

HURT TOWN COUNCIL 2026

MEETING MINUTES

MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING

Date: July 7, 2026

Location: TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
533 POCKET RD. HURT, VA

Time: 6 PM

Adjournment: 8:10 PM

Meeting called to order by: MAYOR GARY HODNETT

COUNCIL MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE ESTABLISHING A QUORUM

Vice Mayor Bob Majure

Alice Bond

Gary Poindexter

Jimmy Harding

Paul Johnson

Steve Worley

Council Members Absent:

None

Special Guest:

Mike Lockaby – Bond Council

TOWN STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Shannon Race, town clerk

Joe Smith, Public Works Director

Paul Wathlington, Public Works Assistant

Bob Williamson, Water Plant Operator

Jason Lovelace, Hurt Police Chief

John Eller, town attorney

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Hodnett called meeting to order at 6:10 pm and presided.

Clerk called the roll call.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Hodnett requests a motion to move into closed session.

- Councilman Poindexter moves that the council convene a closed session in accordance with Virginia Freedom of Information Act as amended. Siting Authorization: § 2.2-3711 A (8) Legal Counsel (as applicable).
- Vice Mayor Majure seconds the motion for the closed session.

- Clerk calls for individual votes on the motion with Hurt Town Council voting 6-0 in favor of the closed session.
 - The motion is passed, and the Hurt Town Council moves into a closed session at 6:11 pm.
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CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

- Mayor Hodnett calls for motions to return and certify a closed session.
- Councilman Poindexter makes a motion for the certification of the closed meeting, citing the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (**Requirement: VA FOIA § 2.2-3712 (D)**)
- Mayor Hodnett calls for a second, which is given by Vice Mayor Majure, council voted 6-0 in favor and approves the certification of the closed session.
- Councilman Worley leads the invocation.

Public Comment Period Opened:

Mayor Hodnett invited anyone wishing to speak to sign up and address Council.

- No public comments were made at that time.
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New Business

VRA Lease Financing for Water System

5.1 Approval of Lease Financing Resolution (Water System Improvements)

- **Item:** Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Hurt approving the lease financing of capital improvements to its water system, authorizing:
 - Leasing of town facilities,
 - Execution and delivery of a Prime Lease, Local Lease Acquisition Agreement, Financing Lease, and related documents.
 - **Motion:** **Vice Mayor Majure** moved approval of the resolution.
 - **Second:** **Councilman Johnson** second the motion.
 - **Vote:**
 - Roll call by **Shannon Race** – **Paul, Jimmy, Alice, Bob, Gary** all voted **Yes**.
 - **Result:** Resolution **adopted unanimously**.
 - **Note:** This action supports closing on **VRA financing** for mandated water system improvements; closing date later referenced as **July 24**.
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CONSENT AGENDA

1. June Expenditures
2. June 2, June 17, & June 24 Meeting & Workshop Minutes.
3. Additions to the Agenda

Presentation and Discussion

- **Items:**
 - **June expenditures**
 - **Budget vs. actual** (end-of-year status)
 - **Meeting minutes**, including **June 24** minutes.
- **Discussion highlights (Councilman Poindexter):**
 - Acknowledged the town is over budget, which was expected, especially due to fuel surcharge increases for garbage collection.
 - Stated there is work to do in the new fiscal year to manage these challenges.

- Complimented the appearance and formatting of the minutes (AI-assisted), but requested one correction in the June 24 minutes:
 - Under “Streetscape and plaza corridor”, first bullet:
 - Change reference from “Family Dollar to the Plaza” to “Family Dollar to SVMP (Southern Virginia Multimodal Park)” to reflect the original corridor vision.

Councilmember Bond made a motion to approve the consent agenda with corrections made to the June 24th minutes, second by Councilman Harding, and the Hurt Town Council voted in favor 6-0, and approved the July 7th Consent Agenda as presented with corrections to the June 24th minutes.

