

Town Council Regular Meeting

Meeting Minutes

July 20, 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, July 20, 2026, at 7:30 PM at Unionville Town Hall, 1102 Unionville Church Road, Unionville, NC. All Council and staff were present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the invocation was delivered by Councilman Jeff Broadway.

Public Comment

No members of the public came forward to offer comment.

Action Items

1. Consideration of Minutes — June 15, 2026 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the June 15, 2026 Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes was made by Councilman Jeff Broadway and seconded by Councilman Jaren Simpson. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Financial Report

Finance Officer Darrell Baucom presented the financial report. He opened by highlighting two notable grant awards: the Town will receive a \$300,000 state grant applicable toward park improvements, against a budgeted \$500,000 for that purpose, and the fire department will separately receive \$150,000.

Regarding the prior fiscal year's performance, Finance Officer Baucom reported total revenues of approximately \$713,000, driven by investment income of \$104,000 (exceeding the \$98,000 budget), property taxes of \$231,000, franchise taxes of \$207,000, and sales and use tax of \$81,000. On the expense side, major expenditures included contributions of \$102,000, payroll and payroll taxes of approximately \$170,000, park operational support costs of approximately \$125,000–\$130,000, UDO implementation fees of approximately \$39,000, and America's 250th Celebration costs of just over \$40,000 (offset by \$10,000 in sponsorship revenue). Total expenses were approximately \$669,000, resulting in revenue over expenses of approximately \$44,000 for the fiscal year. Finance Officer Baucom also noted that Pinnacle Bank had agreed to increase the Town's deposit interest rate to a level more comparable to the municipal rate, strengthening the Town's cash position.

Finance Officer Baucom noted that the current month's pending bills totaling approximately \$60,000 represent one of the larger billing months in recent memory, reflecting a combination of remaining America's 250th Celebration invoices and routine start-of-fiscal-year expenses such as dues and insurance.

Motion to approve payment of the pending bills was made by Councilman Gene Price and seconded by Councilman Jaren Simpson. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Consideration of the Recommended Revisions to Town of Unionville's Personnel Handbook

Councilwoman Lana Kirkpatrick presented the recommended revisions to the Personnel Handbook, noting that the major changes had been discussed at the prior meeting. She identified one outstanding item: language

governing part-time employees had not yet been incorporated and would need to be added before the handbook is finalized.

Town Attorney Ken Helms raised several clarifying questions based on his review of the revised document. He noted an inconsistency in terminology, observing that the handbook references both "PTO" (paid time off) and "sick days," and sought confirmation that the intent of the revision was to merge sick leave and vacation leave into a unified PTO bank. Clerk/Tax Collector/Land Use Administrator Melody Braswell confirmed that was the intent and acknowledged that the language would need to be clarified accordingly. Attorney Helms and Clerk Braswell also discussed the applicability of PTO to part-time versus full-time employees, confirming that PTO accrual applies to full-time employees only, with a note that the handbook may contain some language requiring correction on this point.

Additionally, Attorney Helms raised a question regarding compensatory or flex time, noting that there may be legal limitations on the timeframe within which comp time must be used, potentially within the same workweek. Clerk Braswell agreed that this area had not been updated from the original handbook language and that it would need to be reviewed against current employment law standards. Attorney Helms offered to provide his annotated markup of the document to assist in finalizing the revisions. No vote was taken; the item will return to the Council once the outstanding edits have been incorporated.

4. Consideration of Recommendations for Vacant Planning Board Positions

Clerk Braswell presented the Planning Board's recommendations to fill three positions. She explained that Doug Helms's first term has expired and that he is willing to serve a second term. Steve Outen's second term has also expired; as he has reached his term limit, he is required to take a one-year hiatus. Whitney Wall, currently serving as an alternate member, was recommended by the Planning Board to assume a full voting member role to fill the vacancy left by Outen. John Hinson was recommended to assume the now-vacant alternate position. The Council considered each appointment individually.

a. Doug Helms recommended for a second term

Motion to appoint Doug Helms to a second term on the Planning Board was made by Councilman Jeff Broadaway and seconded by Councilman Jaren Simpson. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Whitney Wall recommended for Steve Outen's expiring second term

