



Office of the Town Manager  
Christopher E. 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

<b>Council Meeting Date:</b>	June 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2026.
<b>Agenda Title:</b>	Town Council Handbook Update
<b>Requested Action:</b>	Consider adoption of the Updates
<b>Department / Agency Lead:</b>	Town Clerk
<b>Staff Lead:</b>	Stephen Clough, MMC, Town Clerk

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The Town Council Handbook is one of the Town Council's governing documents and serves as a reference for Council procedures, roles, expectations, appointments, and related governance matters.

Staff is recommending that the Town Council approve limited administrative updates to the Handbook at this time. These updates include revising names of Council members and appointees and adding a provision allowing the Clerk, the Town Manager, or their designee to update names and similar administrative information in the Handbook without requiring the document to return to Town Council for formal approval.

Staff is also requesting Council's consent to initiate the standard review process for the Town Council Handbook. The Handbook was last reviewed prior to the most recent Town election. Since that time, there have been changes in Council membership, updates in law, changes in policy direction, and new legal guidance from the Town Attorney. In addition, the current structure of Council meetings now includes additional individuals at the dais, including the Town Manager, making this an appropriate time to review the Handbook's policies, processes, and procedures.

The purpose of the broader review is to ensure that the Handbook reflects current law, Council direction, Town practice, and the Town's own adopted guidelines for governance. Any substantive proposed amendments identified through that review would be brought back to Town Council at a later meeting for review and consideration.

Staff recommends that the Town Council approve the proposed administrative updates and authorize staff to initiate the standard Handbook review process.

## **BACKGROUND**

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The Town Council Handbook is maintained as one of the Town Council's governing documents. It provides guidance regarding Council operations, procedures, appointments, meeting practices, and other matters related to the effective governance of the Town.

The Handbook was last reviewed prior to the 2024 Town elections. Since that review, there have been changes in Council membership and appointments, as well as changes in the structure and administration of Council meetings. With the addition of a New Town Attorney and an Imminent Net Town Manager and an upcoming election, now is the time to review processes to ensure alignment of the guidance documents with the actions of the Council.

Because the Handbook is intended to guide Council operations and support consistent governance practices, it should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains accurate, current, and aligned with the Town's needs. The period following an election and changes in Council composition is a natural and appropriate time to conduct that review.

The immediate proposed update before Council is limited in scope. Staff is recommending that the Handbook be updated to reflect current names of Council members and appointees. Staff is also recommending that the Handbook include a provision authorizing the Clerk, the Town Manager, or their designee to make future administrative updates to names and similar references without requiring formal Council action, provided that such updates do not change the substance, meaning, or policy direction of the Handbook.

In addition to these immediate administrative updates, staff is requesting Council's consent to begin a broader standard review of the Handbook. That review would evaluate the Handbook's policies, processes, and procedures to ensure that they reflect current law, Council policy direction, legal guidance, meeting structure, and Town practice. The review would also help ensure that the Town is operating within its own adopted guidelines.

At this time, staff is not requesting adoption of any broader substantive amendments. Any substantive proposed changes identified through the review process would be brought back to Town Council at a later meeting for discussion, review, and possible action.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff recommends that the Town Council:

1. Approve the proposed administrative updates to the Town Council Handbook; and
2. Authorize staff to initiate the standard review process for the Town Council Handbook to evaluate potential future updates related to changes in law, Council policy direction, legal guidance, Council meeting structure, and Town practice.

### **Service Level/Collaborative Impact**

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The proposed administrative update is expected to have a positive operational impact by allowing staff to keep the Town Council Handbook accurate and current without requiring formal Council action for routine, non-substantive updates.

The broader review process will support consistency in Town operations by ensuring that Council's governing document reflects current policies, processes, procedures, and meeting practices. This review will assist Council, the Town Manager, the Clerk, the Town Attorney, and staff in working from a shared and current understanding of the Town's adopted governance guidelines.

The review will require collaboration among the Clerk, the Town Manager, the Town Attorney, and other staff as appropriate. Any substantive recommendations resulting from the review will be brought back to Town Council for consideration.

### **Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040**

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The proposed updates support the Town's broader commitment to effective governance, transparency, administrative efficiency, and clear public records.

While this item does not directly implement a specific land use or capital project goal of the Warrenton Plan 2040, it supports the Town's general policy direction of maintaining clear, accurate, and accessible governing documents. Reviewing the Handbook after changes in Council membership and meeting structure helps ensure that the Town's policies, processes, and procedures remain aligned with current practice and Council expectations.

The broader review process will also help ensure that the Town is operating within its own adopted guidelines and that the Handbook continues to support orderly, transparent, and effective governance.

### **Fiscal Impact**

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There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the proposed administrative update.

The administrative update may result in minor efficiency by reducing staff time associated with preparing formal agenda items for routine name changes or other non-substantive updates.

The broader Handbook review is expected to be completed using existing staff and legal resources unless otherwise directed by Council. If future proposed amendments create a fiscal impact, that impact will be identified when those amendments are brought back to Town Council for consideration.

### **Legal Impact**

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The proposed administrative update is limited to non-substantive revisions, including updates to names of Council members, appointees, staff, or other persons identified in the Handbook. These administrative updates would not alter the substance, meaning, policy direction, procedures, duties, or authorities established by the Handbook.

The broader review process will allow staff and the Town Attorney to evaluate the Handbook for consistency with current law, legal guidance, Council policy direction, and Town practice. This review is intended to ensure that the Town Council Handbook remains legally current and operationally consistent with the Town's own adopted governance guidelines.

Any substantive changes to the Handbook, including changes to Council procedures, governance policy, legal requirements, duties, authorities, or Council direction, would be brought back to Town Council for review and approval.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Proposed Changes to the Town Council Handbook- Redline
2. Current Town Council Handbook V4.1 and appendixes.