



**REGULAR**

**MEETING *MINUTES***

**MAYODAN TOWN COUNCIL**

**February 9, 2026**

**6:00 p.m.**

**James A. Collins Municipal Building**

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL PRESENT:**

Mayor Dwight Lake  
Mayor ProTem John Miller  
Doug Cardwell  
Letitia Goard  
Buck Shelton

**ABSENT:**

Melanie Barnes

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Town Attorney Eugene Russell  
Town Manager Melody Shuler  
Town Clerk Sarah Hopper

The Mayodan Town Council met at 6:00 pm on February 9, 2026, in the Council room of the James A. Collins Municipal Building, and with a quorum present, Mayor Lake called the meeting to order.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor and Town Council members.

**RECOGNITION:**

- 1. Recognition of Macy Hurd for Successfully Earning a certification as a playground inspector.**
- 2. Recognition new police officer Jordan Neal**

**Mayor Lake recognized Rockingham County Manager Lance Metzler and thanked him for attending the meeting.**

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS:**

- A. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Agenda Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2026
  - b. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2026
- B. Budget Amendments
- C. Amended Capital Project Ordinance Town Hall Conversion and Police Department Expansion

**Motion** by Councilmember Goard, seconded by Councilmember Shelton, to approve the consent Agenda, as presented.

Ayes: Councilmembers Cardwell, Goard, Miller, and Shelton

Nays: None

Motion carried unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. Washington Mills Park Design**

Ed McLean of Destination by Design presented an update to Council regarding continued design development for Phase 1 of Washington Mills Park. The presentation included a refined site layout incorporating feedback received from Council at the December meeting. Ben Schwabof STITCH Design Shop also participated, providing additional details and answering questions while presenting a slideshow outlining the proposed layout and planned improvements.

Phase 1 focuses on core park infrastructure and recreational amenities identified through awarded grant funding. Proposed improvements include pickleball courts, basketball courts, approximately 1,320 linear feet of multi-use trail, approximately 2,080 linear feet of natural surface trail, river access improvements, and stormwater bioretention.

Although the existing building is not included in Phase 1 construction, the project team provided background information to assist with long-term planning. This included a preliminary scope of work and cost estimate to convert the structure into an open-air flexible space, provide restrooms, and address safety concerns, as well as conceptual alternatives illustrating potential future uses of the building. No action was requested from Council regarding the building at this time.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the project team requested Council approval to move forward with the Phase 1 Park Construction layout at Washington Mills Park.

Council asked how the roof issues were identified and whether an inspection report was available. Representatives from STITCH Design explained that a structural engineer, architect, and local contractor conducted a visual inspection of the building, including drone footage of the roof. They observed ponding water, low areas, and signs of water intrusion, particularly where wood joists meet the masonry walls. Interior areas also showed signs of damage and need for reinforcement. The estimated roof repair cost is approximately \$21,000, with additional structural repairs needed at certain columns and girders.

Council inquired about the extent of decking damage and whether the recently installed TPO roof was failing. The presenters clarified that the TPO membrane itself is not failing; however, ponding water was observed in certain areas, making the roof more susceptible to future issues. Approximately 20–25% of the decking showed visible concerns during inspection. They confirmed that architectural and structural reports, along with drone footage, were included in the packet and could be shared again for review. Motion by Councilmember Goard, seconded by Councilmember Miller, to approve moving forward with Phase 1.

Ayes: Councilmember Cardwell, Goard, Miller and Shelton

Nays: None

Motion carried unanimously

### **B. Amended Strategic Priorities**

As part of the FY 26-27 Budgeting process, staff reviewed the Town's strategic priorities to ensure goals and proposed funding for the upcoming fiscal year. During this review, it was determined that certain priorities required adjustments to timing and sequencing in order to make the plan more functional and achievable within a reasonable timeframe.

One proposed revision involves the transparency initiative previously listed under Infrastructure (Priority #4). Staff recommended elevating this item to a town-wide goal rather than limiting it to infrastructure, as it includes broader communication efforts such as website improvements, newsletters, and expanded social media engagement.

Staff also proposed conducting a community survey in the next fiscal year to better assess how the Town is serving residents, identify areas for improvement, and gather feedback on citizen priorities. The results would help guide service delivery and future planning efforts.

Under Workforce Analysis (Priority #4), staff recommended expanding the focus to include employee retention and benefits. Proposed initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year include conducting an updated compensation and market rate review to ensure pay remains competitive, continuing to evaluate employee benefits, and identifying opportunities to strengthen the Town's competitiveness in the labor market. Additionally, staff emphasized aligning performance evaluations, merit increases, and career progression with the adopted pay plan and integrating retention strategies into the annual budgeting process.

