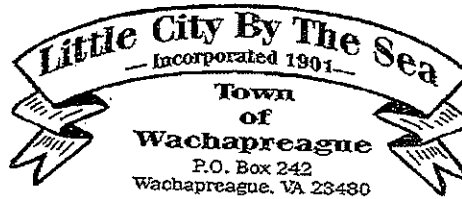




Marina
757-787-1930



Town Office
757-787-7117

Charles Elliott, Mayor

Town Council Present:

Sandie Puchalski, Vice Mayor
Robert Bilicki
Glenn Schagelin
Craig L. Baker
Aileen Joeckel
Robert Hipple

Clerk: Susan Springer

Guests: Board of Supervisors member
David Hart
Town Attorney Carl Bundick

**TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2025
VIMS SEASIDE HALL**

Town Council Meeting

Meeting began at 7:00 pm

- I. Mayor Charles Elliott called the meeting to order.**
- II. Councilman Glenn Schagelin led the prayer.**
- III. Mayor Charles Elliott led the Pledge of Allegiance.**
- IV. Public Comments.**

Guest Speaker Donald Hart, Accomack County Board of Supervisors representative for District 8, took the floor. Mr. Hart thanked the current Mayor, Council and past Council members present, for inviting him and for all their hard work for the Town. He proceeded to inform all present that the Board of Supervisors were supporting and moving forward the Town initiatives regarding the crucial issue of keeping the Coast Guard Station, and thanked John Joeckel for his efforts on this crucial issue and spoke on the emerging concerns on the issue of biosolids being injected below ground into aquifers. Mr. Hart proceeded to update all on the much needed repair of Willis Road, just outside of Town. Mr. Hart informed all present, however, that the Board of Supervisors would not get involved with internal affairs or issues within the Town. He rounded out his speaking by encouraging all to work together toward the good of the Town and continuing to move beneficial initiatives forward.

Town Clerk Springer read a statement to the Town Council prepared by resident Sue Fountain in which a request was made for the resignation of Mayor Elliott. A copy of the statement, the Mayor's cease and desist letter to her, and the signed Petition are attached to these minutes as Addendum 1.

Resident Judy Bilicki read a prepared statement that addressed the importance of the continuation of the Sewer Project and the broader concern of lack of experience and leadership of Mayor Elliott. A copy of the Statement is attached to these minutes as Addendum 2.

Resident Steve Joseph read a prepared statement that outlined the factual background of Mayor Elliott's recent actions. A copy of the Statement is attached to these minutes as Addendum 3.

Resident Aleena Elliott read a Statement in support of Mayor Elliott and outlined her concerns with the Council Members as well as her concerns of the costs associated with monthly sewer bills for those on fixed income. Mayor Elliott presented but did not read signature sheets in support of his action and leadership as Mayor. Mayor Elliott then read a prepared statement he made offering rebuttal of his actions and questioned the actions of the Council in regard to the Sewer Project. Mayor Elliott reiterated that the cease and desist letter sent to resident Sue Fountain was meant for her alone to see, and that he had no intention of resigning. No copy of the statement was submitted for inclusion in these minutes.

The Council then voted to bring forth New Business before continuing the meeting.

Motion made by Councilman Joeckel

Motion 2nd by Councilman Bilicki

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski		X	
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

Town Clerk Springer was asked to distribute a Mayoral Censor letter from the Council and did so assuring all members and the Mayor received a copy. Councilman Joeckel explained it was simply a letter of reprimand to Mayor Elliott and requested Town Clerk Springer read the Censor letter and the letter was read out loud. Mayor Elliott gave a copy of the letter to Town Attorney Carl Bundick and requested review. Mr. Bundick agreed to review and research Case Law, committing to write an opinion in the morning and answered the question that he represented the Town, and that according to Charter the Council was decision making body with the Mayor being primarily ceremonial.

Councilman Bilicki clarified the stipulations of the Grants received for Phase II Sewer, reviewing the history of all three, being that the first two grants are not income restrictive and only the third grant is designated for low and mid income households. Councilman Bilicki also clarified for the records that Mayor Elliott dismissed him from the Sewer Project Management in Town in front of Town Clerk Springer, this being after Mayor Elliott requested his assistance and was included in all correspondence and meeting with Councilman Bilicki on the project. No further discussion of this topic was given.

