



TOWN OF APPOMATTOX TOWN COUNCIL ACTION FORM

Order of Business:

- Consent Agenda
- Public Hearing
- Presentation-Boards/Commissions
- Unfinished Business
- Citizen/Councilor Request
- Regular Business
- Reports of Council Committees

Action:

- Approve and File
- Take Appropriate Action
- Receive & File (no motion required)
- Approve Ordinance 1st Reading
- Approve Ordinance 2nd Reading
- Set a Public Hearing
- Approve on Emergency Measure

COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM TITLE: Town Manager Tuition Reimbursement.

ISSUE: The Town Manager requests Council approval of tuition reimbursement for doctoral coursework. Because the Town Manager is the approving authority for employee reimbursements, **Council action is requested to avoid an actual or perceived conflict of interest.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Town Manager requests approval of reimbursement.

TIMING: Requested for consideration at the 3/9/2026 Town Council meeting to align with enrollment for the 2026 and 2027 academic terms.

BACKGROUND: The Town Manager has completed an MBA in Finance and intends to pursue a doctoral program aligned with the duties of the Town Manager role (examples: Doctor of Public Administration, Executive Leadership, Public Policy, or related field). The purpose is to strengthen executive leadership capacity, public-sector management skills, and policy/financial decision-making that directly support Town operations and strategic objectives.

ENCLOSED DOCUMENTS: Please see attached document for details.

STAFF/SPONSOR: Michael Campbell – Town Manager

FOR IN MEETING USE ONLY

MOTION: _____

Roll Call**SUMMARY:****Y N**

- Councilor Timothy W. Garrett
- Councilor Jack Hensley
- Councilor James Boyce, Sr.
- Councilor McKinley Cardwell

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- Councilor Danielle Ulmer
- Councilor Mary Lou Spiggle
- Mayor Richard Conner (If required)

Town Manager Tuition Assistance Request Summary

Town of Appomattox, Virginia

Purpose

This document provides supporting information for the Town Manager's request for tuition assistance related to doctoral level coursework aligned with the responsibilities of the Town Manager position. The request is presented for Town Council consideration to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest, as the Town Manager would otherwise be involved in administrative approval of reimbursement requests.

Educational Objective

The Town Manager has completed an MBA in Finance and seeks to pursue doctoral education that strengthens executive public-sector leadership and directly supports Town operations. Programs under consideration include:

- Doctor of Public Administration (DPA)
- Doctor of Executive Leadership (DEL)
- Public Policy (PhD or related doctoral program)
- Other closely related doctoral programs that support executive leadership and public administration practice

Relevance to Town Operations and Governance

Doctoral-level study may enhance the Town Manager's ability to lead complex municipal operations and advance Council priorities through stronger capability in:

- Executive leadership and organizational performance
- Public finance, budgeting, and long-term fiscal sustainability
- Policy analysis, implementation, and program evaluation
- Economic development strategy and intergovernmental coordination
- Risk management, compliance, and administrative best practices
- Workforce development, retention, and succession planning
- Grant strategy, program implementation, and performance measurement

Tuition Assistance Guidelines

The following guidelines define the requested standard for tuition assistance associated with doctoral-level coursework:

1) Academic Performance and Completion Standard

Tuition assistance will be provided upon successful course completion, defined as:

- A grade of **B (3.0) or its equivalent**, or
- A **Pass** in a pass/fail course format, and
- Continued **good standing** in the doctoral program as defined by the institution.

2) Satisfactory Progress and Doctoral Program Structure

Doctoral programs operate on varying schedules and may include residencies, seminars, research milestones, and dissertation-related credit structures. The Town Manager will maintain **satisfactory academic progress** as defined by the institution and program. Tuition assistance is intended to align with the academic structure of the doctoral program rather than a standardized course-load model.

3) Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses may include:

- **Tuition**, and
- **Required program fees** that are customary and necessary for enrollment and participation.
Optional expenses such as travel, lodging, meals, parking, and non-required materials are excluded unless specifically authorized.

4) Documentation Requirements

Tuition assistance requests will be supported by:

- An itemized tuition and fee statement or invoice,
- Proof of payment (if applicable to the Town's reimbursement process), and
- Proof of successful completion (final grade report, transcript, or institutional confirmation of completion or "Pass").

5) Financial Controls and Cost Reasonableness Standard

Tuition assistance will be provided in an amount **generally consistent with in-state tuition rates at Virginia public universities for comparable doctoral-level coursework**, subject to annual budget availability and appropriation.

Administrative Oversight and Ethics Safeguard

This request is presented under Town Council oversight due to the Town Manager's role within the organization and is intended to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest. Any approved tuition assistance will be processed using standard financial controls and documentation expectations.

Summary

This request supports the Town's interest in continuous executive development and stronger long-term organizational capacity, **and the Town Manager remains accountable for performance expectations under the employment agreement**. The proposed standard preserves accountability through completion and documentation requirements while remaining flexible and appropriate for doctoral-level programs and schedules.