AGENDA
STONEVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
Regular Meeting
December 1, 2026 – 6:00 PM
Council Chambers at 101 Smith St.

CALL TO ORDER – MAYOR GALVAN

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & INVOCATION

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 1, 2026 AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular Meeting - November 5, 2026
2. Recessed Regular Meeting – November 10, 2026

OLD BUSINESS – NONE

RECOGNITION

1. Community Volunteers, Local Businesses, and Town Staff for Christmas Decorating

PUBLIC COMMENTS

NEW BUSINESS

1. Consideration and Approval of the 2027 Town Council Meeting Schedule
2. Consideration and Approval of the 2027 Town Holiday Schedule
3. Consideration of $500.00 Downtown Façade Improvement Grant for 117 N Henry St
4. Consideration and Approval of Quotes for the Purchase of Fire Department Thermal Imaging Cameras
5. Consideration and Approval of Quotes for the Purchase of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) for Fire Department Vehicles

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Christmas Tree Lighting** – Friday, December 4 at 6:00 p.m.
- **Christmas Parade** – Saturday, December 5 at 3:00 p.m.
- **Senior Bingo** – Thursday, December 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- **Curbside Leaf Collection** – Ends Monday, December 14
- **Special Town Council Meeting** – Tuesday, December 15
- **Christmas Holiday** – Town Hall Closed Wednesday, December 23 through Friday, December 25
- **New Year's Holiday** – Town Hall Closed Friday, January 1
- **Next Town Council Meeting** – Tuesday, January 5 at 6:00 p.m.

CLOSING REMARKS BY MAYOR GALVAN

ADJOURNMENT

Stoneville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 5, 2026
6:00 PM – Council Chambers

Regular Meeting

Members Present: Mayor Kathy Stanley-Galvan and Council Members Curt Bennett, Henry Thornton, Jessica Smith, and Lee Shelton. Members Absent: Councilwoman Daisy Smith. Staff Present: Town Administrator Michael Sands, Town Clerk Deleia Hutcherson, Finance Officer Mary Ann Greer, Police Chief Rebecca Dixon, and Town Attorney Eugene Russell.

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, and Invocation: Mayor Galvan welcomed the assembly and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., following the Pledge of Allegiance and the Invocation.

Mayor's Statement Regarding Ethics Investigation: The following is reproduced verbatim as transcribed:

"At the October Council Meeting, the Council addressed a recent incident involving Councilman Lee Shelton and charges for an alleged assault. Many community members were and remain concerned about this incident.

"In view of the serious questions involved, the Council voted to initiate an investigation to determine whether Councilman Shelton's conduct violated the Town Code of Ethics and Conduct.

"Pursuant to that vote, and the Town Code of Ethics and Conduct, the Town authorized an independent investigation by a licensed North Carolina attorney. That attorney now indicates that he will be ready to report his findings to the Council on Tuesday, November 10th. This will be an open meeting held here in the Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m. This meeting will be live streamed.

"There is no action scheduled at tonight's meeting regarding this matter as the Council follows the steps set out in the Town Code of Ethics and Conduct and awaits the independent investigator's report of his findings."

Agenda: Councilman Thornton made a motion to approve the November 5, 2026 agenda. Seconded by Councilman Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: Councilman Thornton made a motion to approve the October 6, 2026 regular meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilman Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

Pocket Park Renovations at 110 N. Henry Street - Staff reported that, at the Council's direction several months earlier, the Town had sought bids for the possible addition of restroom facilities at the pocket park. Five companies visited the site and reviewed the plans, and two submitted bids: Byer's Enterprise of King, North Carolina, in the amount of $180,312, and Cirrus Construction of Eden,

Advisory Board recommended redirecting the funds designated for the Pocket Park toward maintenance and other improvements, including the pathway and general park improvements, rather than proceeding with the restroom project. The Town Administrator noted that slightly more than $68,000 remained designated for the Pocket Park.

Councilwoman Jessica Smith clarified that requesting bids did not indicate Council had approved or committed to installing restrooms; the funds were grant funds restricted to use at the park. It was noted that the Town does not have the budget for that project. Council members expressed a preference to spend the funds on improvements the Town can afford and maintain, such as seating, lighting, beautification, and plantings requiring less maintenance. It was also noted that costs continue to rise and that the funds should be put to use rather than left unspent.

