



**Town Council
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2026**

The Town Council of Bedford, Virginia, held a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Municipal Building at 215 East Main Street, Bedford, Virginia.

Town Council members present:

Mayor C. G. Stanley, Vice Mayor Darryl Updike, Councilman Todd Foreman, Councilman Stacey Hailey, Councilman Jai Ippolito, Councilman Dwight Evans, Councilman Dave Foster

Town Staff present:

Attorney Michael Lockaby, Police Chief Jim Moore, Director of Planning and Community Development Mary Zirkle, Clerk of Council Debra B. Anderson, and Recording Secretary Shauna Boggus.

Mayor Stanley called the meeting to order and led all those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ADMINISTRATIVE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Stanley declared that the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting on December 9, 2025, were approved as submitted.

REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER

None.

APPEARANCES BEFORE COUNCIL

Leslie Mahaffey, *1517 Woodland Road, Bedford, Va 24523*

Mrs. Mahaffey addressed the council regarding two distinct concerns:

- She observed "Bay's" (a third-party service) trash cans located at Liberty Lake Park and town cemeteries.
 - She questioned the fiscal responsibility of paying an outside contractor for trash removal on town-owned property when the town already employs a sanitation department.
 - Council Response: Council indicated they were unaware of this specific arrangement but committed to investigating the cost and reasoning.
 - She expressed concern regarding a closed session agenda item, which she suspects involves the sale of property at the reservoir (a topic previously addressed two years ago).
 - She urged the council to avoid "backroom deals" and requested that any decision regarding the sale of public land be brought to a public hearing or put out for bid to ensure community involvement.
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Melvin Adams, *938 Ashland Avenue, Bedford, Va 24523*

Mr. Adams offered blessings and scriptural guidance for the new year (2026). He concluded with a prayer asking for wisdom, discernment, and prosperity for the town and the council members individually.

David Goode, *1723 Wycliffe St., Bedford, Va 24523*

Mr. Goode spoke briefly regarding the same property concerns raised by Mrs. Mahaffey. He attended at the request of a friend concerned about the land surrounding the reservoir. He asked the council to consider placing the land into a conservation easement, regardless of whether the property is eventually sold or retained.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- The Council welcomed a large turnout of citizens and those watching via YouTube, wishing everyone a blessed 2026.
- Council members expressed gratitude for the robust attendance, noting it was good to hear "a lot of voices" reciting the pledge. They reiterated that they listen to and consider all citizen input.

- Thanks were offered to Mr. Adams for his scripture choice and prayer, which were deemed "spot on" and appropriate for the start of the year.
- **Burke's Hill Construction:** Councilmen commented on the rapid progress of the motel construction at Burke's Hill. After sitting dormant for a long time, the site is now active with steel and interior walls going up quickly.
- The Council took time to honor community members and former colleagues who passed away recently.
- Significant time was dedicated to recognizing long-serving town employees:

Bart Warner, Town Manager was recognized for 25 years of service. A timeline of his career with Bedford was presented:

April 2000: Hired as City Director of Planning and Community Development.

May 2002: Served as Interim Director of Parks, Rec, and Cemeteries.

October 2005: Title changed to Assistant City Manager.

September 2017: Became official Town Manager.

A thank-you card was read in which Warner expressed his gratitude to the Council and his love for the community.

Garth Morck (Electric Department): Recognized for 35 years of service to the Bedford Electric Department.

- Thanks were given to the volunteers who worked on the materials, repainting, and decorations at Spring Oak, the Elks Home over the holidays.
- Acknowledged Bedford Baptist for hosting a live nativity activity that was well-received.
- Specific thanks were offered to Leslie Mahaffey for her input during the meeting.

REPORT ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES

None.

REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointment of Fire Chief

Mr. Hailey moved, seconded by Mr. Updike, to appoint Stacey Wills as Chief of Fire Department.

Voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote.

Councilman Evans	aye
Councilman Foreman	aye
Councilman Foster	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Councilman Ippolito	aye
Vice Mayor Updike	aye
Mayor Stanley	aye

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The motion carried with seven members voting aye.