Councilman Schagelin requested Town Attorney Carl Bundick include all Council members when submitting his written opinion of the Censor letter to Mayor Elliott. Councilman Joeckel further explained that when Mayor Elliott has received official Town business communication he has repeated failed to distribute it to Town Council and that is why the Council is requesting Mr. Bundick's opinion be sent to the Council as well. Prior to close of discussion of this matter it was voted on to formalize the censure letter to Mayor Elliott.

Motion made by Councilman Joeckel

Motion 2nd by Councilman Bilicki

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski		X	
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

V. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Town Council Meeting – October 9, 2025

Motion made by Councilman Joeckel
Motion 2nd by Councilman Hipple

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski	X		
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

Approval of Town Council Meeting – July 10, 2025 – No Action taken

VI. Review of Financial Reports

Approval of Town of Wachapreague June 2025 – Year end Complete

Motion made by Councilman Bilicki
Motion 2nd by Vice Mayor Puchalski

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski	X		
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

Approval of Port of Wachapreague June 2025 – Year end Complete

Motion made by Councilman Joeckel
Motion 2nd by Councilman Schagelin

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski	X		
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

Approval of Town of Wachapreague – November 2025

Motion made by Councilman Schagelin
Motion 2nd by Vice Mayor Puchalski

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski	X		
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		

Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

Approval of Port of Wachapreague – November 2025

Motion made by Councilman Schagelin

Motion 2nd by Councilman Hipple

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski	X		
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Maintenance

Councilman Schagelin gave a status report on the 1986 trash truck, stating it has passed inspection, received an oil and fluids change and is available for back up. He also stated that all mowing equipment has been repaired and winterized and the Maintenance crew is working to keep the ditches clean of excess leaves and fall debris.

B. Powell Park

Vice Mayor Puchalski reported on the future plans to clean up the brush and repair the fence on the far side of the dog park as well as the Southside playground. This will occur in the spring and coincide with the fresh mulch on the playground.

C. Seaside Park

Councilman Baker reported on the recent cleaning and repair work done by residents Beth and Arthur Mendez, John McDermott and Steve and Liz Joseph. It greatly improved the Gazebo and all were thanked.

D. HRSD

Project Assistant Arthur Mendez reported on the steady progress of Phase II including a list of properties that chose to drop out for various reasons including the length of time the project has taken to get this far and he reported on the efforts to make sure all the pumps now in the Town's possession will be utilized for those who are close enough to be tied in to the existing collection system, giving full detail on logistics of this. It was clarified that the reason for the collection line was ran on Brooklyn Ave was to accommodate the commercial properties on the East side of Brooklyn, the waterfront, and Main Street in Phase I. This is what enables those properties abutting the collection system to be hooked up using the Grant money Steve Joseph worked hard prospecting for.

E. Derelict Properties

Nothing reported

F. Marina

Vice Mayor reported on the recent repair of some pilings on the dock and the need to repair some cross boards, estimating that cost at about \$800 for material and labor. The Council approved as below.

Motion made to approve a budget of \$1000 made by Councilman Hipple
 Motion 2nd by Councilman Glenn Schagelin

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski	X		
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

Vice Mayor Puchalski reported the weather has been too inclement to install the no wake signs, but anticipated they will be installed prior to start of the 2026 season, probably in early March 2026.

Councilman Hipple reported that he spoke directly with Board of Supervisors member Donald Hart regarding the dredging issue and the concerns for the Coast Guard Station closing. He also advised that all our State and Federal elected officials were aware of both situations and monitoring them. Vice Mayor Puchalski also spoke with the Coast Guard Captain of the Wachapreague Station who assure her the Coast Guard Station was not closing. Council discussed the benefits of having as many letters as possible sent to the Coast Guard and all elected officials.

G. Tourism

Councilman Joeckel reported on the closing of the Island House Restaurant and the possible listing price of over 2 million, she also reported on the number of entertainment venues for sale on the Peninsula, including several in Cape Charles, and Chincoteague. Discussion was given to the Finney Creek property owned by the TNC and the Atlantic Ave property owned by TNC. Councilman Joeckel noted Oyster's recent fishing pier and it's VPA and Tourism funding, citing the possibility of something similar on the Atlantic Ave TNC property.