Staff confirmed that funding associated with established timelines has been appropriately aligned and that no proposed adjustments would negatively impact grant or externally funded project deadlines. Where appropriate, modest scheduling flexibility has been incorporated to provide sufficient time to accomplish stated goals effectively.

Town Manager Shuler stated that a comprehensive group training on the evaluation process has already been conducted, including department heads, to outline expectations and reduce concerns about the new system. She noted that a refresher training will be held prior to implementation, with continued guidance provided during the evaluation cycle to ensure consistency.

Councilmember Goad emphasized the importance of properly modeling the process from the outset, including coaching supervisors and ensuring evaluations are delivered appropriately to prevent poor habits from developing.

Town Manager Shuler acknowledged this is a significant change for employees and stressed the importance of delivering constructive feedback appropriately while maintaining accountability. She confirmed the timeline remains on track to implement the pay plan by April 27, pending completion of final preparations.

Town Manager Shuler explained that she has obtained quotes for a new pay plan study, which would begin in July. The consultant would collect updated information on all positions and revise job descriptions, noting that the Town's job descriptions have not been formally updated since 2013. She stated that, in practice, many organizations update pay plans approximately every three years due to market changes and evolving job responsibilities.

Council questioned the need for another pay plan so soon after the previous study. Town Manager Shuler explained that the prior plan began in 2022 but was not adopted until 2024, raising concerns about data accuracy. She also noted that job descriptions were not updated and some positions do not align with the current structure, recommending a comprehensive review to ensure an accurate compensation framework.

Council asked whether a different firm would be used. Town Manager Shuler confirmed that a new firm would be selected, noting she has received one quote and is seeking another, with further discussion planned for the retreat.

Council then discussed adopting the amended strategic priorities. It was clarified that the action would update the existing plan. Members agreed it may be best to consider adoption at the budget retreat after reviewing departmental and capital requests.

**Motion** by Councilmember Cardwell, seconded by Councilmember Miller, to table until after budget retreat.

Ayes: Councilmembers Cardwell, Goard, Miller, and Shelton

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **C. Appoint Ross Vaden to Madison Mayodan Recreation Commission**

A vacancy currently exists on the Madison–Mayodan Recreation Commission. Sarah spoke with Ross Vaden regarding the open position, and Mr. Vaden expressed his willingness to serve if appointed. Tracy Blackard had agreed to continue serving on the Commission until a replacement was identified. Council considered the appointment of Ross Vaden to fill the vacancy on the Madison–Mayodan Recreation Commission.

**Motion** by Councilmember Cardwell, seconded by Councilmember Miller, to appoint Ross Vaden to the Madison-Maodan Recreation Commission.

Ayes: Councilmembers Cardwell, Goard, Miller, and Shelton

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **D. Western Rockingham Chamber of Commerce Update**

Mavis Dillon, President of the Western Rockingham Chamber of Commerce, thanked the Mayor, Board, Town Manager, and department heads for their continued support and partnership. She shared that Walmart has rejoined the Chamber after several years of non-membership and expressed appreciation to Chief Knight for assisting with that connection. She also thanked Dylan and the Fire Department for assisting her family's restaurant with a recent event.

Ms. Dillon reported that the Chamber recently hired Maria Bridges to assist with website management and marketing efforts. She noted that Chamber membership has increased, with 32 new members this year compared to 25 the previous year.

She announced that the Chamber's annual dinner will be held on April 16 at White Oak Terrace, with limited seating available. She also promoted the Roco Is Hong Foundation's upcoming countywide chili cook-off, which will rotate locations annually. She encouraged community participation, noting the event will take place from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., with a \$25 registration fee and a \$100 cash prize for the winner.

Mavis Dillon also shared information about the formation of the Western Rockingham Alliance, a proposed nonprofit organization that will operate under the Chamber's umbrella. She explained that while chambers are 501(c)(6) organizations, this new entity will be established as a nonprofit to expand opportunities for grant funding and community-based initiatives benefiting Madison, Mayodan, and Stoneville. The Alliance's mission will focus broadly on beautification, revitalization, quality-of-life improvements, and inclusive community programs, particularly important given Rockingham County's Tier One designation.

She noted that once the nonprofit's tax identification number is received, fundraising efforts will begin, including corporate partnerships, grant applications, and outreach to industries operating in the area. She

emphasized the importance of volunteer support and regional collaboration to ensure the organization's success.

