

MAYOR & COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 6, 2026 | 7:00 PM
Town of Galena, Maryland

ATTENDANCE

Present

- Tyler Carpenter — Mayor
- Sarah Merrell — Council Member
- John Carroll — Council Member
- Cheryl Richwine — Council Member
- Jack Duhamell — Council Member
- Marisa Pisapia — Town Administrator
- Sue Bisbee — Finance & Administrative Clerk
- Kevin Best — Town Attorney
- Mike Gibson — Maintenance & Facilities Coordinator

Absent

- Dennis Hickman — Kent County Sheriff

Guest Presenter

- Barry Byers — Accountability Officer, Kent County Police Accountability Board

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Tyler Carpenter called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Council Member Duhamell and seconded by Council Member Richwine to accept the Mayor and Council meeting minutes from June 1, 2026. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

The regular meeting was temporarily suspended to open a public hearing on two items.

1. Charter Amendment Resolution 2026-3 — Town Administrator Duties

A Charter Amendment Resolution amending Sections 804 (Town Administrator) and 805 (Powers and Duties of Town Administrator) to enumerate the powers and duties of the Town Administrator. Mayor Carpenter explained the amendment brings the charter in line with the duties already assigned under the Town Administrator's current contract; previously the charter listed only budget preparation, which does not reflect the full scope of the role. "Other duties as assigned" remains in the charter. No public comment was raised in opposition.

Motion: A motion was made by Council Member Duhamell and seconded by Council Member Merrell to accept Charter Amendment Resolution 2026-3. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Ordinance 2026-07 — Grass & Yard Waste (Introduction Only)

An Ordinance amending Chapter 131 (Property Maintenance) to prohibit depositing grass clippings, leaves, and other yard debris on public streets, sidewalks, gutters, storm drains, and other public ways; declaring such deposits a public nuisance; and increasing authorized fines. Mayor Carpenter noted the ordinance is intended to keep debris off the roadway for the safety of motorcyclists and cyclists and to reduce buildup in gutters and storm drains, following resident complaints during grass-cutting season.

This item was introduced only; no vote was taken. Residents were invited to direct comments to Town Hall over the next month, ahead of a vote at the August meeting.

Motion: A motion was made by Council Member Merrell and seconded by Council Member Carroll to close the public hearing and reopen the regular meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: KENT COUNTY POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Barry Byers, Accountability Officer for Kent County Police Accountability Board and a retired police officer with 36 years in law enforcement, presented an overview of the Kent County Police Accountability Board (PAB) and Administrative Charging Committee (ACC).

- Both bodies were created under 2021 state legislation reforming police discipline procedures; every Maryland county (and Baltimore City) is required by law to establish one.
- Kent County's PAB, established in 2023, has seven members and covers the Kent County Sheriff's Office, Chestertown Police Department, and Rock Hall Police Department. It now meets quarterly with local law enforcement (previously monthly).
- The five-member ACC undergoes a five-day state training program and makes the final determination on whether a charge against an officer is sustained or unfounded, after review of the agency's internal investigation.
- Since the PAB's 2023 inception, Kent County has had 16 total complaints across all three agencies; only one resulted in a charge (which was chief recommended). By comparison, Baltimore City handles roughly 1,000 cases per month with paid staff, while Kent County's board operates largely on a volunteer basis.
- Residents may file a complaint either through the Police Accountability Board (by phone or email) or directly with the officer's agency; complaints are subject to statutory timelines for investigation, hearing, and notification to all parties.

Mayor Carpenter thanked Mr. Byers and encouraged residents with policing concerns to use the appropriate reporting channels.

MAYOR & COUNCIL REPORT / GOOD OF THE TOWN

Reports were accepted as submitted. Additional items discussed:

- The Town marked the celebration of America's 250th anniversary.
- Mayor Carpenter, Council Members and Staff attended the Maryland Municipal League (MML) summer conference, describing it as busy and worthwhile. Trainings completed included ethics, community engagement, economic development, risk management, and municipal budgeting.
- Council Member Carroll met with MDOT at the Cabinet Secretary's Roundtable at MML to raise concerns about a long-completed bridge project on Route 301 in Millington, MD where construction cones and equipment have remained in place for six to seven months after work finished; MDOT stated it would look into removal.
- Council Member Carroll also met with the Department of Housing & Community Development regarding comprehensive plan matters and statewide housing study funding and affordable housing opportunities.
- Rock Hall's Fourth of July celebration and parade was attended by Council Member Carroll and Finance & Administrative Clerk Bisbee and was reported to be a great event.
- Mayor Carpenter and Town Administrator Pisapia will attend MML's Summer Symposium on municipal funding on July 30 to connect with other towns on funding sources.
- Council Member Carroll noted this month marks the completion of Mayor Carpenter's first full year in office.
- Council discussed restarting Council of Government meetings ("COG") with neighboring town officials; lunchtime on a Wednesday was preferred to accommodate schedules.