H. Floodplain Administrator/CRS Coordinator/RAFT

Councilman Bilicki reported on the progress of the CFPF Grant, noting that the selected Engineering firm was Weston and Sampson Engineers. Councilman Hipple thanks Councilman Bilicki for keeping the Council so well informed of this Grant's progress. The Council voted on accepting the proposal from Weston and Sampson Engineers as follows:

Motion to accept the proposal made by Councilman Bilicki
 Motion 2nd from Council Hipple

	Yes	No	Absent
Sandie Puchalski	X		
Bob Bilicki	X		
Aileen Joeckel	X		
Craig Baker	X		
Robert Hipple	X		
Glenn Schagelin	X		
Charles Elliott – if in tie			

Councilman Bilicki also noted that the VA Energy Grant project was also moving forward with the intent being to provide a portable trailer and generator for emergency use of residents requiring use due to the medical needs and that the first \$6,000 has been received by the Town and deposited by the Town Treasurer.

I. Town Beautification

Councilman Joeckel reported on the Christmas lights stating the lights will be removed from the old garland and the new lights attached and Sean Fate would be hanging them most likely on the Friday after

Thanksgiving. She thanked resident Sue Fountain for generously covering the amount the purchase went over budget.

J. Safety/Security

Councilman Schagelin reported no issues with safety and security.

K. Historic District

Planning and Zoning Chair Jim Bell reported on the Dept of Historic Resources public meeting held Tuesday Oct 21, 2025 at VIMS Seaside, 6:30 pm and thanked those who attended. He stated the plan would now go before the Board December 11th and voted on. If approved it would then be sent to the National Park Service.

L. Streets and Drainage

Councilman Hipple reported road safety was good and give thanks to longtime former resident Randy Powell for documenting all streets, culverts and ditches, noting that with this information a maintenance plan can be formed. He reported on the South Ditch, noting that Town was fortunate to have County funding as that has now become unavailable to many towns. He noted that he would be coordinating with Bill Savage, Draining Coordinator for the County, and that right of entry still needed to be obtained from a few properties as well as application made to the Army Corp of Engineers for work on the South ditch as that is a tidal ditch. It was noted that Contractors were being considered and the plan would also benefit from either the Contractor, or the Town, having use a closed caption camera designed to examine closed storm drains and culverts.

M. Planning Commission

Planning and Zoning Chair Bell reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission has approved the Plan and once adopted by the Council the Plan will move forward after the first of year based on priorities.

VIII. New Business

Vice Mayor reported that both the Town and Port of Wachapreague needed an additional signer on the checking accounts, as Bob Williams had not been removed yet and a signee was needed in his place. Councilman Hipple agreed to replace Bob Williams as an authorized signor.

Mayor Elliott spoke on the plans he and resident Abby Taylor have made for a large event at the Gazebo for Christmas.

Councilman Baker reported on the possible use of participating in a PILOT program, with is Payment in lieu of Taxes, for the VIMS property. He reported that the Town had looked in to it in 2021 but decided at that time not to participate. He reported the loss of tax revenue, based on the total assessed value of the VIMS property, was \$1,629.45. VIMS pays the town \$1,200 a year for services. Councilman Baker also noted other benefits VIMS provides for the Town, not the least of which being free use of VIMS Seaside Hall for Council and Committee Meetings. It was noted that they do not pay for Fire Service, however they may donate to the Fire Dept., that is an unknown. It was also noted the benefit of employment for Town employees. Councilman Baker was thanked for his work. After further discussion it was decided this item would be studied further and revisited.

Councilman Bilicki spoke to Mayor Elliott and offered to work on their professional relationship over the next 30 days in an effort to improve it and offered to consider taking a leave of absence if that could not be achieved. There was no response to Mayor Elliott.

IX. Ajournement

Motion made by Glenn Schagelin to adjourn

Motion 2nd by Bob Bilicki

All in favor

Meeting Adjourned.

Statement to the Town Council of Wachapreague

Submitted by: Sue Fountain McMurray

Read by: Beth Mendez

Introduction

Due to my inability to attend this critically important town meeting, I have requested that Beth Mendez present my statement to the Town Council on my behalf. It is my hope that my thoughts and intentions are clearly conveyed through her reading.

Purpose of the Petition

The reason I initiated the petition to the Town Council was to formally ask Charles Elliot to resign from his position as Mayor. The petition has two primary objectives. First, it is meant to serve as a clear and visible sign of community support for any action the Council may decide to take. Second, it communicates the community's strong opposition to Mr. Elliot continuing as Mayor of Wachapreague.