Staff reminded the Council that the partial brick wall and structure on the left side of the park, which is open at the back and has broken away from the concrete pad, will need to be secured for safety and liability reasons. Staff confirmed that this work would be considered part of the park's maintenance and may be paid from the designated funds. The cost has not yet been determined, and the Park Advisory Board is expected to address the matter in its recommendations.

Councilwoman Jessica Smith made a motion that, due to insufficient funds to complete the restroom project, the Town proceed to obtain the bids or quotes needed to secure the area from liability and to improve the pathways and plantings. Seconded by Councilman Thornton. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

Bruce Land – 212 North Henry Street: Mr. Land spoke about the walking trail and areas around the park, stating that overgrown brush and vegetation made portions of the trail uncomfortable for some residents to use. He offered to organize volunteers to help clear brush and suggested that individuals completing community service might also assist. He identified various areas needing attention. The Town Administrator stated that volunteer efforts and park improvements were included in the Parks and Recreation study and that the Advisory Board would develop a plan identifying steps and timing after reviewing the study.

Roger Hodge – 114 King Street: Mr. Hodge raised concerns regarding alleged conduct involving Councilman Shelton. The Mayor and Town Attorney reminded Mr. Hodge to address the Council as a whole and to keep comments relevant to Town business. Mr. Hodge concluded by expressing his view that Council members should comply with the law and held to a high standard of conduct.

New Business:

Presentation of Recreation Study - Town Administrator Michael Sands introduced Ms. Lisa Wolff, Senior Consultant with BerryDunn. He noted her more than 30 years of local government experience, certification as a Parks and Recreation professional, prior service as Assistant Director of Recreation and Parks for the City of Burlington, and experience with planning, programming, organizational development, feasibility studies, master planning, and grant-related assistance. Ms. Wolff presented the findings and recommendations developed through the Town's recreation planning process.

Study Process and Community Engagement: Ms. Wolff thanked the Council and explained that the Town approached her firm in the fall of 2025 about developing a vision for parks and recreation. The study followed five steps: project initiation; data collection; community engagement and profile development; site analysis of the Town's three parks with a subconsultant; and development of the plan and recommendations. Stakeholder input came from the Park Advisory Board, Council members, community partners, regional organizations such as the Rockingham County Chamber of Commerce, the Madison-Mayodan parks and recreation department, and economic development professionals. Ms. Wolff described approximately 1,500 engagement touch points, including a kickoff meeting, an online survey, a postcard mailer, social media promotion, stakeholder interviews, and outreach at the May Day Festival.

Community Profile and Key Challenges: Ms. Wolff reviewed demographic information included in the study, noting that the Town's population was approximately 1,300, with a 2024 Census-based figure of 1,243 within the Town limits. The study identified a median age of 46.2 years, compared with 39.1 statewide; median household income of $43,194, compared with $72,388 statewide; and approximately 29 percent of residents below the poverty level, compared with approximately 13 percent statewide. She also reviewed household, population, and veteran demographic information. Ms. Wolff identified challenges raised during engagement, including preserving Stoneville's small-town character, competing with nearby recreation providers, limited financial and operational resources, serving existing and growing neighborhoods equitably, improving connectivity, meeting varied and accessible recreational needs, and supporting the downtown environment.

Study Themes and Recommendations: Ms. Wolff identified four recurring themes: (1) building upon existing assets; (2) strengthening regional collaboration; (3) aligning growth with the Town's capacity; and (4) advancing community and economic vitality. Recommendations included reinvesting in Memorial Park, Friendship Park, and the downtown Pocket Park; preserving the Town's small-town character; leveraging regional facilities and natural resources; exploring partnerships with Madison-Mayodan, schools, state parks, businesses, community organizations, and volunteers; and considering shared facility use, volunteer support, and improved marketing and promotion. She encouraged Council and the Advisory Board to prioritize achievable projects, phase investments over time, identify staffing and maintenance responsibilities, and consider long-term operating and lifecycle costs.

Connectivity, Downtown, and Implementation: Ms. Wolff discussed opportunities to improve walking and trail connections, including a potential connection between downtown and Memorial Park, coordination with the North Carolina Department of Transportation when roadwork is planned, and consideration of sidewalk connectivity as new development occurs. The study's implementation priorities included regional partnerships; maximizing existing facilities and resources; staffing, maintenance, and organizational capacity; community identity and quality of life; economic development and tourism; programming and events; marketing and public awareness; trails and outdoor recreation; grant opportunities; and volunteerism and stewardship. The recommendations were organized into short-, mid-, and long-term timeframes. Ms. Wolff noted that having a recreation study and documented community engagement may position the Town to pursue grants. She offered to provide information on potential state and private grant programs, while noting that grant applications can require significant time and may include matching-fund requirements.