CLERK REPORT

- Finance & Administrative Clerk Bisbee reported the Town is closing out the first quarter and preparing for the second quarter billing cycle. A new billing/utility software system is being implemented with vendor support through the transition; the Town expects to operate it independently by the third quarter.
- The Town has selected Lindsey & Associates as its auditor for the upcoming term, whom they met at the MML conference; the engagement is approximately three months ahead of last year's timeline.
- A new carbon-copy stop-order / notice-of-violation form was created for solicitation permit enforcement, allowing staff to issue a written warning and gather solicitor information on the spot rather than relying on repeated phone reports. It was confirmed that religious and political solicitation are constitutionally protected and cannot be restricted.
- Finance & Administrative Clerk Bisbee also completed an MML class on inclusive playgrounds and is pursuing grant funding to convert the Town's playground into a fully inclusive design so that all children, regardless of ability, can use it. She met with a Councilman from another Maryland town that completed a

similar project and is meeting with a playground design representative to develop a phased site plan ahead of grant applications. The project will stay within the existing playground footprint, replacing aging equipment (the current playground program is roughly 20 years old).

Bank Balances

The following account balances were read into the record:

Account	Balance
General Fund	\$79,364.56
General Fund Savings	\$182,948.86
Sewer Fund	\$119,419.90
Sewer Fund Savings	\$547,031.42
Water Fund	\$101,615.94
Water Fund Savings	\$257,158.64
Backup Account	\$5,000.00
Total (all accounts)	\$1,292,539.32

Motion: A motion was made by Council Member Merrell and seconded by Council Member Carroll to approve the balances as read into the record. The motion carried unanimously.

Inter-Fund Transfers (Due-To / Due-From Transfers)

The following inter-fund were read into the record:

Sewer Fund to General Fund	\$5,141.55
Water Fund to General Fund	\$3,800.10
General Fund to Water Fund	\$1,835.74

Motion: A motion was made by Council Member Merrell and seconded by Council Member Richwine to approve the inter-fund transfers. The motion carried unanimously.

Council Member Carroll raised the idea of laddering CDs for the Town's excess savings to generate additional interest income; Town Administrator Pisapia noted the Town's money market accounts at its new bank have already improved interest earnings and agreed to research CD rates as a further step.

MAINTENANCE & FACILITIES REPORT

- The Kent County Planning Commission gave a favorable recommendation on the monopole project, which proceeds to the Kent County Board of Appeals on July 20 at 5 p.m.
- Jarman Avenue paving is complete, including installation of speed humps and signage. Overall, the project was well received and came in at roughly half the cost of other bids received.
- A resident at 412 Jarman Avenue requested that #57 blue stone removed from the edge of his driveway during milling be restored rather than with milling material as offered. The Town Attorney advised this is a minor restoration matter best resolved directly (purchasing a small quantity of stone) rather than pursuing it through the paving contractor. Maintenance & Facilities Coordinator Gibson will source a small amount of #57 stone from Mega Materials to complete the repair.
- For future paving contracts, Council Members suggested building in a restoration/contingency allowance, so contractors handle driveway-edge repairs directly rather than the Town absorbing that cost after the fact.
- The wastewater treatment plant air compressor has been ordered; the dryer has been received, and the compressor is expected by the end of July, with installation and electrical work to follow.
- The semi-truck previously parked for two weeks at Dogwood Park was resolved: the driver has a longstanding town permission to park there while visiting family in the area (he visits roughly once a year). The Kent County Sheriff's Office confirmed the truck would not be towed absent a request from the Town, and the County

confirmed it had not contacted the driver's company as had been claimed; the source of that call remains unknown.

