

Town Council Meeting

Date: June 18, 2026, 5:30 p.m. **Location:** Council Chambers, Easton Town Office, 14 S Harrison Street, Easton.

Attendees: Present were: Mayor JM Cook, President Don Abbatiello, Councilmembers Ms. Maureen Curry, Mr. Robert Rankin, Dr. David Montgomery, and Rev. Davis. Also, present were the Town Attorney Ms. Sharon VanEmburch, Chief of Police Alan Lowrey, Deputy Chief Greg Wright, Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch and Town Clerk Kathy Ruf.

I. Opening Proceedings

- **Call to Order:** At 5:30 p.m., President Abbatiello called the regularly scheduled meeting to order.
- **Opening remarks:** Meeting opened with remarks and the Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Ms. Maureen Curry, with intention to protect the community and town.
- **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:**
 - **Dates:** Workshop minutes – June 1, 2026
 - **Correction:** Mr. Rankin’s name misspelled; amendment to correct.
 - **Motion:** Upon motion by Mr. Rankin, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, the workshop minutes from June 1, 2026 were approved.
 - **Dates:** Regular Council meeting minutes - June 1, 2026
 - **Motion:** Upon motion by Mr. Rankin, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, the meeting minutes from June 1, 2026 were approved.

II. Main Topics Discussed

A. Conference and Community Recognition from Mayor Megan Cook

- **MML Conference**
 - Council expressed gratitude for mayor’s support in attending the Maryland Municipal League (MML) convention.
 - Councilmembers noted valuable learning and team-building with other municipalities.
 - Representation: Mr. VanEmburch participated as a speaker/panelist.
- **Community Achievements**
 - **Easton High School Clay Team:** State champions; watched by Dr. Montgomery in Sudlersville.
 - **Individual Student Recognition:** William Helen Austin Eater, 2nd and 3rd in state.
 - **Easton Police Department:** Two cadets (Officer Tucker Lytle and Officer Chase Fletcher) graduated, sworn in; to be introduced at July 6 meeting.
 - **Scott Messick:** Honored for 41 years of service with Easton/Easton Utilities.

B. Town Manager’s Updates: Mr. Kitzrow

- **Public Event Permit**
 - **Event:** Webb’s Hope Community Block Party
 - **Date/Time:** July 11, 2026, 2 PM—8 PM
 - **Location:** West Street between Glenwood Ave. and Grace St.
 - **Expected Attendance:** 50–100 guests.
 - **Logistics:** Assigned police officer for duration; road closure for event safety.
 - **Status:** Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Rankin and carried unanimously, the Public Event Permit was approved.

C. Public Hearing: Resolution 6222 – Schedule of Fees

Time: At 5:35 p.m., President Abbatiello opened the scheduled Public Hearing.

- **Purpose:** To revise the town’s license, application, permit, inspection, certificate, and other fee schedules.
- **Public Input:** No public comments submitted during hearing.
- **President Abbatiello closed the Public Hearing at 5:36 P.M.**

D. Legislation Discussion—Resolution 6222

1. **President Abbatiello brought Res. No. 6222 to the floor.**
2. **Mr. Kitzrow discussed Clerical Corrections and Current Rates from Ordinance No. 788.**
 - **Corrections (not increases) to:**
 - Municipal Recycling (Single: \$87.50/year; Multi: \$82/year; Commercial: \$290/year)
 - Code Enforcement Licenses: \$50/unit/year
 - Residential/Commercial Revisions: \$100–\$200, Trades \$50–\$100
 - Rental Unit Reinspection: \$50/unit
 - **Clarified:** These accuracy updates reflect current rates from Ord. 788 which instituted the ten-year phase-in increase.