Plaza Update (HVAC and Lighting)

- **Report by Mayor Hodnett**
 - Two air conditioning units at the plaza are experiencing issues:
 - One with a fan bearing problem.
 - One with a motor issue.
 - Doss (HVAC/electrical contractor) has been called in to diagnose and repair.
 - A row of lights is out in one of the spaces; someone is scheduled to inspect.
 - Mayor indicated cost estimates exist but were not read clearly; approximate mention of “\$300” in context of repairs.

No motion taken; informational only. Action item is to review and act on Doss estimates once fully received.

Employee Handbook and Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Timing

Employee Handbook Update

- **Mayor Hodnett:**
 - Stated the employee handbook needs significant updates.
 - Offered to work with Evelyn on revisions if councilmembers are unable to take it on.
- **Councilman Poindexter:**
 - Noted he is overextended and cannot take lead.
 - Reminded Council that the budget was developed assuming the annual COLA/HRY change would coincide with the fiscal year (July 1) rather than calendar year.
 - Noted that Council previously discussed but did not formally vote to shift COLA timing.

Discussion – Fiscal Year vs. Calendar Year Raises

- **Mayor Hodnett:**
 - Prefers raises remain on a calendar-year basis (January), stating most employers do that and it should not be difficult administratively.
- **Councilman Poindexter & Vice Mayor Majure:**
 - Emphasized:
 - Alignment of raises with fiscal year (July 1) improves budget projections,
 - Transparency for citizens when reading the budget,
 - Avoids confusion where a “3.5% raise” mid-year is only funded at half that level for the current fiscal year.
 - Noted that schools and many public bodies align raises with the fiscal year.

Motion – Change Effective Date of Annual Budgeted COLA Raises

- **Clarification:** Discussion focused on annual cost-of-living (budgeted) raises, not one-off individual pay adjustments.
 - **Motion:** Councilman Poindexter moved that annual budgeted raises (COLA) take effect at the beginning of each fiscal year (July 1) instead of January, to align with the budget year.
 - **Second: Vice Mayor Majure.**
 - **Discussion:**
 - Councilmember Johnson supported the change for greater transparency and to address citizen concerns about perceived “back-door” adjustments.
 - Councilmember Bond stated no strong opinion but would go with the group.
 - **Vote:**
 - Roll call by Shannon Race – Steve, Paul, Jimmy, Alice, Bob, Gary all voted Yes.
 - **Result:** Motion carried unanimously.
 - **Policy outcome:** Effective immediately, annual budgeted COLA raises are to begin July 1 of each fiscal year.
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Audio/Visual (A/V) and Live Streaming System

Presentation of A/V Quotes

- **Presenter: Vice Mayor Majure.**
- **Purpose:**
 - To upgrade live streaming from the current ad-hoc system to a professional-quality system with improved audio, video, and reliability for Council meetings.
- Two main options presented (from Matthew / vendor, likely Elliot Group):
 1. **Basic System – Approx. \$33,642.01**
 - Manual control via laptop (e.g., OBS software).
 - Hanging microphones over Council table and podium; improved audio tuned to the room.
 - Ceiling speakers and an additional TV to improve in-room visibility.
 - Multiple PTZ (pan-tilt-zoom) cameras covering Council and podium.
 - Vendor-provided training and support; requires a human operator.
 2. **Full / Automated System – Approx. \$61,408.04**
 - Wall-mounted touch panel control (no dedicated laptop required).
 - AI-enabled microphones and cameras that auto-detect speakers and switch camera views accordingly.
 - Cloud-based Webex integration with automatic recording to a local server.
 - High-end components (Cisco and similar), significantly higher hardware cost.
- **Key points raised:**
 - Current livestream audio quality is poor, discouraging viewers.
 - Typical live viewership is about 4 during meetings, with up to ~50 replays on better videos and 5–10 on others.
 - Some feedback from citizens has been received, but volume of complaints is modest.