- Security cameras at the pavilion and pocket park are installed and in use.
- Footage from the park bathroom camera was used to identify vandalism to the restroom door push bar on June 19; "No Smoking" signage has been installed at the park restroom. Council discussed upgrading camera resolution, as the current system is not clear enough for identification purposes; a full system upgrade to 4K or wired cameras would be required.
- A water main leak on Phelps Avenue was traced to a cracked clamp on a lateral line; it was repaired and the road patched at a cost of approximately \$15,000.
- Continued concerns about trash and unauthorized large gatherings at the pavilion after hours were discussed; Council favored adding signage directing groups to call ahead for reservations.
- Recently installed motion-sensor lighting at the pavilion is functioning well as a deterrent to after-hours use.
- A power outage occurred during the Jarman Avenue paving project when utility lines came down; it is unclear whether the lines were below the required 15-foot clearance. The utility's estimated repair cost of roughly \$10,000 is expected to be billed to the paving contractor, not the Town.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- The final FY26 budget-to-actual profit and loss showed a net of approximately negative \$17,000, attributed largely to an underbudgeted wastewater treatment plant loan payment (roughly \$35,000) and rising utility costs. The new fiscal year began July 1.
- Mayor Carpenter, Council Member Carroll, and Town Administrator Pisapia met with the annexation group on June 10; the previously proposed entrance adjacent to Town Hall across from Phelps Avenue will be removed in favor of a walking trail, consistent with State Highway Administration concerns. The revised traffic study, including only entrances from Jarmin Avenue and Jim Davis Road, has been submitted to State Highway for final approval, with Phase 2 expected to return within approximately six months.
- Town Administrator Pisapia and Maintenance & Facilities Coordinator Gibson met with Ark Systems (met at MML) regarding a cloud-based electronic badge lock system for the Town Hall office and back entrances (not the public front entrance); a quote is pending, with possible cybersecurity grant funding available to help offset cost.
- Town Administrator Pisapia met with McEnroe Voice & Data (met at MML) regarding replacing the phone system with a cloud-based system, including three desk phones, voicemail-to-email, auto attendant, call forwarding, and a mobile app that lets staff call from personal phones while displaying the Town Hall number. One-time installation cost would be \$927; monthly service \$77, compared to the current provider's \$145/month.
- Town Administrator Pisapia met with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) regarding the countywide housing study; the study is Kent County-led (DHCD is not directly involved), with RFPs due July 1. Per DHCD's statewide analysis, Kent County's housing stock generally meets current needs, with the focus on maintaining rather than expanding it; the Town's recent annexation positions Galena well to accommodate future housing growth. DHCD is also planning public "Housing 101" outreach sessions that the Town may look into hosting.
- Grants: the Town received a \$2,600 Chesapeake Bay Trust Grant for a pollinator garden at Gateway Park; applied for the Maryland Department of the Environment Bay Restoration Fund Grant for wastewater operations (previously awarded roughly \$35,000); and applied for \$70,000 in DHCD commercial/residential facade improvement funding, an increase over the Town's usual \$50,000 request after several years of applying.
- Code Enforcement: a rat infestation was identified along the shared property lines behind Dogwood Plaza and Tower Four, linked to trash, dumpster, and grease trap attractants. A resident had reported dead rats since mid-May without resolution from the Kent County Health Department; after the Town escalated the matter, the Health Department responded the same day and confirmed property management will address the colony using bait stations. Residents in the area are advised to keep trash enclosed and to be cautious when walking pets nearby.
- Family First Enrichment Cooperative is hosting a Back-to-School Bash on August 29 from 1:00–4:00 p.m., including a backpack and school-supply giveaway for families in need. The group requested a Town donation and permission to use the Town's portion of the park parking lot in addition to their own; Council approved the parking lot use, provided space remains available for regular park visitors, and will donate \$150.00 worth of supplies.

- The Town of Chestertown is considering a regional grant application, in partnership with area municipalities, to purchase an electric street sweeper; the Town expressed interest in participating and benefiting from shared use.
- The owner of the landlocked parcel adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant has indicated willingness to sell the roughly half-acre parcel to the Town. The Town will prepare an offer; if acquired, the Town will do a lot-line adjustment to consolidate it with the Town's adjoining parcels and annex it into town limits. The Board of Appeals had asked for assurance that the adjoining critical-area parcel (in the monopole fall zone) would not be sold to a third party; the Town Attorney advised that a non-binding letter of intent is sufficient, and that any eventual purchase would require authorization by ordinance.

MEETING & EVENT SCHEDULE

- Galena Youth Market — Friday, July 25 at 11:00 a.m., Town Hall (youth vendors selling handmade crafts and other goods).
- Park & Tree Committee Meeting — Wednesday, July 29 at 7:00 p.m., to be held at the park. The committee is returning to a quarterly meeting schedule per the charter, supplemented with additional sessions as needed to keep members engaged. Committee members raised the physical demands of maintenance work (weeding, etc.) and suggested more frequent attention to the grounds or funding to help with upkeep.
- Next Mayor & Council Meeting — Monday, August 3 at 7:00 p.m.

MOTIONS SUMMARY

Motion	Made By / Second	Result
Approve June 1, 2026 Mayor & Council meeting minutes	Council Member Duhamell / Richwine	All in Favor — Approved
Approve Charter Amendment Resolution 2026-3 (Town Administrator Duties, Sections 804 & 805)	Council Member Duhamell / Merrell	All in Favor — Approved
Close public hearing and reopen the regular meeting	Council Member Merrell / Carroll	All in Favor — Approved
Approve bank balances as read into the record	Council Member Merrell / Carroll	All in Favor — Approved
Approve inter-fund transfers	Council Member Merrell / Richwine	All in Favor — Approved
Approve minutes as read into the record and adjourn	Council Member Carroll / Richwine	All in Favor — Approved
Adjournment	Council Member Carroll / Richwine	All in Favor — Approved

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion was made by Council Member Carroll and seconded by Council Member Richwine to approve the audio minutes for the meeting and adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.