Discussion of Survey Results and Advisory Board Participation: Council questioned the survey methodology and the distinction between the 70 statistically valid surveys reported in the study and the broader engagement total. Ms. Wolff explained that the 70 surveys were mailed to a random selection of residents within the Town limits and represented the statistically valid survey; other outreach and conversations contributed to the broader engagement total. She noted that some of the May Day Festival feedback may have come from individuals outside the Town limits and that the statistically valid survey was the strongest quantitative representation of residents within the Town. Council also discussed how interested residents could apply to serve on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, how members are appointed, and whether meeting times during the workday could limit participation. It was suggested that the Town clearly communicate the process for becoming involved and consider ways to encourage broader participation. Ms. Wolff stated that Advisory Board meetings are open to the public and that nonmembers may attend and provide comments.

Conceptual Town Center Park and Priorities: Council discussed the conceptual town center park illustration included in the study, including a possible location near the post office and bank property, potential parking, and the possibility of implementing improvements in phases. Ms. Wolff explained that the illustration was conceptual and would require further evaluation, public input, and engineering/design work before implementation. She stated that the concept could be useful in pursuing grant funding and that projects could be identified and phased based on community priorities and grant requirements. Council members discussed the importance of considering parking and the effect of events on downtown traffic. Members also emphasized that the Town should maintain and improve existing facilities before undertaking major capital projects.

Mr. Jerry Smith, a member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board suggested that Council consider whether a portion of the Town's reserve funds could support recreation staffing, including a full-time recreation director. No action was taken on funding or staffing.

Next Steps and Acknowledgments: Council members thanked Ms. Wolff, Town staff, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and community participants for their work on the study. It was suggested that the complete study packet, including supporting charts, survey information, and the conceptual illustration, be made available on the Town's website. Council indicated that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should review the study, identify recommended priorities, and return to Council with proposed actions and funding needs. Ms. Wolff reiterated that improvements should be prioritized and implemented in a sustainable manner. No formal motion was made to adopt the study or approve funding. Copy incorporated into minutes.

Consideration of $500.00 Downtown Façade Improvement Grant for 573 Subs & More - The Town Administrator presented a grant application from 573 Subs and More requesting $500 to assist with exterior renovations completed at the downtown property located at 119 N Henry Street. Staff recommended approval, noting that funds had been allocated in the budget for the façade improvement grant program. Councilwoman Jessica Smith made a motion to approve the $500 Downtown Façade Improvement Grant as presented by staff. Seconded by Councilman Bennett. Motion carried unanimously. Copy incorporated into minutes.

Consideration of Quotes for Smith Street Sidewalk Repairs – The Town Administrator reported that sections of sidewalk along Smith Street near the library were in disrepair and that a person had fallen in the area. Three concrete providers were contacted; two submitted quotes. The quotes were $8,800 from Teague's Concrete and $13,600 from Hundley's Concrete. The proposed work included sidewalk replacement and addressing drainage from the library by directing runoff beneath the sidewalk through piping. Staff had contacted the County Manager because the library property and certain adjoining sidewalk sections were County responsibilities. Staff had also contacted Duke Energy regarding two utility-pole locations that may have contributed to sidewalk issues.

Council discussed the condition of the adjoining sidewalk, liability concerns, whether the County would participate in the work, and the need to avoid leaving a known hazard unaddressed. Council discussed allowing the County one week to respond regarding whether it would fund or arrange repairs to its portion. Councilwoman Jessica Smith made a motion to proceed with securing Teague's Concrete for the $8,800 sidewalk replacement, contingent upon the County responding within one week of the meeting as to whether it would contribute funds or arrange repair of its section during the same timeframe. If the County did not respond within that week, the Town would proceed. Seconded by Councilman Thornton. Motion carried unanimously. Copy incorporated into minutes.

Consideration of Christmas Bonuses and Longevity Pay Disbursements – The Town Administrator presented the proposed Christmas bonus schedule of $500 for each full-time employee and $250 for each part-time employee. The total Christmas bonus amount shown on the spreadsheet was $10,000. The Council was advised that the bonuses had been included in the original budget as a planned expenditure. The Town Administrator also reviewed the longevity pay information, explaining that longevity pay is a State-required employee benefit calculated as a percentage of salary based on years of service. The amount discussed for longevity payments was approximately $8,831. Councilman Thornton made a motion to approve the Christmas bonuses and longevity pay as presented by the Town Administrator. Seconded by Councilman Bennett. Motion carried unanimously. Copy incorporated into minutes.

