



## TOWN OF BOWLING GREEN TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

### MINUTES

Thursday, May 22, 2025  
5:00 PM

#### CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:

- Mayor Gambill called the Council Meeting to order at 5:08 PM

#### *Council Members Present:*

Honorable Mayor Tina Gambill, Vice-Mayor Valarie Coyle, Councilmember Jean Davis, Councilmember John Chinault, Councilmember Jeff Voit, Councilmember Dan Webb, Councilmember David Storke, Councilmember Randy Hageman

#### *Staff Members Present:*

India Adams-Jacobs, Town Manager; Jeff Gore, Town Attorney; Ted Cole, Davenport & Company, Financial Advisor

#### NEW BUSINESS:

1. PUBLIC HEARING (5:00 pm)- FY26 Proposed Budget

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS: 3 MINUTES PER INDIVIDUAL

- Mayor Gambill welcomed the public and opened public comment at 5:11 PM.
- **Katherine Burchell**  
Ms. Burchell expressed appreciation for the Council's hard work and dedication and acknowledged confusion among residents regarding tax billing, particularly the difference between county and town taxes, and noted that misinformation may stem from a lack of attention or non-resident commentary. Ms. Burchell shared her experience of living through a lengthy sewer project near her home and emphasized the importance of continued investment in infrastructure.
- **Arthur Wholey**  
Mr. Wholey commended the town's newest police officer and supported continued investment in public safety. He raised concerns about significant budget increases in the proposed FY2026 budget compared to FY2025, specifically pointing to notable rises in the finance, public works, water, and sewer departments. He questioned the status of prior infrastructure evaluations and reports from Caroline County and expressed disappointment over the perceived decline in intergovernmental cooperation. Mr. Wholey also criticized the scheduling of public meetings during working hours and noted the lack of visible meeting minutes on the town website, referring to the January 2 meeting as an example of incomplete follow-up regarding the Smart Scale project.
- **Glenn McDearmon**  
Mr. McDearmon acknowledged the difficulty of the Council's role and stressed the importance of fiscal responsibility. He inquired about an \$8.5 million grant and requested transparency regarding the use of new tax revenue. While recognizing the need for infrastructure investment, he cautioned against excessive tax

increases that could disproportionately affect residents on fixed incomes and discourage economic development.

- **Ann Giles**

Ms. Giles voiced concern over rising taxes amid declining municipal services, specifically noting Town Hall's limited three-day operating schedule. She objected to the requirement to make appointments to speak with the Town Manager and expressed dissatisfaction with the current level of accessibility and customer service provided by the town.

- **Peter Haase**

Mr. Haase compared Bowling Green's proposed tax rate to averages across Virginia, stating that while the rate may appear high in percentage terms, it remains within or below state and national averages. He acknowledged the need for tax increases but emphasized the importance of understanding the broader context.

- **Bonnie Cannon**

Ms. Cannon expressed deep concern over the cumulative financial burden placed on residents through tax increases, inflation, and higher living costs. She urged the Council to be mindful of the hardships faced by residents, particularly those on fixed incomes, and stressed that such increases are unprecedented in her lifetime living in the area.

- **Pam Weldon**

Ms. Weldon discussed the impact of increased property assessments and the compounding effect of rising taxes. She warned that escalating costs could drive long-term residents and small businesses out of town, negatively affecting community life and economic stability. She encouraged Council to preserve Bowling Green's small-town appeal and affordability.

- **Pat Cropper**

Ms. Cropper raised concerns about the budget being based on unaudited financial data, noting that audits for FY2020 through FY2024 remain incomplete. She expressed a lack of confidence in basing fiscal decisions on estimates and stressed the importance of verified financials for public trust.

- **Krista Manns**

Ms. Manns acknowledged the fiscal challenges facing the town and proposed long-term solutions such as expanding the residential tax base through new housing development. She suggested that increasing the number of households contributing could help address recurring budget deficits.

- Following citizen remarks, the Council briefly discussed the potential of continuing the public hearing at a later meeting to allow more residents to participate. A motion was made by Councilmember Voit to continue the hearing, but it did not receive a second. Public comment was officially closed at 5:32 PM.

### **MEMBER COMMENTS:**

- Councilmember Hageman expressed appreciation to all attendees who remained for the full meeting.
- Mayor Gambill thanked all members of the public for their attendance and participation.

### **STAFF REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS:**

2. FY26 Proposed Budget Overview, India Adams-Jacobs, Town Manager

- Town Manager Adams-Jacobs reviewed highlights of the FY26 budget reflecting the Council's decision to lower the proposed advertised real estate tax rate from 20¢ to 13¢. Highlights included:
  - Realigned departmental spending priorities
  - Preserved essential services while deferring some capital projects
  - Maintained critical utility infrastructure investment through the use of reserves and grants
  - Adjusted employee compensation to remain competitive within budget limits
  - Avoided further burdening citizens by minimizing additional fee increases

3. Town's Financial Outlook & Rate Setting Briefing, Ted Cole, Davenport & Co

- Ted Cole, the Town’s financial advisor, presented fiscal context and projections. Key takeaways:
  - Compared Bowling Green’s tax and utility rates with regional peers, noting the Town remains competitive even with the 3¢ rate
  - Described long-term funding needs for water/sewer infrastructure and the need to build reserves.
  - Recommended rate-setting policies to reduce reliance on emergency rate changes
  - Confirmed FY26 debt levels were sustainable; no new borrowing would be necessary
  - Reinforced that budget flexibility would be critical in FY27 and beyond to manage inflation and infrastructure demands

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

4. Rate Setting- Action Item

- Councilmember Davis motioned to set the real estate tax at the 0.15 level and all other taxes as advertised, seconded by Councilmember Storke. Mayor Gambill initiated a roll call, the motion failed with only five members in support, opposed by Councilmember Voit and Councilmember Chinault
- Councilmember Storke motioned to set the real estate tax at the 0.13 level and all other taxes as advertised, seconded by Councilmember Chinault. Mayor Gambill initiated a roll call, the motion passed with six members in support, one opposed (Councilmember Voit).

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

None.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

None.

**RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Hageman at 7:27 PM, seconded by Vice-Mayor Coyle. The meeting adjourned at 7:27 PM.