TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2026 | 7:03 P.M.

The Town of Middletown Town Council meeting was held in the council chambers located at 7875 Church Street, Middletown VA on October 13, 2026, at 7:03 PM.

Town Council Present
Mayor Charles Harbaugh IV
Vice Mayor Jeffrey Pennington
Councilor Carolyn Aliff
Councilor Jessica Chekaldin
Councilor Diane Newman-Shannon
Councilor Jacob Skeith
Councilor George Smith

Staff Present
Town Manager & Public Works Superintendent Les Morefield
Chief Gary Benedict Jr.
Town Treasurer Keith Smith
Deputy Clerk Rachel Henry

1. Set Agenda
Mayor Harbaugh asked for a motion to set the agenda. Councilor Newman-Shannon made a motion to set the agenda. Councilor Skeith seconded the motion. All Councilors were in favor and the agenda was set.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes
Mayor Harbaugh asked for a motion to approve the Town Council minutes from September 14, 2026, and Work Session minutes from October 5, 2026. Councilor Pennington made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilor Smith seconded the motion. All Councilors were in favor, and the Town Council minutes and Work Session minutes were approved.

3. Citizen Comments (3 minutes per person per meeting – max 30 minutes)
Matthew James 103 Winton Ln., Stephens City - see attached for transcript.

Amanda Killen 280 Jubilee Court, Winchester- see attached for transcript.

Town Council Meeting Citizen Comments October 13, 2026

Matthew James

“Let me start, for those that are just joining us, the Council just spent 30 minutes talking about a bicycle ordinance, which I think is really ironic, because at your work session last week.

You guys talked about why should we be concerned about Flock, because the technology has been around for a while, and there's been a lot of cameras around. Why should we be concerned about it now? But hey, bicycles have been around for a long time. There are millions of bicycles out there, but here you are acknowledging that the technology has changed, and maybe you should pass some new ordinances.

I just want to highlight the irony of that.

I do hope that you guys have a formal vote on this. Last year, you implemented a surveillance system with just a committee action. I hope that you have a formal vote. If any of you guys do vote in favor of keeping the contract going, I hope that you say why, and what you know that other counties don't. More than 20 counties, including just last week, Richmond cancel their flock contracts. If you guys vote in favor, tell us what you know, how you're smarter than Richmond.

Also, at your work session, you guys spent about 9 minutes talking about Flock. In that 9 minutes, though, you mostly talked about how to protect the town from liability. You didn't really talk about, is this good for the town? And most of you laughed at the idea of even having a public discourse with the community about whether these, these, cameras are worthwhile.

I asked the chief how many, vehicles the plates scan per month. He said 500,000 vehicles per month. That's 6 million vehicles per year.

And out of that, you guys produced zero arrests related to vehicle theft, but you produced three arrests, which we don't really know the specifics of. Did those really result in any prosecutions? Did anybody really was anybody really guilty of any crimes on that? We don't know. But 6 million vehicles for three arrests doesn't really seem like good math to me and a good use of systems.

You guys argue that, that doesn't cost the town any money because it's a heat grant.

Heat grants are paid for by insurance premiums, so we all pay into that, so that does cost the town money. Plus, you got to pay the chief to administer the program, so it does cost the town some money, so don't… please don't tell us that it's free to the town. What else?

You guys compared flock cameras to cell phones and business surveillance. I'm not sure you guys understand the difference between corporate security and government

surveillance, okay? Yes, we carry cell phones. No, we're not happy about them tracking us, but you know what? We all agree to pay that bill; we all sign the terms of agreement. Those are personal decisions we make.

We don't agree to government surveillance. You guys should ask the town if they and the community want that.

We didn't get any discussion in that. I've asked for some transparency from the town. I've submitted several FOIA requests. I haven't gotten a lot back in return. As a good example about how poorly this is administrated, in the past 3 months, I've received 3 different versions of the town's ALPR policy from the chief. I received one in August, he posted a different one to Facebook, and then today I received a third version. What is the town's policy? Do we even know? Because there's 3 versions floating out there."

Amanda Killen

"Thank you all. So, not only am I the new EDA director, but I'm also new to the community. I'm brand new to Frederick County, so I wanted to make the rounds and introduce myself to everyone. A little background on me. I have worked with various municipalities, small towns primarily, and counties and planning districts across the country on various initiatives, whether it be economic development, community development, grant writing, and downtown revitalization is where my passion lies. So, layering in grant writing to achieve all those goals and helping towns build roadmaps and counties to where they want to go, and help them find the funding to get there. So, Frederick County, we are so excited to implement a few new support resources for our small to mid-sized businesses, and you all, I'm sure, are familiar with Shayla Rickard. She's our Business Retention and Expansion Manager, and she's a wonderful resource. So, first and foremost, I want to just remind you that if you know some business owners who are looking to expand or have some sort of need for growth, please reach out to Shayla, she's amazing.

