

Town Council

Regular Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2026, 7:30 PM
1102 Unionville Church Road, Unionville, NC, US

Opening Proceedings

The Town Council Regular Meeting of the Town of Unionville was called to order on Monday, May 18, 2026, at 7:30 PM at Unionville Town Hall, 1102 Unionville Church Road, Unionville, NC. Mayor Baucom, Mayor Pro Tem Andrew Benton, Jeff Broadaway, Lana Kirkpatrick, Gene Price, Jaren Simpson, and staff were present. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by an invocation delivered by Councilwoman Lana Kirkpatrick.

Public Comment

One member of the public addressed the Council. Galen Williams, of Unionville Brief Road, spoke regarding the stop sign at the intersection of Unionville Indian Trail Road and CJ Thomas Road. Drawing on his professional background in data analytics, Mr. Williams described a 10-foot elevation change in the terrain at that location, which he argued creates a dangerous blind spot for drivers navigating the intersection. He stated that vehicles traveling eastbound on Unionville Indian Trail Road from US-601 would crest the hill at approximately 55 miles per hour without being visible to drivers already in the intersection. Mr. Williams expressed strong opposition to any removal of the existing stop sign and indicated he would not object to the addition of a stop sign on CJ Thomas Road.

Action Items

Consideration of Minutes — April 20, 2026 Regular Meeting & April 27, 2026 Strategic Planning & Budget Retreat Special Meeting

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2026, Regular Meeting and the April 27, 2026 Strategic Planning & Budget Retreat Special Meeting was made by Councilman Jaren Simpson and seconded by Councilwoman Lana Kirkpatrick. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report

Finance Officer Darrell Baucom presented the financial report. He noted the Town continues to maintain a strong cash position, though the money market rate has declined to approximately 2.73%, down from approximately 4% when the account was first established. He indicated he would explore other rate options.

For the current fiscal year, total revenue stands at \$596,000, with the majority derived from ad valorem taxes and franchise taxes. The report also reflected \$10,000 in sponsorships received for the America's 250th Celebration. Total expenses year-to-date are \$528,000, with the largest expenditures in payroll, UDO implementation, and contributions, resulting in a year-to-date excess of revenue over expenses of approximately \$67,000.

Finance Officer Baucom reviewed recent disbursements, including a payment of \$12,500 to JB Watson, approximately \$12,000 to Warwick Trucking for gravel work at the entrance road to Noel Williams Park, \$10,000 to the Council on Aging, \$20,000 to the Unionville Lions Club, and \$17,500 to Piedmont Recreation.

Motion to approve the pending bills as presented was made by Councilman Gene Price and seconded by Councilman Andrew Benton. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Rezoning Request ZC-26-01

The Council considered Rezoning Request ZC-26-01, with a public hearing having been conducted prior to the regular meeting. Clerk and Land Use Administrator Melody Braswell confirmed that all relevant information was contained in the staff report. She directed Council to the consistency and reasonableness statement language on pages 4 and 5 of the report as required for the motion.

Councilman Gene Price read the full motion for approval into the record. The motion stated that the subject parcel (PIN 09174102, located at 2919 Concord Highway) be rezoned from RA-40 to B-2, based on the request's compliance with the Town of Unionville's Comprehensive Plan adopted June 2022. The motion cited that the area falls within a designated commercial land use category permitting the B-2 General Use zoning designation, consistent with the Plan's goals of focusing new commercial development at strategic locations, including intersections along US Highway and Ridge Road/Boston Beach Road, and requiring all future development to comply with applicable land use and environmental regulations.

Motion to approve Rezoning ZC-26-01, rezoning parcel 09174102 at 2919 Concord Highway from RA-40 to B-2, including the full statement of consistency and reasonableness as read into the record, was made by Councilman Gene Price and seconded by Councilman Jaren Simpson. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Resolution RES-26-01 — A Resolution Establishing a Charitable Contributions Grant Program and Adopting Related Procedures

Clerk Braswell presented Resolution RES-26-01, which formalizes the Town's charitable contributions process into a structured annual grant cycle. The program, discussed at the prior strategic planning and budget retreat, would require applicant organizations to hold 501(c)(3) status and submit applications during a defined window opening June 1 of each year, with a deadline of June 30. Clerk Braswell noted a date error in the draft that she would correct. Applications would be reviewed for completeness by the Clerk and then scored by a grant review committee using an established rubric, with funding recommendations brought to the full Council for a vote at the August meeting.

