



Office of the Town Manager
Christopher Martino

Warrenton Town Council
Carter Nevill, Mayor
Roy Francis, Ward 1
William Semple, Ward 2
Larry Kovalik, Ward 3
Michele O'Halloran, Ward 4
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date:	March 10, 2026
Agenda Title:	WWTP Operator, Night Shift FTE
Requested Action:	Approval
Department / Agency Lead:	Human Capital & Risk
Staff Lead:	Kasey Braun, Director of Human Capital & Risk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proper staffing levels are essential to maintaining the Town’s wastewater systems, ensuring safe and reliable service, and maintaining compliance with applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) regulatory standards. Additionally, per VA Administrative Code and per the Board for Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage System Professionals (WWWOOSP), there are minimum staffing levels for our WWTP facility to ensure the safety measures and operating protocols are being adhered to.

BACKGROUND

The Town’s WWTP Operators are responsible for keeping critical infrastructure functioning effectively and directly contribute to public safety, service reliability, and the Town’s long-term sustainability. Recently, during an internal operating procedures safety review, we identified a safety concern that is directly related to limited staffing at the WWTP. At this time, the Town frequently has only one employee scheduled on the early shift (4:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.). Due to operational demands and employee safety concerns, OSHA safety regulations advise that a minimum of two employees be assigned to this shift at all times to ensure safe operations, adequate coverage, and the ability to respond to incidents or service disruptions. Most importantly and under applicable safety regulations, including the requirements enforced by OSHA and VOSH, a minimum of two employees is required when work involves permit-required confined spaces. The required reason for this is one authorized employee performs the work inside the space and a minimum of one authorized employee remains outside, monitors conditions, and manages communication or any emergency response. Furthermore, the main concern founded was the wastewater treatment plant contains multiple permit-required confined spaces; therefore, this presents a significant operational and safety risk if only one employee is working a shift. Should there be an accident due to not adhering to these OSHA guidelines, this could expose the Town to a significant financial liability.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Add one (1) full-time employee (FTE) to support night-shift operations in order to meet operational and safety requirements, reduce employee burnout, minimize unnecessary overtime costs, and eliminate single points of failure caused by limited staffing.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

Ensuring employee safety, in particular when work involves confined spaces, is a critical responsibility that the Town must continuously prioritize. From a staffing perspective, failing to meet basic coverage and safety requirements exposes the Town to unnecessary operational and personnel liability risks. In addition, the current lack of sufficient personnel coverage during this shift is not fiscally sound due to the continued and unavoidable reliance on

overtime. When the sole night-shift employee is scheduled off or calls out, another employee must be brought in to cover the shift. This single point of failure increases personnel costs and places additional strain on the workforce. Over time, this contributes directly to employee fatigue and burnout, which further elevates safety risks, particularly when employees are operating and maintaining critical infrastructure under demanding conditions. Sufficient staffing is therefore necessary not only to meet operational needs, but also to protect employee wellbeing and reduce long term financial and safety impacts to the Town.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

CF-4: Ensure healthy, safe, and adequate water and wastewater services.

- CF-4.1: Maintain a reliable and sufficient quantity of wastewater treatment capacity and an adequate quantity and quality of public water supply to meet the needs of expected long-term residential and commercial growth.
- CF-4.2: Meet the future infrastructure needs through careful planning and acquisition of required permits through adequate staffing.

Fiscal Impact

Request for an appropriation of \$27,215 from the Water & Sewer fund for the time period of April 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026. The position will be included in the proposed FY27 budget. Sufficient funding is available in the Water & Sewer FY26 budget to fund this position.

Legal Impact

The Town Attorney will address the legal impact.

ATTACHMENTS

1. A Resolution to Add a Full-Time Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, Night Shift Position