



SOUTH HILL TOWN COUNCIL

WORK SESSION MINUTES

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025, 6:00 P.M.

A work session of the South Hill Town Council was held on Tuesday, September 23, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the temporary Council Chambers of the South Hill Town Hall located at 111 E. Danville Street, South Hill, Virginia 23970. The meeting was held to discuss the following matters: South Hill Strategic Plan updates, ongoing projects, and issues of interest.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Honorable Mayor Mike Moody called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor Moody called upon Clerk of Council Leanne Feather to call the roll, which was as follows:

A. Council Members

Randy Crocker
Ashley C. Hardee
Carl Sasser, Jr.

Lillie Feggins-Boone
Gavin Honeycutt
Michael Smith

Jenifer Freeman-Hite
Delores Luster

Councilor Smith departed the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

B. Staff in Attendance

Keli Reekes, Town Manager
Leanne Feather, Admin. Asst./Clerk
Brentley Morris, Business Dev. Manager

Ryan Durham, Deputy Chief of Police
Dahlis Morrow, Dir. Fin. and Admin.

3. TOWN OF SOUTH HILL STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

A. Goal 1: Revitalize and Repurpose Dilapidated Properties

a. Draft Ordinance Amending the Town's Implementation of the Uniform Statewide Building Code

Town Manager Keli Reekes presented the proposed ordinance amendments, noting that they would impose civil penalties in place of criminal penalties for code violations. She explained that this change is intended to be more effective and timely. Mrs. Reekes further clarified that the amendments would apply to both commercial and residential properties, and would not be retroactive to current open cases.

b. Draft Ordinance Introducing Vacant Property Registry

Mrs. Reekes presented the proposed ordinance to establish a vacant property registry. She explained that the registry would assist in identifying blighted properties, holding property owners accountable, and could also serve as a resource for future economic development. Mrs. Reekes further clarified that the fees are set by the state, that the Town has proposed specific processes for identifying properties, and that the registry will apply to both commercial and residential properties.

Council reached a consensus to schedule public hearings to receive comments regarding amendments to the Town's implementation of the statewide building code and the proposed ordinance establishing a vacant property registry to be held during the October regular Town Council meeting.

B. Goals 2-4: Updates from Staff Retreat

Mrs. Reekes provided updates from the recent staff retreat. She reported that Town staff is partnering with County staff on workforce development efforts. She also noted that the Town has applied for grants to support sewer infrastructure improvements in alignment with the current Capital Improvement Plan. In addition, Mrs. Reekes shared that staff attended a housing summit earlier this year, will attend an upcoming summit in Danville, is working with the Southside Planning District Commission to identify additional funding opportunities, and continues to oversee progress on the Nick's Lane Rehabilitation Project.

Mayor Moody requested that Mrs. Reekes provide a more detailed update on the Nick's Lane Rehabilitation Project at the October regular Town Council meeting.

4. DISCUSSION: ONGOING PROJECTS AND ISSUES OF INTEREST

A. Review and Consider Draft Ordinances

a. Low-Speed Vehicles and Golf Cart Communities

Mrs. Reekes requested Council's comments regarding the allowance of low-speed vehicles and golf carts within Town limits. While the distinction between the two was clarified, Council raised concerns about overall safety and inquired about insurance requirements, permitting processes, restrictions on certain roadways, and the placement of golf cart communities within the Town.

Council reached a consensus to hold public hearings at the November regular Town Council meeting to receive comments on prohibiting low-speed vehicles within Town limits and on allowing golf cart communities within designated areas of the Town.

b. Right-of-Way Permit Process

Mrs. Reekes presented a draft ordinance proposing that companies be required to obtain a permit before accessing Town rights-of-way.

Council reached a consensus to hold a public hearing at the October regular Town Council meeting to receive comments on the proposed right-of-way permit ordinance.

c. Finance: Utility Bill Payment, Utility Cut-On Fee, and Bad Check Fee

Mrs. Reekes presented draft ordinances to update utility fees. The proposed

updates include aligning cut-on and cut-off fees, requiring certified funds for the activation of water and sewer services, and implementing a fee for all returned checks.

Council reached a consensus to hold a public hearing at the October regular Town Council meeting to receive comments on the proposed ordinances to update utility cut-on fee, require certified funds for the activation of water and sewer services, and implement a fee for all returned checks.

B. Water and Sewer Rate Review

While a broader discussion will take place during the FY27 budget planning process, Mrs. Reekes provided Council with a financial forecast prepared by Waterworth, which indicated that without adjustments to water rates, the Town will experience revenue shortfalls. The report outlined suggested actions to prevent these losses.

C. Facility Use Policies

Mrs. Reekes presented Council with updated policies for the use of the Exchange Building and Centennial Park. She explained that the policy language had been revised and that new forms will streamline the reservation process. Mrs. Reekes clarified that the religious exemption was broadened to be more inclusive of religious events while prohibiting the park from being used for regular recurring religious services. She further suggested that the decision on allowing the Exchange Building to be used for private events be deferred until adequate parking is available.

A motion was made by Councilor Sasser, second by Vice Mayor Honeycutt to accept the updated facility use forms for The Exchange Building and Centennial Park as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Reekes requested Council's input on the audio-visual setup in Town Hall. She asked whether Council preferred to continue livestreaming Town Council meetings, as in the past, or to implement a system allowing meetings to be recorded and posted online for later public viewing. Council reached a consensus to recommend recording the meetings and posting them afterward, noting that this approach would encourage in-person participation.

Councilor Freeman-Hite commented on the Town's role in the community and inquired whether the Town has any intention of purchasing property for a community center focused on youth activities.

Councilor Luster commented on the Town's need for an emergency shelter, noting the importance of addressing the needs of the aging community and individuals with disabilities. Mrs. Reekes explained that emergency shelters are the responsibility of the County but stated that the Town will play an active role in partnering with the County in any future efforts.

Mayor Moody commended staff for their efforts in preparing resource materials for Council.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business matters before the South Hill Town Council, Mayor Moody adjourned the work session at 7:29 p.m.

VALIDATION

Minutes approved this ____ day of _____, 20____.

Leanne Feather, Clerk of Council

W. M. "Mike" Moody, Mayor