Presentation and Discussion of Downtown Action Strategy

Presentation Overview: The 5-Year Strategy

Mary Zirkle presented a refined table detailing the implementation tasks for the **Downtown Action Strategy**. She emphasized the distinction between this document and the general Comprehensive Plan:

- **Action Strategy:** A 5-year tactical, intentional, and actionable roadmap.
- **Comprehensive Plan:** A long-range, 20-year vision (currently being drafted with public meetings scheduled for February/March).

Organization of the Strategy

The strategy table has been sorted into three categories to help Council prioritize:

1. **Timeline:** Immediate actions ("Now"), Years 1–3, and Years 3–5.

2. **Investment Level:**

- **Strategy Only:** No cost.
- **\$ (Tactical/Low-Cost):** manageable within current budgets.
- **\$\$:** Resources typically within budget parameters.
- **\$\$\$:** Requires funding outside typical budget parameters.

3. **Partners:** Identifies responsible parties (Town, consultants, and external partners).

Several initiatives are already underway or completed:

- **Lighting:** String lights installed at the Market Pavilion (year-round) and planned for Bridge Street to create visual impact.
- **Google Business Profiles:** A "no-cost" guide is ready to help business owners claim and manage their online presence.
- **Bower Center for The Arts Partnership**
- Discussions are active regarding placing art in vacant storefront windows, though this requires funding and willing property owners.

Council Discussion & Key Themes

1. "Enhancing the Downtown Experience"

A significant portion of the discussion focused on a philosophy of shared responsibility. It was noted that success requires a three-pronged approach:

- **The Town:** Must handle infrastructure and planning.
- **Business Owners:** Must maintain properties and engage with programs.
- **The Community:** Must actively choose to shop downtown rather than relying solely on online retailers.
- Mr. Updike commented that, "If we can come together with as much intensity as we did about a name change, we ought to be able to do this about shopping habits."

2. Communication & Awareness- Concerns were raised that many citizens and business owners are unaware of existing incentives, such as façade grants.

- **Consensus:** The Town is doing good work but must improve how it communicates these opportunities.
- **Action:** Staff plans to send letters to property owners and utilize BedfordVA.gov and BetterBedford.com to increase visibility.

3. Housing as a Catalyst- The "domino effect" of downtown housing was highlighted. Developing upstairs apartments is seen as a key driver that will naturally pull in more businesses and extend operating hours.

While the strategy could be adopted by reference later within the Comprehensive Plan, Council members expressed a strong desire to formally adopt the Downtown Action Strategy immediately (tonight). This vote is intended to signal full Council support and commitment to the public and business community.

Mr. Foreman moved, seconded by Mr. Evans, to formally adopt the Downtown Action Strategy immediately.

Voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote.

Councilman Hailey	aye
Councilman Ippolito	aye
Vice Mayor Updike	aye
Councilman Evans	aye
Councilman Foreman	aye
Councilman Foster	aye
Mayor Stanley	aye

The motion carried with seven members voting aye.

Freedom of Information Training

Annual Freedom of Information Training was conducted by Town Attorney Michael Lockaby.

Mayor Stanley read the following Closed Session paragraph from the Code of Virginia:

Closed session pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(3) and (8) for the purpose of discussion or consideration of the acquisition or disposition of land, and for consultation with the Town Attorney regarding the legal status of such property, where discussion in open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the Town, regarding forest property outside of Town limits in the Peaks Magisterial District of Bedford County

Mr. Hailey moved, seconded by Mr. Ippolito to enter into closed session at 8:31 p.m.

Voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote.

Councilman Foreman	aye
Councilman Foster	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Councilman Ippolito	aye
Vice Mayor Updike	aye
Councilman Evans	aye
Mayor Stanley	aye

The motion carried with seven members voting aye.

Attorney for Town Michael Lockaby, Clerk of Council Debra B. Anderson and Recording Secretary Shauna Boggus stayed for the closed session.

Council reconvened into open session at 8:42 p.m.

The Recording Secretary read aloud the following resolution.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Town of Bedford hereby certifies that (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies; and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Council.

Mr. Ippolito moved, seconded by Mr. Updike to adopt the resolution.

Voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote.

Councilman Foster	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Councilman Ippolito	aye
Vice Mayor Updike	aye
Councilman Evans	aye
Councilman Foreman	aye
Mayor Stanley	aye

The motion carried with seven members voting aye.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn meeting at 8:44 until 6:00 p.m. on January 20, 2026, to present and review second quarter financial statements