Consideration of Budget Amendments No 110526-01, 110526-02, and 110526-03 – The Town Administrator presented three budget amendments. The first recognized a $20,000 grant awarded to the Fire Department and a $20,000 grant to the Police Department by The McMichael Foundation. The second recognized revenue from Rockingham County Schools and the related expenditures for the part-time School Resource Officer position. The third recognized State funding and corresponding expenditures for the law-enforcement officer bonus mandated by the State, with the State providing the full funding. Councilman Bennett made a motion to approve the budget amendments as presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Jessica Smith. Motion carried unanimously. Copy incorporated into minutes.

Update and Discussion: Future Paving Projects (Bryan & Leslie Streets) The Town Administrator provided an update on the previously discussed paving needs on Bryan and Leslie Streets. After consulting with the project engineer, staff reported that the planned water and sewer work was not expected to affect Bryan Street in the same manner, but that construction equipment and utility work in

the Leslie Street area could damage newly installed pavement. Staff therefore recommended coordinating paving with the utility work rather than paving Leslie Street beforehand. Bids for the utility work in that area were expected to be solicited in early December, with the work anticipated during the first quarter of 2027.

Council discussed the poor condition of a section of Leslie Street and whether temporary patching could make it safer and more passable until the utility work and paving could be completed. Staff stated that patch products may not be suitable for a large road surface and could provide only a temporary repair. The Town Administrator also noted that the Town was awaiting approximately $23,000 in additional Powell Bill funds expected in the spring. Council members asked that the matter remain a priority. No action was taken.

Town Administrator Report – Mr. Sands reported that one of the two easement agreements for the US 220 water main extension has been received and the second is under review by the property owner's attorney, with a response expected early the following week. The awarded contractor is ready to begin once the easements are secured. He also reported that the paperwork for the final parcel for the booster pump station is expected to be signed within two to three days and then filed with the county, after which work on that section can begin.

Mr. Sands commended Councilwoman Jessica Smith for leading the committee planning for the Town's 150th anniversary celebration scheduled for March 6, 2027, and asked anyone with ideas to contact her.

Mayor Galvan announced upcoming events and meetings.

Councilman Thornton made a motion to recess the meeting until Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Councilwoman Jessica Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting recessed at 7:42 p.m.

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Mayor, Kathy Stanley-Galvan Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson

DRAFT

Stoneville Town Council
Recessed Meeting Minutes
Continuation of the November 5, 2026 Regular Meeting
6:00 PM – Council Chambers

Recessed Meeting - November 10, 2026

Members Present: Mayor Kathy Stanley-Galvan and Council Members Curt Bennett, Henry Thornton, Jessica Smith, Daisy Smith and Lee Shelton. Staff Present: Town Administrator Michael Sands, Town Clerk Deleia Hutcherson, Finance Officer Mary Ann Greer, Police Chief Rebecca Dixon, and Town Attorney Eugene Russell.

Reconvening of Meeting: Mayor Galvan requested a motion to come out of recess on the November 5, 2026, Regular Meeting. Councilwoman Jessica Smith made a motion to come out of recess. Seconded by Councilwoman Daisy Smith. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting reconvened at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Galvan announced that the Council was officially out of recess and explained that the meeting was a continuation of the November 5, 2026, Regular Meeting. The purpose of the continued meeting was to receive the report of the independent investigation conducted by Attorney Patrick Baker concerning allegations involving Councilman Lee Shelton. Mayor Galvan explained that Attorney Baker had been engaged by the Town to investigate Councilman Shelton's conduct following recent assault charges and the resulting questions regarding possible violations of the Town's Code of Ethics and Conduct.

She emphasized that the meeting was a public meeting; but not a public hearing or trial. private meeting, and that the purpose was for the Council to hear the investigator's report and determine what steps, if any, should follow. She announced that no public comments were scheduled and asked that everyone remain respectful, stating that no speaking or disruption from the audience would be permitted. Mayor Galvan then invited Attorney Patrick Baker to present his report.

Presentation of Independent Investigation: Attorney Patrick Baker introduced himself and provided an overview of his professional background and experience in municipal government and ethics matters. He explained that he is the owner of Patrick Baker Law, PLLC, and has more than 30 years of experience in municipal law. He served with the City of Durham from 1997 through 2019 in several capacities, including eight years as Assistant City Attorney, four years as City Manager, and twelve years as City Attorney. In 2019, he left Durham to serve as the Charlotte City Attorney, a position he held until 2024, when he retired from local government service.

Attorney Baker explained that he has extensive experience with ethics matters involving elected officials in North Carolina. During his tenure in Durham, he participated in rewriting that city's ethics code in 2011–2012 following legislation requiring local governments to adopt codes of ethics. He also addressed a substantial ethics investigation in Charlotte, which resulted in revisions to that city's ethics code. He further noted that he had served as President of the International Municipal Lawyers Association and President of the North Carolina Association of Municipal Attorneys. He advised that he is currently based in Winston-Salem and provides legal services to other municipalities.

Attorney Baker explained that he had prepared a PowerPoint presentation to assist the Council and members of the public in understanding the applicable provisions of the Town's Code of Ethics and Conduct, the investigation process, and the authority available to the Council under the Town's governing documents. (copy incorporated into minutes)

Code of Ethics and Conduct – Enforcement and Sanctions: Attorney Baker directed the Council's attention to Section 6 of the Town's Code of Ethics and Conduct, entitled *Enforcement and Sanctions*, explaining that this section governs how the Council addresses alleged violations of the Code. He reviewed the process for initiating an investigation and noted that an investigation may be initiated when a majority of the Town Council believes that a Council member or the Mayor has violated the Code.

He explained that the Council had taken this initial step at its October meeting by voting to initiate an independent investigation. Under the Town's policy, the Council may engage an independent investigator who is a licensed attorney in North Carolina. Attorney Baker emphasized that matters involving alleged misconduct by elected officials must be addressed in open session. Unlike certain personnel matters involving Town employees, elected officials are not afforded the same personnel privacy protections in this process. Accordingly, the investigative report was being presented during a public meeting.

Attorney Baker then explained the potential next steps under the Town's policy, including the possibility of a public hearing to consider a non-binding resolution of censure. He specifically addressed questions and comments that had circulated on social media suggesting that the Council could remove a sitting Council member as a result of the investigation. After reviewing the Town's Code of Ethics and Conduct, the Town Charter, and consulting with the Town Attorney, Mr. Russell, Attorney Baker stated that he could not identify any authority allowing the Town Council to remove a sitting Council member for a violation of the ethics policy.

To provide context, Attorney Baker discussed the differences among municipalities in North Carolina. He explained that the City of Durham has a specific provision in its Charter allowing the City Council to bring charges against a sitting Council member for malfeasance, misfeasance, or violations of official duties and ethical responsibilities, and potentially remove that individual by majority vote following the prescribed process. However, the City of Charlotte does not have similar authority. He stated that most municipalities in North Carolina do not have the independent authority to remove a sitting elected official under these circumstances and that the absence of such authority in Stoneville's governing documents is not unusual.

Attorney Baker further explained that, generally, when an elected official engages in conduct that is inconsistent with an ethics policy and the public becomes aware of it, the matter is typically addressed through the electoral process or the individual's decision to resign. He referenced situations in other municipalities where governing boards were dissatisfied with their inability to remove an elected official but lacked the legal authority to do so.

He clarified that if the Town Council elected to proceed beyond the investigative stage, the next step under its policy would be a public hearing to consider whether the Code of Ethics and Conduct had been violated and whether a resolution of censure was appropriate. At that hearing, individuals presenting

evidence for or against the Council member would have an opportunity to provide information. The Council would then consider the evidence and determine whether a violation had occurred and whether censure was warranted. The Council member involved would have the right to have legal counsel present and to advocate on his behalf in responding to the proposed censure.

Attorney Baker defined censure as a formal rebuke by the Council concerning the specific conduct of a Council member. He emphasized that censure does not authorize the Council to suspend or remove an individual from elected office. A resolution of censure would require a majority vote and, if adopted, would become part of the Town's permanent record.

Attorney Baker also reviewed the additional sanctions addressed in Section 6 of the policy. He explained that repeated or egregious misconduct may result in additional sanctions as permitted by law, including removal from appointed boards or committees and the loss of leadership assignments. He stressed that these provisions concern appointed positions and assignments and do not authorize removal from elected office. He further noted that, where appropriate, matters could be referred to the State Ethics Commission or the District Attorney. However, he clarified that the State Ethics Commission does not have authority to remove local government officials and generally focuses on state officials.

Status of Investigation and Allegations Involving the October Incident: Attorney Baker reviewed the circumstances that led to the investigation, explaining that the Council's October action followed allegations involving a misdemeanor assault incident reported to have occurred on October 6, 2026. He stated that shortly after the Council authorized the investigation, he met with the Mayor and Mr. Sands and began interviewing individuals who might have relevant information.

Attorney Baker reported that he had interviewed approximately six or seven individuals, including Councilman Shelton. However, he had not been able to interview the alleged victim or any witnesses to the October incident. He explained that the criminal matter remained active and that the initial trial date, which he understood to have been October 21, had been continued to a date sometime in December. Consequently, the underlying criminal allegations had not yet been adjudicated.

Attorney Baker stated that he had met with Councilman Shelton for approximately one hour during the preceding week and asked him questions concerning information provided by other individuals. He explained that Councilman Shelton declined to answer questions specifically concerning the criminal matter, reportedly on the advice of counsel, because the criminal case remained pending. Attorney Baker clarified that Councilman Shelton had not indicated that he would never address the matter, but rather that he preferred to wait until the criminal proceedings had concluded before discussing the specific allegations.

Attorney Baker stated that he had also been unable to speak with the alleged victim or any witnesses to the incident. He referenced public reports indicating that members of the media had attempted to contact the alleged victim, who reportedly declined to speak with them. He stated that he remained willing to interview the alleged victim and any witnesses who were willing to provide information and requested that anyone with relevant firsthand knowledge provide contact information so that he could continue his investigation.

Regarding the October incident, Attorney Baker stated that the information available to him indicated that a confrontation had occurred between Councilman Shelton and the alleged victim in the Walmart

parking lot. He explained that, based on the information provided to him, there appeared to have been a physical confrontation and that he had received information suggesting the individual may have required medical treatment at a hospital. However, he expressly stated that he had not independently confirmed the medical treatment information and had not been able to establish the precise nature or circumstances of the confrontation.

Attorney Baker emphasized that he was not in a position to make a definitive finding concerning the October incident because he had not interviewed the alleged victim or any witnesses. He distinguished between information reported to him and facts that he had been able to verify, explaining that he could not provide a final investigative conclusion on the underlying assault allegations at that time.

Additional Information and Concerns Raised During the Investigation: Attorney Baker next addressed other concerns brought to his attention during the investigation, explaining that he had spoken with several individuals regarding their past interactions with Councilman Shelton. He advised that some individuals agreed to speak with him on the condition that their names would not be included in the investigative report. He explained that he would identify such information as having been provided anonymously rather than attribute it to an individual who did not consent to having their name disclosed. Other individuals were willing to have their names associated with the information they provided. He noted that many of those individuals, if not all, had previously appeared before the Town Council and publicly discussed concerns regarding their interactions with Councilman Shelton.

Attorney Baker referenced a special Council meeting held approximately one year earlier, during which several individuals raised concerns about their interactions with Councilman Shelton. He stated that he had reviewed the minutes of that meeting and noted that the Council had voted four to zero, with Councilman Shelton recusing himself, that the allegations presented at that time were primarily personal in nature rather than matters directly involving the Town. Consequently, the Council had not proceeded with an investigation at that time.

Attorney Baker explained that he had spoken with some of the individuals who had previously raised concerns, as well as others, and had discussed several of those concerns with Councilman Shelton during their interview. He stated that the individuals he interviewed described feeling that Councilman Shelton had targeted, intimidated, or harassed them. Councilman Shelton, in turn, expressed a different perspective and indicated that he felt some of those same individuals had targeted or mistreated him. Attorney Baker acknowledged that the accounts differed and that Councilman Shelton disputed or viewed many of the allegations differently.

Attorney Baker also discussed a video he had reviewed that reportedly circulated on social media. He described the video as showing an individual filming Councilman Shelton while Councilman Shelton was near his vehicle, with his younger son reportedly inside the vehicle. The video depicted an intense verbal exchange between the two individuals involving repeated profanity directed at one another. Attorney Baker stated that he had discussed the incident with Councilman Shelton, who acknowledged that, in hindsight, he probably should not have returned to the residence involved on that particular day. Councilman Shelton indicated that the matter had previously been discussed with the Council and had been addressed in some manner. Attorney Baker stated that he had not located documentation establishing the specific findings or outcome of that prior discussion. He also noted that the incident reportedly occurred in June or July 2026, after the special meeting held the previous year.

Attorney Baker then addressed allegations concerning possible inappropriate interactions with members of the public, including concerns raised about Councilman Shelton allegedly impersonating a law enforcement officer. He explained that he understood Councilman Shelton had served as an animal control officer and that some individuals reportedly believed his uniform, clothing, or vehicle gave the impression that he was a law enforcement officer. Attorney Baker stated that he had raised the matter with Councilman Shelton, who denied impersonating a law enforcement officer. He further explained that the individuals raising the concern had not reported that Councilman Shelton pulled them over or attempted to arrest them. Based on the information provided, Attorney Baker stated that he had not identified the types of conduct that would clearly establish unlawful impersonation of a police officer and believed the concern may have resulted from confusion or a misunderstanding regarding the uniform or vehicle.

Attorney Baker identified the recurring concerns involving interactions between Councilman Shelton and members of the community as the issue that concerned him most from an investigative standpoint. He described several reported interactions as difficult interpersonal relationships and communications involving profanity, gestures, and confrontational exchanges. He explained that, in many instances, Councilman Shelton maintained that the other individuals had initiated or participated in the same conduct. Attorney Baker stated that the information presented frequently involved conflicting accounts of who initiated the confrontations and that it was difficult to determine responsibility based solely on the differing statements.

Attorney Baker advised Councilman Shelton that elected and appointed officials are held to a higher standard of conduct because their actions are subject to public scrutiny. He explained that public officials must remain mindful that their interactions with members of the community can affect public confidence in the Town's leadership and their ability to effectively perform their responsibilities. He encouraged officials to exercise restraint and, when faced with difficult or confrontational situations, consider walking away rather than engaging in arguments or conduct that could reflect negatively on their public responsibilities.

Applicable Provisions of the Town's Code of Ethics and Conduct: Attorney Baker returned to the Town's Code of Ethics and Conduct and identified several provisions that he believed were potentially applicable to the matters under review. He explained that these provisions would form an important part of his continued evaluation and eventual findings once he had been able to obtain additional information concerning the October incident and the other reported interactions.

He first reviewed the purpose of the Code, which establishes ethical and behavioral standards for the Mayor and Town Council to promote integrity and foster mutual respect. He highlighted the provision explaining that the Code is not a substitute for the law or the good judgment of public officials, but rather serves as a guide for conduct that sustains public confidence in the Town's leadership. Attorney Baker emphasized that maintaining public confidence is a central purpose of the ethics policy.

He then reviewed the section concerning ethical responsibilities and compliance with the law. He explained that elected officials are required to obey all applicable federal, state, and local laws and Town ordinances and must be guided by both the letter and the spirit of those laws. He emphasized that this responsibility applies regardless of whether an official is acting in the Council Chambers, conducting Town business, or interacting with members of the public in the community.

Attorney Baker next discussed Section 3(B), concerning acting with integrity and independence. He specifically highlighted the requirement that officials conduct themselves respectfully toward others both in and outside official settings. He explained that, in his professional opinion, public officials should not assume that they are ever entirely off the clock once they have been elected or appointed to public service. He stated that this has been his longstanding approach when advising elected officials and public employees.

He also reviewed Section 4, concerning conduct and civility, and emphasized the guiding principle that respect is the foundation of public service. The policy requires elected officials to demonstrate courtesy, professionalism, and fairness in all interactions with one another, Town staff, and the public. Attorney Baker stressed that the standard applies to all interactions, not merely those occurring during official meetings or while conducting Town business.

Additionally, he reviewed the provision addressing conduct with the public, which requires officials to treat all citizens with courtesy and impartiality and maintain professionalism at all times, both in and outside official settings. He noted that the repeated references to conduct outside official settings were intentional and reflected the expectation that individuals serving in public positions remain mindful of their responsibilities and the public perception of their behavior beyond formal Town functions.

Attorney Baker explained that these provisions, particularly the requirements concerning respectful conduct and professionalism, would be central to his continued review. He reiterated that the October incident remained the primary underlying matter prompting the investigation, but he was not yet able to make a definitive determination concerning that incident. He noted that Councilman Shelton had previously acknowledged that an incident occurred but had characterized it as taking place during his private time rather than while performing official duties. Attorney Baker stated that this distinction would need to be considered in light of the Code's provisions requiring professionalism both in and outside official settings.

Considerations Regarding the Application of the Ethics Policy: Attorney Baker acknowledged that terms such as professionalism and respectful conduct can be subjective and may be interpreted differently depending on the circumstances. He provided an example of an individual perceiving another person's failure to return a greeting as unprofessional and explained that not every unpleasant or uncomfortable interaction should automatically constitute an ethics violation.

He stated that an ethics policy cannot reasonably address every possible interaction or circumstance. Therefore, the Council must exercise sound judgment when determining whether particular conduct rises to the level of an actual violation or whether it is more appropriately characterized as a personal disagreement. He cautioned that the ethics policy should not be used as a weapon against elected officials by individuals who may disagree with them politically, dislike them personally, or have been unsuccessful in an election.

To illustrate this concern, Attorney Baker referenced his experience in Charlotte, where numerous ethics complaints were filed against City Council members shortly before an election. He explained that many of those complaints involved minor, technical, or theoretical allegations that nevertheless required attention under the applicable policy. He noted that the experience contributed to changes in the city's ethics procedures to provide greater flexibility in distinguishing personal disputes from matters involving legitimate municipal business.

Attorney Baker emphasized that the ultimate responsibility for determining whether conduct constitutes a violation of the Town's Code rests with the Town Council. Although he would provide investigative information and findings, the Council would be responsible for evaluating the evidence and exercising its judgment under the policy.

He reiterated his position that elected and appointed officials should generally conduct themselves as though they are always representing the public office or organization they serve. He explained that this expectation is not limited to elected officials but also applies to Town employees, particularly those who wear a Town uniform or otherwise identify themselves as representatives of the municipality. He cautioned that conduct occurring outside regular working hours can still affect public confidence in the Town and the manner in which its representatives are perceived.

Request for Additional Time to Complete the Investigation: Attorney Baker advised the Council that he was not yet able to complete the investigation into the primary incident that prompted the Council's action. He explained that he needed an opportunity to speak with individuals who witnessed the October incident, including the alleged victim and any other witnesses who could provide firsthand information.

He noted that the criminal matter remained active and expressed concern about potentially affecting or interfering with the pending criminal proceedings by conducting interviews while the case was still unresolved. He explained that the criminal process could take several additional months and that he did not know how long the proceedings would remain pending.

Attorney Baker clarified that the Council would not necessarily have to wait for a criminal case to reach a final disposition before making an independent determination under its ethics policy. He explained that the standards of proof in the two proceedings are different. A criminal case requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt, whereas an ethics violation under the Town's policy requires that a majority of the Council believe that the Code has been violated. He further explained that even a dismissal of the criminal charge or a finding of not guilty would not automatically establish that no violation of the Town's ethics policy had occurred, because the two proceedings involve different standards and considerations.

Nevertheless, Attorney Baker requested additional time to complete his review of the criminal incident and obtain the information necessary to provide the Council with a more complete report. He reiterated that Councilman Shelton had exercised his right not to discuss the specifics of the criminal matter at this time and that the alleged victim and witnesses had not yet been available for interviews.

At the conclusion of his presentation, Attorney Baker advised that he would remain available to answer questions and again requested that anyone who had witnessed the October incident provide contact information so that he could follow up as part of the investigation. He indicated that individuals could provide their contact information after the meeting.

Scheduling of Follow-Up Meeting: Following Attorney Baker's presentation, Councilman Thornton made a motion to schedule a follow-up public meeting sometime in December to allow the investigation to continue and provide an opportunity for the remaining information to be presented. Seconded by Councilwoman Daisy Smith. During the discussion, clarification was requested regarding whether the proposed meeting would be a public hearing to consider censure or a meeting for Attorney Baker to

present his final investigative findings. It was clarified that the purpose of the proposed meeting would be to receive the final findings.

Town Administrator Michael Sands advised that the Town's regularly scheduled December meeting would take place on December 1, 2026, and identified December 8 or December 15 as possible dates for the additional meeting. The Council discussed the available dates, and December 15 was requested.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Thornton to schedule the follow-up meeting for December 15, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Councilwoman Daisy Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Galvan confirmed that the Town Council would meet on December 15, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., for the purpose of receiving Attorney Baker's final investigative findings.

Councilman Thornton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilman Bennett. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Mayor, Kathy Stanley-Galvan

Town Clerk, Deleia Hutcherson

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