Council Discussion – Cost vs. Benefit

- **Cost Concerns (Multiple Members, including Poindexter, Johnson, Worley):**
 - \$33k–\$61k viewed as not feasible given current fiscal constraints.
 - Competing priorities noted: plaza condition, water treatment plant, infrastructure, and limited revenue compared to neighboring towns that do not even stream meetings.

- Consensus that this is a “want” more than a “need” at current price point.
- **Public Engagement & Transparency:**
 - Some members feel better A/V could increase engagement over time.
 - However, they agreed any upgrade must be incremental and affordable.

Direction to Negotiate a Scaled-Down Option (~\$10,000 Target)

- **Discussion Outcome:**
 - General agreement to seek a substantially scaled-back system focusing on:
 - Good audio quality over video features.
 - Possibly one PTZ camera.
 - Eliminating non-essential items (e.g., ambient audience mics).
 - Target budget: around \$10,000, with some flexibility but far below \$33k.
- **Instruction to Vice Mayor Majure:**
 - Council consensus: Have Bob Majure go back to the vendor and say:
 - The town can spend about \$10,000,
 - Ask “What’s the best we can get for \$10,000?” prioritizing audio quality and a simple camera setup.
 - **Action:** Vice Mayor Majure to obtain a revised quote and email the Council with options.
- **No vote** taken on purchasing any system yet; this remains in the proposal/negotiation stage.

Reports from Staff

Treasurer/Clerk – Marissa / Shannon Race

- **Check Listing & Dominion Energy Questions:**
 - **Vice Mayor Majure** noted two sizable **Dominion Energy** payments (June 3 and June 30) and asked if that represented two months of bills.
 - **Shannon** stated she would need to **research** before answering.
- **Clerk’s Operational Report (Shannon):**
 - **VOYA setup:**
 - Reported to VOYA last week with Marissa; expects to be fully set up in 5–8 business days to manage retirement contributions directly.
 - **VRS reporting:**
 - Already fully set up; snapshots and reporting are current.
 - **Invoices/payables:**
 - Focused on paying current invoices this week.
 - **Workload / ADA Compliance:**
 - Noted an extremely heavy workload and insufficient time currently to progress the ADA remediation of online documents.
 - Only 5–6 documents ADA-converted so far; many more remain.
 - Is keeping current minutes ADA-compliant but emphasizes it is time-consuming and requires manual checks because AI tools do not fully handle structure and reading order.
- **Offer of Help:**
 - Vice Mayor Majure offered to help with ADA work, particularly general documents; Shannon accepted.

Public Works – Joe Smith

- **Pump Station Issues:**
 - One pump dropped out, leaving the station operating on a single pump over a weekend.
 - Required:
 - New motor controller for one pump,
 - Two phase monitors,
 - Reprogramming of the pump monitoring system (AIC) to improve alarms & diagnostics.
 - Situation currently stabilized, but Joe does not fully trust one pump for the long term; anticipates a need to ensure redundancy during upcoming water system work.
- **Water Treatment Plant / Power & Fire Suppression:**
 - Recent storms resulted in power failures affecting:
 - Water treatment plant,
 - Fire suppression system for Rage Plastics.
 - Because Town-owned high-voltage lines (13kV) feed these facilities, the town had to bring in a specialized contractor (Elliot) to inspect and repair:
 - Replaced fuses, evaluated lines and poles, and identified overgrown right-of-way from Pocket Road to the railroad tracks as a serious problem (dense brush and trees in the power line corridor).
 - **Risk:**
 - Trees and limbs can contact uninsulated lines, causing shorts and loss of power to the plant and fire suppression system.
 - Emphasized the urgency of clearing the private line right-of-way and tightening sagging lines; otherwise the town will face repeated outages with each major storm.
- **Water Leaks and Service Issues:**
 - Responded to several water leaks and pressure regulator failures in town.
 - Has two meter/under bore projects scheduled, delayed slightly due to contractor backlogs, but expected next week.