The EDA is implementing a revolving loan fund, and we'll come back as soon as we have those details lined out and introduce that to you all so you're familiar with it and can pass that along.

And we're also holding a series of community listening sessions that will be, sort of.

Specific to sectors and location, and we want to invite all stakeholders, everyone's invited, it's an open door. The first one is going to be November 10th at the Winchester Regional Airport, and that one's just going to be sort of focused on getting a good assessment of what the needs of our business community in Frederick County are.

So that we can implement those into our revolving loan fund and other resources that we are implementing for our smaller businesses. Going forward, the Small Business Development Center, which you all have right here in your back door, what a great resource. They're going to have an office, weekly, once a week, they'll be in the EDA office at the County Admin Building.

Of course, that's… that's of no use to you all, because you have it right here, 7… or 5 days a week, anyway.

We're working on some access to capital resources packets to hand out to business owners, again, helping

Entrepreneurs access the capital they need to either open, expand, and grow.

And I just want you to know that we're here for you all. We're happy to help, whether that be just to guide your businesses along the way, point them in the right direction, help them, you know, if they need to go and speak with planning or zoning. We're here, so just feel free to reach out. I thought that I had plenty of cards with me, but it turns out I only have 3, so I'm going to leave those with the town manager. Thank you.”

4. Report of the Personnel & Finance Committee
Councilor Skeith made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Councilor Aliff seconded the motion. Mayor Harbaugh asked for a roll call vote.

Councilor Aliff – Yes
Councilor Chekaldin – Yes
Councilor Pennington – Yes
Councilor Newman-Shannon – Yes
Councilor Skeith – Yes
Councilor Smith – Yes

Motion carried 6-0

Councilor Skeith made a motion to approve "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CURRENTLY ADOPTED BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 FOR PURPOSES OF PURCHASING GREEN SPACE/LAND, TAX MAP PARCEL 91E-2-1-52, 3.84 ACRES, LOCATED AT THE INTERSECTION OF ROUTE 11 (MAIN STREET) AND RELIANCE ROAD. THE PROPOSED ADDITIONAL INCREASED SPENDING FOR THE YEAR IS $600,000.00." Councilor Pennington second the motion. Mayor Harbaugh asked for a roll call vote.

Councilor Aliff – Yes
Councilor Chekaldin – Yes
Councilor Pennington – Yes
Councilor Newman-Shannon – Yes
Councilor Skeith – Yes
Councilor Smith – Yes

Motion carried 6-0

Councilor Newman-Shannon made a motion to approve "A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASE OF REAL PROPERTY identified as Parcel ID 91 E 2 1 52, Reliance Road, Middletown, Virginia 22645." Councilor Pennington second the motion. Mayor Harbaugh asked for a roll call vote.

Councilor Aliff – Yes
Councilor Chekaldin – Yes
Councilor Pennington – Yes
Councilor Newman-Shannon – Yes
Councilor Skeith – Yes
Councilor Smith – Yes

Motion carried 6-0

5. Report of the Public Works Committee and Facilities Committee
Nothing to report

6. Report of Public Safety Committee
Councilor Pennington stated the calls for service can be found in the packet for review. Chief Benedict reported he received an application for a part-time officer, Matt Clark, who was previously employed by the town. Sgt. Monse and the Middletown Fire Department were nominated for the Lifesaving Award through the Chamber of Commerce after performing CPR on a town resident who has made a full recovery and doing well. The award ceremony will take place on November 5, 2026, at Shenandoah Valley Golf Club.

7. Report of the Ordinance Committee
Ordinance committee and Chief Benedict met to draft an ordinance to present to the town attorney regarding e-bikes and scooters.

8. Report of the Planning and Zoning Committee
Nothing to report

9. Report of Special Committees
The Town and volunteers will be planting 44 trees on October 14, 2026, in various places around the town. The 9th Annual Battle of Church Street will take place on October 16, 2026, at 5:30pm. The 162nd Annual Reenactment of the Battle of Cedar Creek will be October 17-18 at Belle Grove. Luminaries will be lit on Main St. October 17, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.

10. New or Unfinished Business
Mayor Harbaugh set the Work Session meeting for November 2, 2026 @ 7:00 p.m.

11. Petitions and Communication
Mayor Harbaugh presented town resident Ellen Gant with a plaque of appreciation for her contributions to the Town Middletown and its history. Middletown Heritage Society presented Ms. Gant with a check to show their appreciation as well for all of her efforts.

12. Adjournment
Mayor Harbaugh adjourned the town council meeting at 7:21 p.m.

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Christina Smith
Municipal Clerk

Charles Harbaugh IV
Mayor