Several amendments were proposed and accepted during discussion. Councilman Jeff Broadaway suggested that incomplete applications submitted before the deadline should be given the opportunity to be corrected prior to July 1, consistent with practices used by state grant boards. He also recommended switching the point values for "strategic alignment" and "financial responsibility" in the scoring rubric, placing greater weight on strategic alignment. Town Attorney Ken Helms recommended adding a fifth eligibility bullet point specifying that contributions must be permitted by North Carolina law. Clerk Braswell confirmed she would incorporate all of these changes. It was also clarified for the record that organizations previously receiving contributions, including the Unionville Lions Club, would need to reapply under the new program for the upcoming fiscal year.

Motion to approve Resolution RES-26-01, establishing the Charitable Contributions Grant Program with the amendments discussed, was made by Councilman Jeff Broadaway and seconded by Councilman Jaren Simpson. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Resolution RES-26-02 — A Resolution Endorsing Alternate 2: Proposed Realignment for the Unionville Indian Trail Road, Unionville Brief Road, and CJ Thomas Road Critical Intersection Improvement Project

Clerk Braswell presented the two alternatives under consideration for the critical intersection improvement project. Survey results indicated that 76.9% of respondents expressed support for Alternate 2, which involves a geometric realignment of the intersection. Alternate 1 would increase signage without changing the intersection's geometry.

Substantial discussion followed regarding safety concerns at the intersection, informed in part by the public comment from Mr. Williams earlier in the meeting. Councilman Jaren Simpson and Councilwoman Lana Kirkpatrick both expressed strong concern that removing the existing stop sign on eastbound Unionville Indian Trail Road under either alternative would create a serious hazard given the topography of the hill, which limits

sight lines. Councilwoman Kirkpatrick argued that a stop sign on that approach must be retained regardless of whether the hill is graded or the speed limit is reduced, noting the Town has limited authority to enforce speed.

Town Attorney Ken Helms cautioned that requiring the project to cut the hill down as part of the project would likely be rejected outright due to the major cost of retaining walls and earthwork and suggested the more practical and affordable alternative would be to retain or add a stop sign controlling the eastbound approach. Clerk Braswell confirmed that topographic concerns had already been communicated to the project engineers and that they were aware of the issue. She also noted Union County is scheduled to vote on the project at its June meeting, making timely action necessary.

After discussion, the Council reached consensus to endorse Alternate 2 with the amendment that an additional stop sign be required on the eastbound approach of Unionville Indian Trail Road due to the topographic blind spot at that location.

Motion to adopt Resolution RES-26-02 endorsing Alternate 2 for the intersection improvement project, amended to include the requirement of an additional stop sign on the eastbound approach of Unionville Indian Trail Road, was made by Councilman Jaren Simpson and seconded by Councilman Jeff Broadaway. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Resolution RES-26-03 — A Resolution Authorizing a Contract with N-Focus for the Preparation of a Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Clerk Braswell presented a proposal to engage N-Focus to prepare an updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan. She explained that as the UDO update has progressed, it has become apparent that amendments to the Town's future land use maps are needed, and that a comprehensive update would better support those changes and bring the maps into consistency with evolving state regulatory expectations. N-Focus offered the Town the same pricing provided to the Town of Fairview for a comparable project, at \$50,000 spread across the fiscal year.

Councilman Jeff Broadaway expressed reservations, noting the Council had previously declined this scope of work when initiating the UDO project and questioning what had changed. He also flagged that any public engagement sessions requiring N-Focus attendance would be billed at an additional \$2,000 per session, above the base contract price. Clerk Braswell acknowledged those concerns but stated her professional opinion was that the update could benefit the Town, particularly given increasing development pressure on the edges of Unionville and the limitations of the 2022 plan she had prepared internally.

Councilman Gene Price initially moved to approve the contract, then amended his motion to condition approval on an attempt to negotiate a lower price. Following advice from Town Attorney Ken Helms that the motion could simply be withdrawn, Councilman Price withdrew the motion. The Council then directed Clerk Braswell to return to N-Focus to explore whether the price could be negotiated before bringing the matter back for a decision.