Water/Electrical – Bob Williamson

- **Detailed Power Line Conditions:**
 - Confirmed:
 - The town's private overhead line from the junction boxes near Pocket Road to the river pump is in poor condition in some sections, especially between Pocket Road and the railroad tracks.
 - Overgrowth makes visual inspection nearly impossible; lines can slap and short during wind events.
 - **Contractor Findings (Elliot):**
 - Some fuses on circuits are oversized (100A) and should be reduced stepwise (50/40/30A) to protect the system properly.
 - **Ownership:**
 - Once power passes the junction point (approx. 12.7kV), the system is owned and maintained by the Town, not Dominion.
 - **Need for Easement Maintenance:**
 - Elliot offers tree clearing and easement maintenance services under contract.
- **Emergency Response / Fire Marshal Coordination:**
 - During an outage, the fire marshal attempted an inspection at Rage Plastics while the suppression system lacked power, forcing the town to call in emergency service from Elliot.
 - **Mayor Hodnett** underscored that these emergency responses are expensive and that proactive maintenance is necessary.

Discussion – Dominion Taking Over Private Power Lines

- **Concept:** Dominion Energy extend its system and assume ownership/maintenance of the lines currently owned by the Town.
- **Points raised:**
 - This would require a one-time capital payment for poles, transformers, and engineering.
 - Long-term benefits include faster response to outages and less risk borne by the Town.
- **Direction:**
 - **Mayor Hodnett** agreed this should be done in principle, but the cost must be known first.
 - Plan to contact Dominion for an engineering assessment and cost estimate.

Police Department – Chief Jason Lovelace

- **Monthly Police Report:**
 - Standard incident/activity report submitted (details not read into transcript).
- **Grants:**
 - Previously awarded training conference grant was utilized; officers attended training.
 - Litter grant application was submitted; covers reimbursement for:
 - Trash bags, gloves, signs, cones, etc., used during town litter pickups.
- **Maintenance:**
 - Anticipates vehicle maintenance and tires, plus some equipment maintenance this year.
- **Abandoned Vehicle Notices:**
 - In response to Councilman Worley's question, Chief confirmed that all vehicle owners identified last month have been notified, and the 90-day compliance period is underway.

Legal / Town Attorney – John Eller

- **VRA Financing & Water System:**
 - Working on VRA financing for mandated water system improvements.
 - Confirmed that following tonight's lease financing resolution, closing is scheduled for July 24.
 - **Upcoming Joint Public Hearing – Mobile Restaurants**
 - Noted that at an upcoming work session there will be a joint public hearing with the Planning Commission on mobile restaurant ordinances, with the goal of Council adoption thereafter.
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Communications, Water Bill Timing, and Possible Survey

- **Water Bill Schedule:**
 - Shannon to process bills on Friday, July 10; mailing date targeted July 15.
- **Newsletter vs. Brief Message:**
 - Councilman Poindexter expressed insufficient time to prepare a full newsletter by Friday.
 - Discussed possibility of a short message on the back of the water bill instead.

- **Virginia Block Grant (Equal Housing / Housing Rehab):**
 - Vice Mayor Majure asked if results of the Virginia block grant (equal housing-related) would be known by that time; Mayor was uncertain and doubted it.
- **Possible A/V Survey Question on Water Bill:**
 - Discussion on including a simple survey question about live streaming on the water bill:
 - Earlier suggestion (Mayor) to ask about willingness to pay for a system was not favored due to likely skewed responses.
 - Consensus moved toward one simple question:
 - Whether citizens are interested in the Town live streaming meetings (without mentioning participation or cost).
 - Concern expressed about using the word "participate" as it might create expectations about interactive, chat-based meetings.
 - **Outcome:**
 - Informal consensus to ask a single, simple question regarding interest in live streaming in a future water bill message, phrased carefully.
 - No formal motion recorded.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Hodnett adjourned this meeting at 8:11 pm.