Community Response

The reaction from the community was mixed. Many residents felt that the petition was long overdue and chose to sign it in support. Some community members agreed that Mr. Elliot does not possess the qualifications or leadership experience necessary for the role of Mayor. However, these individuals refrained from signing the petition because of their personal relationships with Mr. Elliot and his family. There were also members of the community who decided not to participate in the matter, preferring to avoid involvement in town politics altogether.

Clarifying Intent

I want to make it clear that the petition is not intended as a statement about Mr. Elliot's character, his role as a family man, or his abilities as a musician. The focus of the petition is solely on his lack of experience, indecisiveness, and insufficient support for the Town Council.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

This situation highlights the importance for residents to regularly attend and support Council meetings. It is essential that thorough due diligence is carried out, and any potential issues are addressed before decisions are made, rather than afterward. I believe strongly that once the Council has reached a decision and voted on an issue, any questions that arise should be raised and resolved promptly. (ROBERTS RULES)

Ramifications of the Petition

Following the submission of this petition, Charles Elliot responded by issuing a cease and desist letter, alleging defamation, slander, and libel. A copy of this letter has been attached to this statement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue J', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dsfountain11@msn.com

From: Charles Elliott <mayorofwachapreague@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2025 1:57 PM
To: Susan Fountain; Carl Bundick; lindquistfedlaw@gmail.com
Subject: Re: STOP

Please note the town attorney and another attorney is attached to this email

On Mon, Nov 3, 2025 at 1:54 PM Charles Elliott <mayorofwachapreague@gmail.com> wrote:

Charles Elliott
PO Box 263
Wachapreague, VA 23480
mayorofwachapreague@gmail.com

Date: November 3, 2025

Via Email and Certified Mail
Sue Fountain McMurray
PO Box 418
Wachapreague, VA 23480

Re: Cease and Desist – Defamation, Slander, and Libel

Dear Sue Fountain McMurray,

I am writing to formally demand that you immediately cease and desist from making and publishing any further false, defamatory, or misleading statements about me, whether verbally, in writing, or through any form of electronic communication, including but not limited to email, text messages, and social media platforms.

It has come to my attention that you have made false statements concerning me, multiple times including Statements made through email where a large number of people were attached“and that you have distributed these statements to mutual acquaintances via Facebook and email correspondence”]. These statements are entirely false, and you either knew or should have known that they were false at the time you made them.

Under Virginia law, specifically pursuant to Va. Code § 8.01-45 and related case law, defamatory statements that harm a person’s reputation or standing in the community constitute actionable defamation. Statements published in writing or through digital platforms constitute libel, and spoken statements constitute slander. Both forms are legally prohibited when made maliciously or negligently.

Your conduct has caused, and continues to cause, serious harm to my personal and professional reputation. I hereby demand that you:

1. Immediately cease and desist from making or publishing any further false or defamatory statements about me in any form;
2. Remove and retract all prior defamatory statements made by you, including but not limited to posts, comments, emails, and messages, within seven (7) days of receiving this letter; and
3. Provide me with written confirmation within ten (10) days that you have complied with these demands.

If you fail to comply, I will have no choice but to pursue all available legal remedies under Virginia law, including filing a civil action seeking monetary damages and injunctive relief for defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and any other applicable causes of action. This letter shall serve as formal notice of my intent to protect my rights and reputation by all lawful means.

Nothing contained herein shall be construed as a waiver of any rights or remedies available to me, all of which are expressly reserved.

Sincerely,
Charles Elliott

PETITION TO WACHAPREAGUE TOWN COUNCIL – RESIGNATION OF MAYOR CHARLES ELLIOT

Council members have dedicated several years to securing sewer access lines for Wachapreague through a multi-phase initiative. Phase I has been completed. Initial Phase II steps, which included scope of work, surveys, funding (with grants subject to time constraints), and preparation of bid packages, is also complete. On February 13, 2025, the Town Council approved a bidders list and voted to award the contract to the lowest bidder. Upon Bid receipt review and following the council's prior approval, a letter of intent was sent to the selected contractor, Grizzly, and homeowners were notified of the project's progress. This all transpired between the months of February and June.

As of November 2025, the following developments have occurred since the February Town Council meeting:

- Mayor Charles Elliot rescinded the Letter of Intent without majority Town Council approval. This decision was made while Bob Bilicki (Council Member and Project Manager) and Steve Joseph (Volunteer for the project) were unavailable. Neither party was informed of the mayor's actions.
 - o The mayor exceeded his authority in this matter.
 - o The mayor referenced a meeting regarding the issue but has not disclosed the attendees.
- Mayor Elliot cited concerns regarding Grizzly's ability to provide an appropriate bond for the project. It is noted that bonds are typically issued after a contract is signed. No input from the Town Council was sought prior to this action.
- Mayor Elliot further determined that Bob Bilicki would no longer oversee Phase II of the Sewer Project, assuming the role of project contact himself.
 - o There is uncertainty regarding the mayor's authority to make such decisions unilaterally. According to the Commonwealth Attorney for Accomack District, this authority does not reside with the mayor.
 - o Additionally, questions have arisen about Mayor Elliot's qualifications to manage the project, as he lacks field experience and was not involved in preparing the bid scope.

It is recommended that an individual with substantial experience, such as Steve Joseph or Bob Bilicki, oversee project scheduling, expedition, and budget management.

The mayor subsequently proposed awarding the contract to a different company rather than the original lowest bidder, as approved by the Council. Notably, the alternative

Petition To Wachapreague Town Council – Resignation of Mayor Charles Elliot.

contractor has a personal relationship with the mayor, raising concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest.

Due to these circumstances, the Town Council agreed to rebid the Phase II project:

- Additional efforts were required to extend impending deadlines, which placed additional strain on town resources.
- Grizzly declined to participate in the rebid process, citing concerns regarding the mayor's experience and professionalism.
- The bid was reissued, with a deadline set for September 11th.
- Of two bidders, only one submitted their materials on time; the second bid was received on September 17th, after the deadline.
- Based on the bids, the Town Council on September 11th voted to award the contract to Maynard Inc.
- An additional issue arose concerning the signing of the contract by Mayor Elliot thus further delaying the project.

10. At this point because of grant money deadlines, an emergency meeting was convened at Town Hall with Council Members and residents present.

11. After extensive discussion, the Council reaffirmed its decision from September 11th to award the contract to Maynard Inc.

12. When asked if he would sign the letter of intent, Mayor Elliot responded, "if I'm still Mayor." Not certain what his point of view was?

13. Due to the mayor's reluctance to sign approved documents, residents waited while the Town Clerk created the Letter of Intent and watched the Mayor and Assistant Mayor sign


14. The following day, Mayor Elliot rescinded his signature.

15. The Council Members proceeded to formally sign the letter of intent and contract, without involving the mayor in the process.

In summary, Mayor Elliot's actions have not aligned with the Town Council's directives, resulting in strained vendor and community relations, diminished morale among Council Members and staff, and undue criticism directed toward individuals who have contributed significantly to both the project and broader service activities.

In that Charles Elliot has not demonstrated effective leadership or unified our community during his tenure as Mayor. We respectfully ask the Town Council to address this by requesting his resignation so that further public proceedings can be avoided.

Petitioner: Sue Fountain McMurray

 11/3/2025

PETITION BY THE TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE RESIDENTS/HOMEOWNERS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF MAYOR CHARLES ELLIOT

Home Owner/Residents	Address	Comments
1 Gary McMurrah F	10 Brooklyn Ave	Shouldn't have been elected!
2 Claudia Reed H	11 Powell Ave	Lack of leadership experience
3 Stephen Joseph	6 Brooklyne	Lack of leadership
4 L. Alexis Zoss (H)	12 South Street	Loss of confidence in his leadership.
5 Deborah MacCormick	5 Gontor Street	Questionable -
6 Robert C. Williams	10 South Street	Lack of experience
7 Jennifer Carleton	10 South Street	Lack of experience, NO confidence
8 Anne J. Finski	8 Bayview Ave	No knowledge or drive to learn how to do the job.
9 Chabern White	3 Cust's Ave	
10 (S. J. Stone)	17 Powellton Ave	
11 (S. J. Stone)	17 Powellton Ave	
12 Margaret Morgan	16 Bayshore Ave	Not committed to what he's doing for Wachapreague
13 Steve Monds	20 Brooklyn Ave	Lack of experience, believes everyone is corrupt
OPEN		

RH - REGISTERED VOTER/HOME OWNER H - HOME OWNER RE - RESIDENT

PETITION BY THE TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE RESIDENTS/HOMEOWNERS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF MAYOR CHARLES ELLIOT

	Home Owner/Residents	Address	Comments
14	Elysha Jester	6 Brooklyng Ave	
15	Cindy J. Staffer	11 Lee St.	back up support for the town & their positive interests
16	Donna Staff	444 Main St	Integrity/Ethics
17	JOE ALTHOFF	2 Pearl St	
18	Ruth H. H. H.	14 Brooklyng Ave	
19	Paul R. Johnson	14 Brooklyng Ave	
20	Whitney Bishop	8 Main St.	Lack of experience & willingness to listen
21	Michelle H. H.	17 Main St.	
22	Jameson Thompson	11 Richards Ave	
23	Dean Thompson	11 Rich. Ave	
24	Janet S. O'Leary	17 Richardson Ave	independent
25	Wendy Savage	12 Brooklyng	11-10-25
26	Paul Savage	12 Brooklyng Ave	

PETITION BY THE TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE RESIDENTS/HOMEOWNERS FOR THE RESIGNATION OF MAYOR CHARLES ELLIOT

Home Owner/Residents	Address	Comments
27 K 28 F. B. B...	24 Buxton Ave	
K 29 A. B...	24 Paulston Ave	
K 30 B...	7 Lee St	
R 31 D...	7 Lee St	
R 32 C...	11 Lee St	
R 33 L...	20 Brooklyn	Charles seems to be against the town rather than for it.
R 34 M...	3 Cassis St.	
R 35 B...	4 Blacklyn Ave	
H 36 J...	41 Main St.	
H 37 T...	41 Main St.	
H 38 L...	8 Lincoln Ave	
H 39 B...	5 Lee Street	LOSS OF CONFIDENCE, CANNOT TRUST FOR HIMSELF, NO INTEGRITY!!!

Judy Bilicki
8 Main St.

Comments

Point One:

I think we often forget that Stages 1 and 2 of the sewer project are not, and should not be, the end of the sewer initiative in our town. As a coastal community facing rising sea levels, we must ultimately provide the option for all residents who wish to do so to replace their septic systems with sewer connections. To achieve this goal, we need to seek funding from sources beyond routine town operations.

Point Two:

Our town's governance relies heavily on volunteers. We are fortunate to have residents with such strong expertise who generously dedicate their personal time to projects like the sewer system, various town committees, and town council activities.

We must carefully steward our two most important resources: the funding entrusted to us and the people who volunteer their time.

In recent months, I believe both of these resources have been put at risk. We need a mayor who can responsibly manage these assets while making difficult decisions in a way that unites—rather than divides—our community. When volunteers are asked to lead a project, only to have their work unexpectedly overturned, be accused of collusion without evidence, or blamed for mistakes that haven't occurred, we risk discouraging anyone from volunteering in the future.

I don't typically sign petitions—it's not my usual way of addressing issues—but when I learned that the mayor had issued a cease and desist letter to the resident who began this petition, I felt compelled to sign.

In our country, the First Amendment protects several relevant rights:

1. Freedom of speech
2. Freedom of assembly
3. The right to petition the government for redress of grievances

Organizing, signing, or circulating a petition is core political speech, and courts have consistently viewed attempts by public officials to suppress such activity as potential First Amendment violations. It deeply concerns me that we would attempt to silence a resident in our town for exercising these rights.

For these reasons, I believe we need a change in how our mayor is fulfilling his role. It's not for me to say exactly how that change should occur, but for the benefit of our community, I believe this change is necessary. Thank you.

1st Invoicing to
SAY that my [collaboration] with Mayor Elliott
has always been professional + I would like him
that said

I. INTRODUCTION

This complaint is submitted to formally document and report a pattern of conduct by Mayor Elliott that has undermined the effective operation of town government, violated established procedures, and created an atmosphere of hostility and dysfunction within the Town. The actions described below raise significant concerns regarding abuse of authority, failure to follow legal and procedural requirements, and conduct unbecoming of an elected official.

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND ALLEGATIONS

- 1. Unfounded Accusations Against the Entire Council**
At his first meeting following his initial election, Mayor Elliott openly accused the entire Town Council of wrongdoing and announced his intent to investigate all prior Council actions, without presenting any evidence to support such claims.
 - 2. Recording Conversations Without Notice**
Mayor Elliott informed a Councilman that he had been recording conversations with individuals without their knowledge or consent, raising significant ethical and potential legal concerns.
 - 3. Unauthorized Cancellation of Contract**
Mayor Elliott unilaterally cancelled an existing contract with a contractor without obtaining Council approval. This action caused delays to an ongoing town project and negatively affected the town's business reputation.
 - 4. Attempt to Obtain an Affidavit Alleging Improper Conduct**
Mayor Elliott requested that a senior councilmember sign an affidavit asserting that the councilmember had acted improperly in relation to the sewer project, without factual basis or Council authorization.
 - 5. Secret Communications With the Town Attorney**
Mayor Elliott contacted the town attorney and engaged in undisclosed discussions regarding town matters, withholding this information from the Council and thereby obstructing the Council's ability to make informed decisions.
 - 6. Inappropriate Request for Law Enforcement Presence**
Mayor Elliott requested a sheriff to attend a council meeting, claiming he required protection. This created unnecessary alarm and disruption for councilmembers and residents.
-

7. Cease-and-Desist Letter to a Private Citizen

Mayor Elliott sent a cease-and-desist letter to resident Sue Fountain, threatening legal action in response to her statement that he was unfit to serve as mayor. This raises concerns related to intimidation and infringement upon citizens' rights to free speech.

8. Refusal to Perform Mayoral Duties

Mayor Elliott refused to participate in the Phase 2 project and declined to act in his official capacity during two council meetings, impeding the progress of town business and failing to fulfill his responsibilities under his elected office.

sept 17th
via email

III. IMPACT ON TOWN OPERATIONS

The actions described above have disrupted orderly governance, eroded public trust, created tension between elected officials, and hampered the town's ability to conduct business effectively. The Mayor's conduct, individually and collectively, reflects a disregard for established procedures, ethical standards, and the collaborative nature required for municipal leadership.

IV. REQUEST FOR ACTION

The complainant respectfully requests that the appropriate oversight body, ethics commission, or council authority:

1. Review the conduct of Mayor Elliott as outlined in this complaint.
2. Conduct any necessary investigation or fact-finding.
3. Determine whether violations of law, policy, or ethical standards have occurred.
4. Implement corrective or disciplinary measures as permitted under governing rules and statutes.

From: Wachapreague Town Council
PO Box 242
Wachapreague, Virginia 23480

November 13, 2025

To: Charles Elliott, Mayor
PO Box 242
Wachapreague, Virginia 23480

Subject: Formal Censure/Reprimand for Conduct

Dear Mayor Elliott,

The Wachapreague Town Council has reviewed your recent actions and determined that they are inconsistent with the ethical standards and responsibilities expected of an elected official serving the citizens of the Town of Wachapreague, Virginia.

Specifically, the following conduct has been deemed inappropriate:

1. Mayor Elliott exceeded his authority
 - A. Unilaterally cancelled a Letter of Intent approved by town council for Phase Two of the sewer project without consultation with Town Council
 - B. Mayor Elliot's qualifications to manage the project, as he lacks field experience and was not involved in preparing the bid scope.
2. Mayor Elliott refused to sign as head of town government the finalized Letter of Intent, approved by Town Council, authorizing the sewer Phase Two project commencement.
3. Mayor Elliot's actions have not aligned with the Town Council's directives, resulting in strained vendor and community relations, diminished morale among Council Members and staff, and undue criticism directed toward individuals who have contributed significantly to both the project and broader service activities.

After careful deliberation, the Town Council has decided to issue this formal censure/reprimand to express our disapproval of your actions and to reaffirm the importance of maintaining the integrity and trust of this office.

This censure/reprimand acts as a formal record of the Town Council's position and serves to remind you of your responsibilities to maintain appropriate standards of conduct as an elected representative. We urge you to take immediate corrective action to ensure that such behavior is not repeated in the future.

Failure to address this matter appropriately may result in further disciplinary actions.

We trust that you will take this matter seriously and work to restore the confidence of the citizens and Town Council of the Town of Wachapreague that you serve.

Sincerely,

~~Sandie Puchalski, Vice Mayor~~
Robert Bilicki
Glenn Schagelin
~~Craig Baker~~
Robert Hipple
Aileen Joeckel

Robert Bilicki
Glenn Schagelin
Robert E. Hipple Jr.
Aileen Joeckel