2. Trash Collection (Commercial Solid Waste Fees)

- **Current and Proposed System:**
 - **Single Family/Multifamily:** No change.
 - **Commercial:**
 - **Option 1:** \$2,000/year per two-cubic-yard dumpster or for 2–4 (eventually revised to 1–4) 95-gallon tipper cans.
 - **Option 2 (new):** \$1,500/year for one 95-gallon tipper can (eventually amended).
 - **Each additional can over allotment:** +\$500 per can; additional dumpster, +\$2,000.
- **Concerns Raised:**
 - Dr. Montgomery: Objected to tiered commercial fee, argued the uniform \$2,000 fee is fair, less prone to system "gaming," and better for revenue.
 - Fears that allowing discounts incentivizes downsizing service without actually reducing trash output, possibly leading to overflow and underfunded budgets.
 - “Cost allocation study” not conducted; concern over basis for \$1,500 rate.
 - Briefed on operational details: downtown businesses receive 5 pickups/week due to high volume; rest of town, twice/week.
- **Department of Public Works/Staff Input:**
 - Barry Slaughter was present and confirmed current service, vehicle use, logistical considerations (automated vs. rear load trucks).
 - Indicated some exploration of possibly moving away from dumpsters in future; ongoing analysis.
 - Budget Impacts:
 - Estimated at least \$25,000 deficit with more businesses downsizing.
 - Correcting undercharged accounts could offset deficit (~\$10,000).
 - Acknowledgement that capital costs for trucks are socialized, not directly loaded into user fees for commercial/residential.
- **Council Discussion:**
 - Agreement this matter warrants a comprehensive review of the waste fee structure and service model—suggested for future agenda.
 - Consideration of private hauler options for businesses unsatisfied with town service/cost.

- General consensus to pass a revised structure for this budget cycle, but with a commitment to revisit for improved fairness and sustainability.

3. Impact Fees

- **Context:** Increase per 2022 Impact Fee Study and Ordinance 788 (approved June 6, 2022), scheduled phase-in of increases through 2031.
- **This Year’s Change:** Example—single-family home increased by \$310 over previous year in line with phase-in schedule.
- **Clarification:** Not a policy change, just following pre-determined trajectory; 2026 now, moving to next set of rates as planned.

E. Motions and Votes

1. Original Motion

- **Motion:** Rev. Davis to adopt Resolution 6222 as amended (with corrections).
- **Rationale:** Need to pass resolution to keep budget intact; insufficient lead time for extended debate.

2. Amendment—Dr. Montgomery

- **Proposed:** Eliminate \$1,500 “single tipper can” rate (all commercial users pay \$2,000/year), correct typographical error.
- **Motion Seconded:** Mr. Rankin
- **Roll Call Vote on Amendment:**
 - Ms. Curry: No
 - Mr. Rankin: Yes
 - Dr. Montgomery: Yes
 - Rev. Davis: Yes
 - President Abbatiello: No
 - **Outcome:** Amendment passes (3-2)

3. Final Vote: Resolution 6222 as Amended

- **Includes:** Clerical corrections + Dr. Montgomery’s amendment (all commercial users pay \$2,000/year, no \$1,500 rate).
- **Roll Call Vote:**
 - Ms. Curry: No
 - Mr. Rankin: Yes
 - Dr. Montgomery: Yes
 - Rev. Davis: Yes
 - President Abatiello: Yes
 - **Outcome:** Resolution passes (4-1)

F. Council & Committee Reports

- **Senior Citizens Task Force (Mr. Rankin):**
 - County Council held briefing on June 9, 2026.
 - Commitment to develop RFP for feasibility study for 24/7 low-barrier shelter for the homeless.
 - Update scheduled for July 6 Town Council meeting, presented by Nancy Andrew.
- **Economic Development (Ms. Curry):**
 - Cassandra VanHooser resigned; moving to Maryland Dept. of Commerce Office of Tourism. Acknowledgement and appreciation for her service.

G. Items by Members of Council

- **Upcoming Absence:** Ms. Curry stated she will be on vacation and not present July 6.
- **MML Conference Appreciation:** Members expressed value of conference attendance.
- **Reflections on Fee Schedule Discussion:**
 - Acknowledgement that discussions regarding the Schedule of Fees should begin earlier.
 - Emphasis on need for long-term, fair, and comprehensive waste collection policy.
 - Recognition that tonight's solution is a stopgap, not a final model.
- **Holiday Wishes:** Members wished all a happy July 4th and Juneteenth.
- **Special Thanks:**
 - Government officials (Governor Moore, Secretary Jacob Day, Congressman Harris) for engagement with Easton's concerns.
 - Mr. Rankin recognized Police/Fire/EMS for teamwork in locating a missing resident.
- **Announcements:**
 - Rev. Davis mentioned Freedom events July 1–5 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, St. Michael's.

IV. Adjournment

- **Time:** At 6:18 p.m., President Abbatiello adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting following a motion by Ms. Curry and seconded by Mr. Rankin and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk