



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 6, 2025 - 5:00 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

5:00 PM Workshop: Discussion of Proposed State Election Changes for Municipalities.

MD State Board of Elections Municipal Election Guidelines.

Mayor Megan JM Cook
President Don Abbatiello
Ms. Maureen Curry
Mr. Robert Rankin
Dr. David Montgomery
Rev. Elmer Davis

Also present was the Town Manager, Mr. Andy Kitzrow; Town Attorney, Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch; Chief of Police, Alan Lowrey; and Town Clerk, Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

Town of Easton Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Edward Forte was present to discuss municipal election guidelines.

Mr. Forte stated he received information regarding what the state Board of Elections proposed. He recommended keeping the elections the way they have been done in the past. He suggested hiring staff, increasing personnel, pursuing a secondary election place, creating rolls and responsibilities. Mr. Forte stated that some things can be tweaked due to some things that happened at the last election.

Mr. Abbatiello asked what problems had occurred. Mr. Forte discussed the absentee ballot applications and suggested revisions.

Rev. Davis stated that if the system isn't broken, he doesn't see anything changing. He stated he would prefer the town to continue with the system we have.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Forte for his thoughts regarding distributing absentee ballots. He stated he enjoys old-fashioned democracy.

Mr. Rankin stated he supports Mr. Forte's thoughts.

Mr. Abbatiello asked Mr. Forte to think about the upcoming budget.

Mr. Forte exited at 5:13 p.m.

President Abbatiello recessed the workshop until 5:30 p.m.

5:30 PM: Call to Order by President Abbatiello.

At 5:30 PM, President Abbatiello called the meeting to order.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Rankin.

Mr. Rankin gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Meeting minutes from 09/02/25 meeting.

Upon motion by Dr. Montgomery seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, minutes of the September 2, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook discussed upcoming events.

October 18, Public Master Plan Meeting

October 20, Council workshop on Complete Streets

October 23, Legislative Breakfast with state and federal delegations

October 25, EVFD Ribbon Cutting on the Training Facility

October 29, last day for walk/run club, kickball league ends

November 5, Annual Town of Easton/EUC Joint Annual Meeting

December 9, Planning Commission's Public Hearing on the Comprehensive Plan
Mayor Cook asked that the citizens not to put leaves in the road as they clog the stormdrains. Mayor Cook discussed the new plantings and other Public Works highlights. She stated that there was a sinkhole formed on Glebe Road and Public Works is installing a new pipe.
Mayor Cook stated that Fall Fest kicked off this weekend and the town was in full fall display, She stated the pumpkins will remain until after the META Conference.
Mayor Cook advised that the holiday parade participants has closed with a waiting list. The Town of Easton is hosting the Main Street Conference starting tomorrow. She encouraged everyone to lend a hand to visitors. She thanked EEDC for all their hard work.

Confirmation of Appointment of Aly Valentine to the Affordable Housing Board

Mayor Cook stated that Ms. Valentine is recently retired. She stated Ms. Valentine has attended some of the Board meetings and is excited to participate.
Upon motion from Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Ms. Valentine's appointment was confirmed.
Mayor Cook introduced Miguel Salinas and Nick Johnson from the Planning Department to discuss Social Pinpoint regarding things that are happening around town.
Mr. Salinas discussed Engage Easton, a community engagement tool. He stated it is a communication tool that shows planned and active projects.
Miguel Salinas and Nick Johnson presented Engage Easton, a place for community feedback on Town projects and developments. He stated the public can register and be updated by email. He stated you can access Engage Easton from Easton's homepage. Mr. Salinas discussed the site translating to other languages.
Mr. Montgomery asked what the timeline is to go live. Mr. Salinas stated a week from Tuesday for the Commercial Pipeline.

Items by Town Manager

Request to award bid for District Court building roof replacement.

Mr. Kitzrow gave a shout-out to Nick Johnson. He has been hard at work putting Engage Easton together.
Mr. Kitzrow discussed the District Court roof replacement. He stated there were eight respondents. He stated staff has recommended that The F.A. Taylor Company be awarded the contract in the amount of \$201, 820.
Mr. Montgomery discussed his concerns with the bid variances and asked what assurances the Facility Manager has to make sure the low-bid contractor can complete the project.
Mr. Newcomb discussed the process.
Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, the bid award to The F.A. Taylor Company was approved in the amount of \$201,820.

Items by Town Attorney.

Planning Commission cover letter for 2025 Zoning Amendments. Proposed 2025 Zoning Amendments.

The Town Attorney, Ms. VanEmburch stated she has two items this evening. She discussed the annual packet of zoning amendments and the letter in the packet from the Planning Commission. She stated the council may want to have a workshop.
President Abbatiello scheduled the workshop for the Zoning Amendments for 4:30 p.m., November 3, 2025.

Petition for Annexation of 34.167 acres +/- Parcels owned by Norris E. Taylor Contractor, Inc., Jeffrey H. Goodman and Patricia T. Goodman.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously; the annexation was referred to the Planning Commission for a recommendation.
Dr. Montgomery discussed his concerns with the proposed annexation site and the planned use of the property.

Presentation.