Motion to table Resolution RES-26-03 pending further negotiation of the contract price with N-Focus was made by Councilman Jaren Simpson and seconded by Councilwoman Lana Kirkpatrick. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of Contract Renewal – N-Focus, Back-Up Land Use and Code Enforcement Services

Clerk Braswell presented the renewal of the existing N-Focus contract for backup land use and code enforcement services. She noted that hourly rates have not changed, remaining at \$135 per hour for code enforcement and \$145 per hour for backup land use services. Town Attorney Ken Helms confirmed the contract retains a 30-day termination provision.

Motion to approve the renewal of the existing contract with N-Focus for back-up land use and code enforcement services was made by Councilman Gene Price and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Andrew Benton. The motion carried unanimously.

Budget & Finance

Review of Proposed 2026-2027 Budget & Fee Schedule

Finance Officer Baucom presented the proposed 2026–2027 budget, noting it reflected decisions made during the April strategic planning and budget retreat. Key items include a capital outlay placeholder of \$500,000 for potential park improvements, subject to amendment; a transfer of \$60,000 in fire truck contributions to the public safety category; and the addition of \$67,000 for a fire department building, bringing total public safety appropriations to \$127,000. Training and travel line items were also increased to accommodate the Town Clerk's certification and related out-of-town expenses. The budget as proposed requires drawing approximately \$453,500 from fund balance and maintains the current two-cent tax rate.

Clerk Braswell then presented a proposed updated fee schedule. Her research focused on comparable municipalities in Union County, with particular attention to the Town of Fairview, whose fees she noted are generally \$100 rather than the Town's current \$50 base, representing an increase across the board. The new schedule also introduces fees for major subdivision applications, including a preliminary plat review fee based on lot count, a final plat review fee, and a letter of credit review fee, with engineering costs billed additionally as applicable. Administrative fees, such as a \$30 returned check fee, were also formalized in the schedule.

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrew Benton proposed increasing the major development permit application fee from \$750 to \$1,500, reasoning that large-scale projects such as major subdivisions demand significant staff time and that the cost should be borne by the corporate applicants rather than taxpayers. Clerk Braswell indicated she would incorporate that change.

Set Public Hearing — 2026-2027 Budget

Motion to set the public hearing for the 2026–2027 budget for June 15, 2026, at 7:00 PM was made by Councilman Jaren Simpson and seconded by Councilwoman Lana Kirkpatrick. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports & Updates

2026 Piedmont High School Outstanding Seniors & Top Athletes

The Mayor announced that the Town would be honoring the 2026 Piedmont High School outstanding seniors and top athletes at an award ceremony at Piedmont High School the following evening at 6:00 PM.

Update on Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Project

Clerk Braswell reported that the Planning Board has reviewed Articles 1 through 5 and Article 7 of the UDO draft. The reviewed articles cover purpose and authority, administration and boards, development procedures, development districts, the table of permitted uses, and subdivision regulations. She noted that consolidating subdivision regulations into Article 7 will significantly improve usability for both staff and the public, as current subdivision-related provisions are scattered across multiple sections of the existing ordinance.

Update on America's 250th Celebration

Councilman Gene Price provided an update on the Town's America's 250th (semi-quincentennial) celebration, planned for June 27. He praised the extensive work performed by Clerk Braswell and Deputy Clerk Sonya Gaddy in organizing the event. The program will open at 6:00 PM with a presentation of flags, prayer, and remarks from the Mayor and Dean Arp, followed by a performance by Chairmen of the Board beginning at 6:30 PM. Eleven food trucks have been confirmed, and a drone light show is planned for approximately 9:30 PM. Fireworks were considered but not pursued due to fire safety concerns.

Councilman Price reported that sponsorship contributions have been strong, including a \$5,000 contribution from a local business, three \$1,000 sponsors, and several \$500 sponsors. He encouraged all Council members and the public to spread the word and distribute event flyers.

Clerk Braswell added that WIXE Radio provided an in-kind sponsorship, and 56 advertising spots will begin airing on June 1. She and Councilman Price are scheduled to record a "Talk of the Town" segment on June 11. FastSigns also provided an in-kind sponsorship for banner printing, with banners expected to be displayed around town as soon as they are complete.

Other Business

No additional business was raised by Council members.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Melody Braswell
Clerk/Tax Collector/Land Use Administrator

Approved as to form:

R. Kenneth Helms, Jr., Town Attorney

Note: These minutes were drafted with the assistance of Clerk Minutes by HeyGov. All content was reviewed and approved by the Clerk/Tax Collector/Land Use Administrator prior to submission.