

## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 02, 2026

The Regular meeting of the Town Council of Drakes Branch was held Monday, March 2nd, 2026 at 7 P.M. in the Municipal Building located at 4801 Drakes Main Street, Drakes Branch Virginia.

Mayor Deborah Kennedy called the meeting to order and Stephanie Clay, Clerk, recorded the minutes. Members present were as follows: Vice Mayor Peery Wells, Sr., Eugene Wells, Jr., Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory and Thomas Pettus. Peery Wells, Sr. gave the Invocation and Mayor Deborah Kennedy led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

- A motion by Eugene Wells, Jr. to accept the February Council Meeting Minutes and February Special Meeting Minutes, was seconded by Charles Errickson passed on a unanimous voice vote of all AYES.

**ACCOUNT BALANCES** with The Bank of Charlotte County were as follows:

SECURITY DEPOSIT ESCROW	\$4,131.32
WATER/SEWER	\$9,367.59
GENERAL FUND	\$73,564.79

### LGIP ACCOUNT BALANCES

LGIP	\$308,504.52
LGIP- EM	\$205,735.83

- After reviewing all ACCOUNT BALANCES, BILLS PAID and TO BE PAID, a motion by Eugene Wells, Jr. to accept, seconded by Charles Errickson, passed on a unanimous roll call vote as follows: AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None

### SPEAKERS

- Garland and Julie Hamlett spoke to the Council about the operations of the Farmers Market. They plan on re-opening in April. A donation was made to the Town and Fire Dept. from proceeds from Farmers Market.
- Bill Devin and Gary Gruenwald were not present for meeting. Clerk Clay addressed Council and relayed Mr. Devins and Mr. Gruenwald's concerns over town taxes and their request to have their land removed from the annexed portion of town. Charles Errickson made a motion to table the discussion until more information could be gathered, Eugene Wells Jr. seconded the motion and motion passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None
- Dearthion Snead spoke on behalf of the Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club, informing Council about all of their outreach efforts. They have requested to use the Municipal Building on March 15<sup>th</sup> and possibly several times a year thereafter, without charge as a 501-3(c). Charles Errickson made a motion to approve use of and waive rental fees for Buffalo Soldiers, seconded by James D. Gregory and motion passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None
- Casey Stuart addressed Council regarding her proposal to provide emergency preparedness classes at the Municipal Building. James D. Gregory made a motion to accept her proposal, seconded by Charles Errickson and motion passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Finance:** Nothing to report.

**Streets:** Clerk provided update on lights that have been reported.

**Museum:** HVAC system had to be repaired.

**Buildings & Grounds:** Clerk presented proposal to add snow rails to Municipal building, but was asked to get a 2<sup>nd</sup> bid for comparison. Clerk brought up the "Welcome to Drakes Branch Sign" on North side of town. The sign is peeling, brick is moldy and bushes are overgrown- sign is not visible. Charles Errickson made a motion to have Cary Brazil, PW supervisor, assess the sign to make recommendation of needed repairs, the motion was seconded by Eugene Wells Jr. and passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None

**Water/Sewer:** White Street water main line break incident has been resolved.

**Personnel:** Personnel Handbook has been emailed to Mayor for first review.

**Grants:** The Mayor reiterated the FEMA Downtown Project Grant was on hold due to Government Shutdown. The deadline for completion of this grant is October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 unless the town receives the extension which has been requested. Lauren Pugh with CRC told the Mayor may be other grants the town could qualify for if we are unable to meet the project deadline due to the government shutdown. The Mayor has requested information from CRC on other possible grants.

**Events:** Mayor Kennedy advised Event Committee of possible events, 100-mile yard sale in July, Veterans Day Parade in November and the 250th birthday anniversary of the United States.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- None (see notes on Casey Stuart as speaker and Mayor's Grant update- both tie into Old Business)

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A motion was made by Charles Errickson and seconded by Eugene Wells, Jr. to approve the room rental for Donna Guill however the question was posed if she was a Town Citizen, upon review, it is determined she is not. Clerk Cliborne will contact her to correct form. The motion passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None
- Discussion regarding the water/sewer billing for Drakes Branch Elderly Apts. For the last few years, they have paid a flat rate fee. Clerk Clay recommended the Town bill based on actual usage and base on residential usage rate. A motion to do so on next billing cycle (30 days' notice) was made by Charles Errickson, seconded by Perry Wells, Sr. and passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None
- Clerk Clay informed Council that the Public Works Dept. needed a tablet to use in the meter update process and stated she could purchase one with a heavy-duty case for \$180 or less. Motion to accept proposal was made by Peery Wells Sr. and seconded by Liz Davis, and passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Clerk asked Council if the check register printed from QuickBooks was acceptable for reporting bills paid. Charles Errickson made a motion to accept this format, motion was seconded by Eugene Wells, Jr. and passed on a unanimous voice vote of all AYES.
- Clerk to confirm with VRSA if Town Patrol Car can be driven out of the County.
- VFW is requesting space to place a small shed being donated by Lowes for VFW storage. Council to research possible locations and make recommendation to Garland Hamlett, representative for VFW.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

A motion made by Liz Davis, seconded by Peery Wells, Sr., that the Council convene in CLOSED SESSION under Virginia Code 2.23711 (A)(1), to discuss personnel matters concerning job performance, and Town Sergeant position and passed on a roll call vote as follows: AYES: Liz Davis, Chrles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None, by unanimous vote.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION:**


A motion by Liz Davis, seconded by Peery Wells, Sr., to return to Open Session, was passed on a roll call vote as follows: AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None, by unanimous vote.

A motion was made James D. Gregory and seconded by Peery Wells, Sr. to adopt Exhibit A, the Certificate of Closed Session, the motion passed on a roll call vote as follows: AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None, by unanimous vote.

- Charles Errickson made a motion to offer employment to Town Sergeant candidate, pending approved background screening. Motion was seconded by James D. Gregory and passed on a roll call vote as follows AYES: Liz Davis, Charles Errickson, James Gregory, Thomas Pettus, Eugene Wells, Jr., and Peery Wells, Sr., NAYS: None

Perry Wells, Sr. made a motion to adjourn the Town Council meeting, seconded by Charles Errickson. All Agreed on a unanimous voice vote of all AYES.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

  
Deborah Kennedy, Mayor

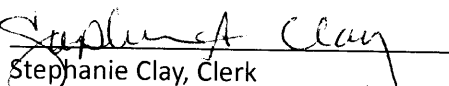
  
Stephanie Clay, Clerk

EXHIBIT A  
CERTIFICATION RESOLUTION OF CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, this Drakes Branch Town Council convened a CLOSED SESSION on this 6<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026 pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provision of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and WHEREAS, § 2.2-3711 A of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Drakes Branch Town Council after such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Drakes Branch Town Council hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting to which this certification applies; and (2) only such public business which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting to which this certification applies.