Ms. Dana Newman, Talbot County Free Library Director, to receive a Proclamation for the Library's 100th Anniversary and discuss Citizens' Academy Grant.
Mr. Rankin as the liaison to the Library Board, presented a Proclamation in celebration of Talbot County Free Library's 100th Anniversary.

Ms. Newnam, Library Director, discussed the Citizen Academy Small grant program. She encouraged everyone to participate in story time with the "Littles." She discussed the engagement of staff to help with the Academy. She stated the library would like to come in partnership with the town and county to help staff the library. She stated the grant is \$1,000 but needs the engagement of staff to teach classes about issues with the government. Ms. Newnam discussed their 100th Year Celebration and their service to the town and county. Ms. Newnam stated there will be a fundraising gala on October 16.

Mr. Darrin Pruitt, Chesapeake Creative Wellness to discuss their organization and how they are planning to serve Easton and the midshore.

Mr. Pruitt was present and discussed their program. He stated they use music and creative arts to help calm anxiety and PTSD. He stated there are natural ways to deliver calming measures with abnormal events. Mr. Pruitt discussed outreach efforts.

Public Hearing.

(cont'd.) PUBLIC HEARING to receive comments on Ord. 840, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE TO ADD CAMPAIGN FINANCE PROVISIONS."

At 6:25 p.m., President Abbatiello opened the scheduled public hearing that is being continued.

Mr. Lance Simon spoke in support of Ord. 840.

At 6:28 p.m., with no further comments, President Abbatiello closed the public hearing.

5:35 PM PUBLIC HEARING to obtain the views of citizens regarding Ord. 844, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE TOWN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026."

At 6:29 p.m., President Abbatiello opened the Public Hearing to receive comments on Ord. 844, regarding moving budgeted funds to cover Main Street Maryland's sponsorship from Human Resources.

President Abbatiello asked for public comments. There being none, President Abbatiello closed the public hearing 6:30 p.m.

Legislation.

Res. No. 6205, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH EASTON VILLAGE ON THE TRED AVON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC."

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Res. No. 6205 was approved.

Res. No. 6213, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE TOWN OF EASTON, MD EMPLOYEES 457 PLAN."

Upon motion by Mr. Rankin, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Res. No. 6213 was approved.

Res. No. 6214, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE TOWN OF EASTON, MD DEFINED CONTRIBUTION 401(a) RETIREMENT PLAN."

Upon motion by Mr. Rankin, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Res. No. 6214 was approved.

Ord. 840, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE TO ADD CAMPAIGN FINANCE PROVISIONS."

Mr. Rankin discussed proposed changes. He stated he appreciated comments and feedback. Ms. Curry thanked Mr. Simon and those that commented. She stated she is happy with the ordinance. Rev. Davis stated we should move forward. He stated that the main goal was to show transparency.

Dr. Montgomery stated he echoed his fellows' comments.

Upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously; Ord. 840 was approved following a roll call vote.

Ord. 844, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE TOWN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026."

Ms. Curry thanked the Mayor for finding the funding for the Maryland Main Street Conference.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Rankin and carried unanimously, Ord. 844 was approved.

Ord. No. 846, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO CARRY FORWARD CERTAIN CAPITAL FUND EXPENDITURES INTO FISCAL YEAR 2026."

The public hearing for Ordinance No. 846 was scheduled for October 20, 2025 at 5:35 p.m.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 8/6/25 through 8/27/25 totaling \$3,876,863.34.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry seconded by Dr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$3,876,863.34 were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

There were no public comments.

Committee Reports by Members of the Council.

Ms. Curry stated that EEDC staff, board and volunteers have worked tirelessly to pull this Main Street conference together.

Mr. Rankin congratulated Easton Free Library on their 100th Anniversary. He discussed their Centennial Celebration on October 16 at 6p.m.

Dr. Montgomery reported on the Talbot County Economic Commission meeting. He stated they updated on the hospital. Dr. Montgomery stated that Vetagro was an interesting topic.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Rankin thanked those that participated in the Town Hall meeting recently at the EVFD. He stated there was great feedback and general interest from the community. He stated the recording is on the town's Facebook page.

Dr. Montgomery stated he will be hosting the same for Ward 3 residents this Thursday, 7p.m., at the Easton Volunteer Fire Department. He urged the community to participate. Dr. Montgomery discussed the assassination of Charlie Kirk and expressed his condolences to his widow and his appreciation to his widow for stepping up.

Rev. Davis thanked Mayor Cook and Pres. Abbatiello for attending his brother's funeral and for the Council's collaboration to make the town look well. He stated his family was grateful and honored for their presence.

Pres. Abbatiello stated that Engage Easton is amazing. He discussed the town being transparent. He urged residents to support local organizations and to slow down and be mindful of pedestrians. Pres. Abbatiello stated he is urging the state to consider a speed camera and crosswalks on Route 50.

CLOSED SESSION: General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(4) To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State.

At 6:52 p.m., upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis, President Abbatiello moved into Closed Session.

At 7:04 p.m., upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis, President Abbatiello moved out of Closed Session.

Adjournment.

At 7:05 p.m. upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Dr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, President Abbatiello adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk