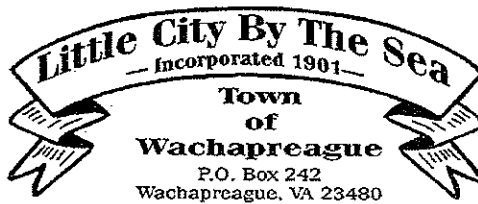




Marina
757-787-1930



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

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 11, 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.**

Business Owner Chris Wardius spoke on the Island House Restaurant closing, noting that it would have big impact on Tourism, however there is a big momentum to go forward with tourism and noted the sewer progress, the General Store, Art Community, Lilliston's and the Campground. He thanked Councilman Joeckel for her hard work on tourism and hoped momentum would continue through the winter and good news would come on the Island House soon. He noted the negative impact the Old Marina has, in particular the state of disrepair it is in the eye sore it has become. He noted the listing price of \$1.9 million and the lack of movement on a sale and suggested perhaps the owner could be persuaded to at least perform some clean up to the site.

V. Mayor's Year End Report and goals for 2026

Mayor Elliott opened his review by reading an email received November 13, 2025 by Councilman Hipple requesting a yearend review of accomplishments and next year's goals. Mayor Elliott reviewed his accomplishments for 2025 as well as the Town goals for 2026,

Highlights of 2025; Improved security at Town Hall, research and introduction of the "mosquito dunk" program in lieu of expensive commercial chemical spraying, and active participation in regulating poultry farms, in particular the ammonia produced by them. Recruiting Abby Taylor to coordinate the 4th of July celebration, assisting Town Employees with the brush trimming and salting, continued contact with Verizon, Team Mobile and Sprint to being a tower to the Town and formal letters to Verizon and FCC citing the need for better mobile service in Town. Mayor Elliott his involvement in bringing Councilman Hipple on to the Council. He noted his involvement with Steve Joseph in receiving the third SERCAP Grant for sewer work.

Mayor Elliott cited his letters written to the Coast Guard regarding dredging concerns and concerns with staffing at the Wachapreague Coast Guard Station. He cited his involvement in protesting the pumping of chicken waste in to the ground. He noted conversations with the Nature Conservancy and his efforts to move forward with the Town taking possession of several TNC properties. Mayor Elliott noted his forming the Drains committee and noted he personally drives around Town looking for Ordinance violations and safety concerns. He noted his efforts to obtain better pay for employees as well as his work with the elderly in Town, often performing tasks for them for free. He noted many Councilman and residents also assist residents of the Town with their maintenance and repair needs.

Goals for 2026; Mayor Elliott cited his desire to look at ways to make revenue so taxes would not have to be raised and citing revenue producing events such as farm markets, fall festivals, music events, movies in the park and kayaking events and reaching out to the black community to establish a parade or black history group. He cited having the Coast Guard more involved with the Town as well as the Town being more involved with VIMS. He noted the art talent in the Town and his desire to enhance art events. He also cited a desire to hold night sky events, enhance bird watching and pickleball. He closed by citing his desire to replenish the population and make the Town more appealing to families to move here. He closed by stating his desire to see all the talent in Town put to good through working and volunteering together and mowing toward the goals set for in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

VI. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Town Council Public Meeting on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan – November 13, 2025

Motion made by Councilman Joeckel
 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 Town Council Meeting – November 13, 2025

Minor revisions recommended by Councilman Bilicki.

Discussion was given to PILOT report presented in November’s meeting minutes by Councilman Baker. Council agreed to place it on the January Agenda to revisit and review numbers.

Motion to accept as revised 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			

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

VII. Review of Financial Reports

Approval of Town of Wachapreague November 2025

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 November 2025

Motion made by Councilman Schagelin
 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			

VIII. Unfinished Business

A. Maintenance

Discussion was given to going forward with the lettering the garbage truck, in light of the news of Island House closing. Council agreed to go forward with pricing at least. Councilman Schagelin reported the Maintenance crew are doing well and the equipment is running well. He noted some concern over their reluctance to wear safety vests all the time when working. Councilman Schagelin stated he would work with Clerk Springer to write an affidavit to their job description outline the need to wear PPE, and request they sign it. Discussion was given to wearing high visibility shirts and sweatshirts and Councilman Schagelin agreed to check in to that possibility. Councilman Schagelin noted he would be still looking at selling the old garbage truck, noting the value of the engine.

B. Powell Park

Vice Mayor Puchalski reported continued use of the pickleball courts and reiterated her plans for maintenance of the dog park in the spring and would utilize Ritchie Puchalski and Town Maintenance crews. Spring would also bring fresh mulch to the playground areas.

C. Seaside Park

Councilman Baker noted Mayor Elliott recently had receptacles replaced at the Gazebo, which he did not know about and further noted that this is often a problem with Mayor Elliott stepping in on projects and not informing those in charge of the project. Councilman Baker had no further updates on Seaside Park.

D. HRSD

Project Assistant Arthur Mendez reported on the steady progress of Phase II noting that the goal for Grant #1 had been met by the deadline with all necessary invoices having been submitted and approved by HRSD, with payment expected shortly. He noted all permits had been approved by HRSD with the exception of a few and he and John L Maynard were working toward satisfying everything for their approval. He further noted that the pump supplier would be on site soon to test the pumps, at which time with HRSD's approval to turn the valve, the final connection to the house could be made the system would be live, and once the final permits were approved the project would be very near completion. Councilman Schagelin inquired if there was one pump leftover, to which Mr. Mendez responded yes and explained the pump came in a water tight cannister, so storage would not be difficult. Vice Mayor Puchalski noted the Powell Park concession stand may have room to store it.

Councilman Bilicki reviews the Town's 1947 Charter Item 10, the portion of the Charter giving the Town authority to collect and dispose of sewage.

Councilman Bilicki spoke on the recent rate information shared by HRSD noting that the focus for Wachapreague is on Section 2) small communities and unmetered pumps:

Single family units - \$2.40 per day

Customers with grinder pumps - \$18.60 per thousand gallon, the category Wachapreague is in.

Councilman Bilicki reviews the rate structure of neighboring Town Exmore, explaining the differences between the Towns.

Councilman Bilicki then reviews portions of the original sewer design for the Town, reviewing the projected growth areas and the 2020 design that allowed for 85,370 gallons of sewage being handled by the Pump Station specific by HRSD and currently in place. He stressed the need to look to the future and the projected areas to install the next section of the 2" collection system.

Councilman Schagelin asked if the intent was for the Town to adopt a billing system. Council Bilicki answered not necessarily, just that the Town Charter permitted it and other Towns had adopted billing systems, with service fees applied. Discussion pursued on the average per day use of a household, and varying calculations, all coming in under the \$80 per month that had been erroneously circulated.

All documents mentioned in this section are included in these minutes as Addendum #1.

E. Derelict Properties

Mayor Elliott discussed the property at 7 Center St that has been a concern, assuring Council that he had made contact and clean up was promised. Councilman Joeckel shared a recent email from Patricia Bragg where she noted other towns who were recently named in the 9 most peaceful town on the Atlantic Coast. Councilman Joeckel used this opportunity to start of a dialogue of "not only the most peaceful but also the prettiest" and the possibility of Historic designation Grants, which would be likelier when owner's restored their homes in an appropriate manner.

F. Marina

Vice Mayor Puchalski reported on a large boat that is currently unattended, with no functioning pump. She noted the liability on the Town should it sink, and anticipated action may need to be taken before long. Councilman Schagelin inquired if she had contact information, and Vice Mayor Puchalski responded she did and has been in touch, but unfortunately he had not made any progress as promised. She continued if he does not come down and repair or replace the pumps, the next step would be to request he remove his boat by the end of his lease, in March. Council Bilicki noted that the Council would need to consider their course

of action should this become an abandoned vessel. Follow-up will occur at the next Council Meeting. Lastly she noted a few more dock cross beams would need to be repaired/replaced, but that there was wood on hand that could be used.

G. Tourism

Councilman Joeckel opened her report with the news that the CBES requested to hold their 2026 bicycle event at Wachapreague. She had met with Merriweather Payne to gather some preliminary information including the planned date of October 24th. She noted the event typically brings in 1200 riders, approximately 70-80 from outside of the peninsula and that registration is generally the Friday before and the morning of the ride at the local Fire House, and would include white tents in the park by Eastern Shore Event Rentals who would need electric and water. Councilman Joeckel also expressed Merriweather Payne’s interested in having local artisans set up tents and displays. She noted there would be about 8-10 porta potties, and a map outlining parking. She informed all if anyone did not want parking in front of their house they could place a sign requesting no parking, and noted that there would attempt to arrang e parking in Powell Park, the carnival grounds, the Front Row Properties lots and the Nature Conservancy lot. She noted Merriweather Payne would be talking to Sean Fate about the possibility of the Fire Dept. selling hot dogs and refreshments at the end of the race and noted that there is usually an Oyster Roast that evening at a different location. It was noted an application would need to completed for rental of each Park, and a deposit would need to be made with each application.

Motion to approve the CBES bicycle event 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			

Councilman Joeckel share information on the upcoming Tourism Summit to be held February 24, 2026 at the Roswald School in Cape Charles. She noted the key speaker would be working with the Wachapreague Inn and how important it was for Wachapreague to represented and to represent all businesses. The summit is free and does include lunch. Discussion then moved to the Island House, with Councilman Joeckel noting Blake Johnson had recently stopped in the Chamber Office and did state that the Island House is not on the market yet, and in fact has not even had it appraised yet, although he has had some inquiry on it already. It was noted that there are many commercial properties for sale on the Peninsula, including many in Cape Charles. It was also noted that Cape Charles receives \$100,000 annually for Festive Fridays, indicating just how much events cost to put on. Councilman Bilicki proposed moving the annual budget meetings to starting in March in 2026, in anticipation of extra effort that may be needed to formulate the next budget, with extra effort placed on increased marketing and revenue.

H. Floodplain Administrator/CRS Coordinator/RAFT

Councilman Bilicki reviewed the status of the two Grants he wrote in November, noting Governor Youngin has given approval for the CFPF Grant. He reported that he returned the Weston and Sampson contract with 29 key points he wanted clarified and was in contact with TNC for assistance in strengthening the conceptual estimates for the resiliency plan so the Town received the benefits of well thought out and individualized plan that assures value for the price, then noting that once that is completed he will return to working on the \$10,000 Virginia Energy Grant. Councilman Bilicki noted that his goal was two complete two more grant applications sometime in April, for Community Resources. Councilman Hipple thanked Councilman Bilicki for all his work and attention to detail in the Weston & Sampson Agreement, especially in light of Town Attorney

Carl Bundick being asked to review the Agreement but noting that the Council heard nothing from the Mr. Bundick or the Mayor on the Agreement, noting that the Mayor just recently signed the Agreement in the last few days. Councilman Bilicki closed his report by requesting a closed session when the Town Council adjourned citing a desire to further discuss the Mayor and Council's goals to work together harmoniously toward mutual goals in the coming year.

Motion to move to Executive Session following the Town Council Meeting made by Councilman Bilicki.
 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			

I. Town Beautification

No updates.

J. Safety/Security

Councilman Schagelin reported he gave a visual inspection to the damage the Elliott family reported done to their Jeep and Trailer, and took pictures. He noted he had not been able to inspect Alena's yet but once able he will make a small report and leave at Town Hall. He noted he did reach out to the Sheriff's Office to request a copy of the vandalism report given by Mayor Elliott, however the Sheriff's Dept. would not issue a copy. Councilman Hipple noted that the curb at the corner of the General Store still needed to be painted yellow, pending temperatures above 40. Councilman Joeckel questioned the legality and safety of riding skateboards on Main Street, discussion ensued among Council as to the safety and scope of the Ordinance against skateboarding. Councilman Hipple noted that if any resident or business sustains vandalism they should be encouraged to report it to their insurance company, file a police report, and report to Councilman Schagelin or Town Hall.

K. Historic District

Councilman Joeckel reported that as of this date, Wachapreague has been accepted by the State Historic Board and would be placed on the National Park Service's registry. She noted that was not individual houses, but rather the Town and the Town could go forward with some signage highlighting the designation. Councilman Hipple inquired if better pictures could be taken of the houses that were included in the historic designation and discussion was given to the that, with a conclusion that more flattering photos could be taken and included in a feature on the website and future promotional materials.

L. Streets and Drainage

Councilman Hipple reported road safety was good and noted several street lights had been replaced, noting that he checks streets often and Matt Moore of VDOT also checks the streets on a regular basis. Mayor Elliott passed a list of his concerns to Councilman Hipple, who said he would look into the list, and noted that VDOT would not perform roadway patchwork on very small areas. Councilman Hipple reported he had been meeting and talking with Bill Savag of Accomack County and reiterated the fact that of the 26 towns, Wachapreague was one of the very few to be receiving funds and support from Accomack County on ditch repair and maintenance, noting that 19 had dropped out due to inability to receive support from adjacent property owners. Councilman Hipple noted that there were still a few of Wachapreague's owners on the South ditch project who might be of concern, however the adjacent farm property had no issues with access and Accomack County was fine with progressing in that manner. Councilman Hipple noted he would be meeting with Bill Savage again soon to begin the process of filing an application with the Army Corp of Engineers. Discussion was given to the properties with bridges across the ditches and it was noted the

South Ditch bridges were not significant however the North Ditch contained a large bridge that would even accommodate equipment, however at this time the concentration is on the South Ditch. Discussion moved to the two drain lines at the waterfront, one at the Marina and one at Front Row Properties. It was determined the Front Row property line contains an old fuel tank owned by Vardvarkas of the Campground. Possible use of State Brownfield funding was noted as a possibility, as was the fact that a right of way cannot be obstructed and with permission can be cleared. It was noted the tank was above ground, and so would be easy to remove, with no soil remediation needed. Councilman Hipple noted he was planning to bid all the South Ditch and Waterfront together, to maximize monies spent, and noted that there was much other culvert work to be done and planned to reach out and research other funding sources. Councilman Hipple clarified his request for a year end Mayor's report by reading the entire email conversation of his request and concluding by explaining that while each Council member reported monthly, the Mayor did not report monthly and he thought the Mayor would like a chance to highlight what benefits the Town, residents and businesses received in the past year. Councilman Bilicki closed the conversation by reading the Town Charter, Chapter 5 page 42, Administration and Government, a copy of which is attached to these Meeting Minutes as Addendum #2, which delegates the responsibility and management of Officers, Agents and Employees solely to the Council. Mayor Elliott expressed he did not feel this was entirely true and all agreed to discuss further in Executive Session.

M. Planning Commission

Council Joeckel read Resolution TC-25-01, the Adoption of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, as recommended and endorsed by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Motion made to accept Resolution TC-25-01 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			

Continued Old Business

Discussion was brought up regarding the Wachapreague sign at the old Hickman Lumber Site, noting the need for repair, and if left unrepaired, the sign could not be built back as it is, as it is an approved non-conforming sign, and a replacement sign would need to conform. It was agreed that funds to repair would come from the Tourism budget. It was determined Murel Gonzales was the contractor who had previously repaired it and former Councilman Steve Joseph had his contact information. Town Clerk Springer offered to take the contact information from Mr. Joseph and try and reach out to him.

VIII. New Business

Councilman Bilicki highlighted the upcoming Wachapreague Holiday Stroll Organized by the Gallery and the General Store, to be held December 18, 2025 5pm to 8 pm, which has grown to include the Gallery, The General Store, the Wachapreague Inn, Lilliston Seafood and the Island House. The event will promote the Commercial Shopping opportunities in Town. Councilman Bilicki contacted a local waterman for a unique feature which will be a crab pot Christmas tree, to be illuminated, on Seaside Park, opposite the Wachapreague Inn, by Lilliston's stand. Councilman Bilicki completed a Seaside Park rental application which includes a deposit and requested Council support.

Motion made by Councilman Joeckel to accept the rental application and support the Stroll event

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			

Organizer Judy Bilicki expressed the intent to do something fun and unifying for the Town, and noted they were not able to move the event to coincide with the Mayor’s Santa Claus arrival, but hoped the Holiday Stroll will be an even bigger event next year and it could be organized to coincide with the Mayor’s Santa Clause arrival event. It was noted by Vice Mayor Puchalski that former Mayor Fred Janci did offer to be a strolling Santa at this year’s Holiday Stroll if the organizers chose to have one.

IX. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilman Bilicki to adjourn.

Motion 2nd by Councilman Schagelin. All in favor.

Executive Session