OCCOQUAN TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
Town Hall – 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Earnie Porta; Vice Mayor Jenn Loges, Councilmembers Robert Love, Cindy Fithian, Eliot Perkins and Theo Daubresse

Absent: None

Staff: Adam Linn, Town Manager / Chief of Police; Megan Lubash, Town Clerk / Assistant Town Manager; Jason Forman, Deputy Chief of Police / Assistant Town Manager; Tammy Hassett, Events Director; Jordan Sanders, Administrative Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Porta called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. CITIZENS' TIME

No one spoke during Citizens' Time.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Request to Accept the September 1st, 2026 Minutes

Councilmember Perkins moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Fithian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. REGULAR ITEMS

a. Request to Adopt Ordinance O-2026-06 Amending the Town Code to Impose a Local Cannabis/ Marijuana Sales Tax

There being no discussion, Vice Mayor Loges moved to adopt Ordinance O-2026-06 adding Town Code § 35.090 entitled Cannabis/Marijuana Tax to impose a local cannabis sales tax of three and one-half percent (3.5%) on taxable retail cannabis sales occurring within the Town. Councilmember Love seconded the motion. The motion passed by roll call vote.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Perkins, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Love
Nays: Councilmember Daubresse

5. Discussion Items

a. RiverFest 2027 Date Discussion

Town Manager Linn presented a proposal to move RiverFest from the first weekend in June to the third weekend in May, with Town staff recommending May 15–16, 2027, instead of June 5–6, 2027. The Town Manager began with an overview of the Town's craft show history, noting that Occoquan Days originated in 1970 as an antique sale supporting the opening of the Mill House Museum. In 1971, the event expanded into its first merchant-sponsored craft show. By the mid-1990s, Occoquan Days had evolved into the Spring and Fall Arts and Crafts Shows. In 2022, the Spring show was rebranded as RiverFest to highlight the Town's connection to the Occoquan River.

Town Manager Linn emphasized that these changes, including the proposed date adjustment, have

been driven by the Town's commitment to economic development, maintaining strong attendance, supporting vendors, and providing a safer and more enjoyable event experience.

Mayor Porta interjected that this history shows that the craft shows have a history of changing overtime to which Town Manager Linn agreed.

Town Manager Linn reviewed the factors considered in the proposed date change, focusing on maximizing attendance, supporting vendor success, and ensuring public safety. He noted that the analysis covered the previous ten years, allowing him to supplement the data with his firsthand experience with the events.

Regarding weather, Town Manager Linn identified rainfall as the most significant factor affecting attendance. Over the ten years reviewed, the third weekend in May had one additional day of rain and just 0.1 inches more precipitation than the first weekend in June, making the differences marginal. He also noted that the data did not distinguish between daytime and nighttime rainfall. Temperature comparisons showed an average of 78.2°F in May versus 84.9°F in June, excluding the heat index. Town Manager Linn emphasized that higher temperatures and humidity increase the risk of heat-related incidents, making May a potentially safer option.

Finally, he noted that the third weekend in May had fewer competing regional events, while the first weekend in June coincided with numerous events throughout Prince William County and surrounding jurisdictions.

Event Director Hassett surveyed 198 maker and creator vendors by email, receiving 96 responses. Town Manager Linn and Event Director Hassett reported that 31.3% preferred May and 54.2% had no preference between May and June, with only 14.5% preferred June. In response to Mayor Porta's inquiry, Event Director Hassett confirmed that food vendors were not included in the survey.

Councilmember Perkins asked whether moving RiverFest to May would attract more high-end vendors. Event Director Hassett explained that the earlier date would allow certain vendors who participate in the Fall Arts and Crafts Show, but are unavailable in June, to attend. She also noted that a competing Maryland event had moved from May to April, potentially creating an opportunity to attract additional vendors to RiverFest.

Councilmember Daubresse asked how cooler May temperatures might affect RiverFest's water activities. Town Manager Linn noted that a local paddleboard and kayak operator welcomed the proposed date change as an opportunity to begin the active season earlier. Mayor Porta added that river activities can begin as early as April and that May typically offers warmer air temperatures with slightly cooler water. He did not anticipate the earlier date affecting his ability to conduct river tours.

Town Manager Linn then requested Council's support to move RiverFest to the third weekend in May, specifically May 15–16, 2027. Councilmembers expressed support for the proposed change, and Mayor Porta requested that Town staff actively promote and publicize the new dates.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Megan Lubash, Town Clerk