Motion to appoint Whitney Wall to the Planning Board to fill Steve Outen's expiring term was made by Mayor Pro Tem Andrew Benton and seconded by Councilman Jaren Simpson. The motion carried unanimously.

c. New alternate recommended: John Hinson

Motion to appoint John Hinson as the Planning Board alternate was made by Councilman Jeff Broadaway and seconded by Councilman Jaren Simpson. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports & Updates

5. Final Update on America's 250th Celebration

Councilman Gene Price delivered the final report on the America's 250th (Semi-Quincentennial) Celebration. The Council had originally authorized up to \$50,000 for the event. With \$10,000 in sponsorship contributions received — including \$5,000 from Unionville Market, along with contributions from War With Trucking, WIXE Radio, and Fun 1 Radio — the Town's net expenditure was \$31,600.36, reflecting responsible stewardship of public funds.

Councilman Price noted that despite heavy rain earlier in the evening that appeared to threaten the event's viability, social media outreach rallied the community and an estimated 2,000 attendees ultimately gathered for the celebration. He praised the quality and cleanliness of the crowd, remarking that only a single piece of litter was visible across the grounds following the event. He also recognized the considerable work performed to prepare the grounds, including drainage tile installation and road repairs. Councilman Price committed to

presenting a full list of volunteers and contributors at the August meeting. He extended particular thanks to Clerk Melody Braswell and Deputy Clerk Sonya Gaddy for their central role in making the event a success.

6. Update on Grounds Maintenance at Noel Williams Park

The Mayor reported that the Town has experienced staff turnover in grounds maintenance at Noel Williams Park and that an interim arrangement is currently in place. Clerk Braswell indicated that the Town is working with the recreation association to develop a formal request for bids, with the goal of posting the solicitation upon Council's approval.

The Mayor also brought to the Council's attention a significant maintenance concern: an area of approximately three to four acres on the west side of the park, situated over the septic drainfield, has become heavily overgrown. The vegetation has grown to a size where root intrusion into the drainage lines is a likely risk. Clerk Braswell noted that she had received one estimate for heavy brush-clearing work, while two other vendors who visited the site had not yet produced written estimates. Council members were encouraged to refer any contractors with heavy brush-cutting capability to Clerk Braswell for consideration ahead of the next meeting.

Councilman Jaren Simpson inquired whether the request for bids would also encompass general mowing. Clerk Braswell confirmed that the brush-clearing work and general grounds maintenance would be treated as separate procurements. The Mayor also noted that any grounds maintenance contract should incorporate a comprehensive turf management component, including fertilization, lime application, and seeding.

Attorney Helms observed that depending on the scope of responsibilities the Town assumes for grounds maintenance, the existing lease agreement with Piedmont Rec — which currently places grounds maintenance obligations on the recreation association — may need to be amended to reflect any adjusted financial responsibilities.

7. Charitable Contributions Grant Program Updates

Councilman Jeff Broadaway and Councilwoman Lana Kirkpatrick provided a brief status update on the Charitable Contributions Grant Program review. Both council members independently reviewed and scored the submitted grant applications and noted that the quality and thoroughness of the applications made the evaluation process a genuinely difficult one, reflecting well on the applying organizations. They are in the process of comparing their individual scores and will present a final funding recommendation to the full Council at the August meeting.

Other Business

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrew Benton raised the matter of staff compensation. He summarized that the Council had previously provided all three members of Town staff the opportunity to complete self-assessments documenting their achievements and areas of expertise over the prior year, and noted the considerable collective experience that the Town's staff brings. Based on that review, Mayor Pro-Tem Benton recommended a combined merit and cost-of-living adjustment of 6% for both part-time employees, and 7% for full-time employee Clerk Melody Braswell, retroactive to July 1, 2026. He noted that this increase is to be awarded in addition to the longevity bonus also being provided to staff.

Motion to approve a combined merit and COLA salary increase of 6% for both part-time Town staff employees and 7% for full-time employee Melody Braswell, effective July 1, 2026, retroactive as applicable, and inclusive of a longevity bonus, was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Andrew Benton and seconded by Gene Price. The motion carried unanimously.

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.