Ms. Dillon also highlighted several upcoming initiatives, including participation in the America 250 celebration by recognizing local industries that manufacture products in Western Rockingham, as well as launching a youth leadership program in partnership with local schools. The program will include industry tours, leadership development opportunities, and future job shadowing experiences.

In response to questions about long-term operations, Ms. Dillon explained that while a nonprofit in North Carolina can legally operate with only one officer, the Alliance will establish a full board. She has secured interest from several community members, including Christy Smith, and is in discussions with others who are rooted in the community and bring professional experience. The goal is to implement staggered terms, such as three-year cycles, to ensure continuity and stability.

She stated that the Alliance's focus will be community-wide impact rather than scholarships. The intent is to pursue grants and matching funds for local projects, such as beautification efforts, murals, or community improvements. For example, the Alliance could potentially provide matching funds for municipal or community projects to help leverage additional investment. She emphasized that the organization's purpose is to serve the broader community and support meaningful local initiatives. She concluded by expressing appreciation for the Town's continued partnership and support.

#### **E. Resolution of Endorsement for LWF Planning Grant**

Council discussed applying for a Land and Water Fund planning grant to evaluate long-term opportunities related to the Mayo River, including water supply infrastructure, dam removal alternatives, and river restoration concepts. The total grant amount would be \$75,000, with \$56,250 requested from LWF and a required Town match of \$18,750. The project would support the ongoing river restoration efforts and address potential impacts to the Town's water intake.

**Motion** by Councilmember Cardwell, seconded by Councilmember Shelton, to approve **the Resolution of Endorsement for LWF Planning Grant**

Ayes: Councilmembers Cardwell, Goard, Miller, and Shelton

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Lake recognized Lindsay Pegg in attendance and thanked her for being present once again.

#### **MANAGER/ COUNCIL COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Town Manager Shuler reported that she attended a meeting regarding the multi-use path project and confirmed that the Town's required match remains \$156,000, as originally anticipated. If the agreement is adopted within the next couple of months, approximately \$86,000 will need to be budgeted to cover the remaining balance, which is less than initially projected.

In response to questions about the timeline, she stated that right-of-way acquisition is currently projected to begin in 2030, with construction anticipated in 2032. Although the toll credit pilot program aims to accelerate projects, the timeline has not yet been adjusted. She noted that as the project progresses and is further evaluated, there may be opportunities to move the schedule forward.

Councilmember Goard suggested considering whether the Town should change the mayoral term from two years to four years, noting that many neighboring municipalities have already made that transition. The member stated that running every two years may not be practical and that extending the term could

provide greater continuity. It was acknowledged that such a change would require a charter amendment and approval by the legislature.

Council briefly discussed pros and cons of the proposal, including concerns about extending terms if an ineffective mayor were elected. No action was taken, and the item was presented for future consideration.

Councilmember Goard asked for an update regarding the Madison–Mayodan Recreation State Championships.

Councilmember Miller stated the Mayodan Merchants Association will host a carnival May 7–9 (Mother’s Day weekend) in the grassy area behind Mavis Tire near Walmart. There is no overhead cost to the merchants; they will assist with promotion, and once a financial threshold is met, a percentage of the proceeds will benefit the Merchants Association to support events such as the Hayodan Festival.

Councilmember Cardwell thanked the Public Works Department for their efforts during recent weather events and for their work maintaining the roads.

The Mayor announced plans to attend the North Carolina Mayors Association meeting and the Essentials of Municipal Government class. Council also discussed the upcoming State Dinner on March 25, with members indicating interest in attending.

**Motion** by Councilmember Goard, seconded by Councilmember Shelton, to enter into closed session to consult with the Attorney N.C.G.S. 143.318.11(a)(3)] and discuss personnel-related matter N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6)]  
Ayes: Councilmembers Cardwell, Goard, Miller, and Shelton.

Nays: None

Motion Carried.

Council entered closed session at 7:04 p.m.

**Motion** by Councilmember Shelton, seconded by Councilmember Goard, to return to open session.

Ayes: Councilmembers Cardwell, Goard, Miller, and Shelton

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Council returned to open session at 8:04 p.m.

**Motion** by Councilmember Shelton, seconded by Councilmember Goard, to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes: Councilmembers Cardwell, Goard, Miller, and Shelton

Nays: None.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

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Sarah Hopper, Town Clerk

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E. Dwight Lake, Mayor