



Town of Stantonburg Special Called Town Council Meeting Minutes April 30, 2026

A special called meeting of the Stantonburg Town Council was held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 30, 2026, in Town Hall with Mayor Coley Rhodes presiding.

Members Present: Mayor Coley Rhodes; Mayor Pro Tem Powell Dew; Councilpersons Jackie Grice, Carla Davis, Skip Covert, and Eartha Butler.

Staff Present: Town Manager Brian Hawley; Town Clerk Christie Cobb.

Call to Order and Opening

Mayor Rhodes called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and offered the invocation.

Approval of Agenda

Council discussed removing the Electric Rate Stabilization Fund item from the agenda and tabling it until the May Council meeting when a presentation is expected. Council Member Eartha Butler made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Council Member Skip Covert and carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Councilperson Jackie Grice moved to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2026, Regular Town Council Meeting. Councilperson Carla Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Council then discussed an amendment to the April 13, 2026, closed session minutes to more accurately reflect the personnel discussion. Councilperson Jackie Grice moved to approve the closed session minutes as amended. Councilperson Eartha Butler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present for public comment.

Business

Public Safety

Town Manager Hawley presented public safety options for Council consideration, including continued coordination with the Wilson County Sheriff's Office, the possible use of off-duty deputies for targeted coverage such as events and school-related needs, and installation of surveillance cameras to aid investigations.

Council discussed potential camera locations, including areas near commercial activity, the park, and key entrances and roadways. Council also discussed the importance of maintaining proper access controls and chain-of-custody procedures for any video evidence.

Council further discussed continued use of Town facilities for Sheriff's Office operations, including potential space in the new building, and asked staff to explore whether a local viewing or monitoring station would be feasible while still allowing the Sheriff's Office to manage evidentiary materials. Town Manager Hawley reported that recent conversations with Sheriff's Office leadership had been positive and included discussion of a possible School Resource Officer partnership and use of Town facilities for training or staging purposes as needed.

Council expressed support for including a flexible public safety allocation in the upcoming budget to support cameras and supplemental law enforcement coverage rather than re-establishing a full Town police department at this time.

Direction/Next Steps:

- Staff will confer with Sheriff's Office leadership (including Major Barbrey) on camera system options, access to footage, and whether limited/local access is possible while supporting proper evidentiary controls.
- Staff will continue developing proposed budget figures for public safety, including potential camera purchases and funds for off-duty deputy coverage as needed (events, meetings, and school-related needs).
- Staff will review options for addressing parking/security needs for large private events within Town limits, including whether any ordinance or policy changes may be appropriate.

Consideration of Rate & Fee Schedule

Town Manager Hawley reviewed the current rate and fee schedule and discussed a possible approach to updating certain rates by using an inflationary adjustment of approximately five percent based on CPI. He noted that any proposed changes would be presented at a future meeting for formal Council action.

Council discussed utility fee considerations and the importance of periodic adjustments in order to avoid significant future increases.

Council also reviewed sanitation-related costs, including the current monthly trash and recycling rate, the cost of carts, and increased county tipping fees. Staff noted that operational and policy changes, including bulk pickup scheduling and enforcement efforts related to dumping, have improved sanitation fund performance and that the current draft budget projects a modest surplus that could be reserved for future equipment replacement.

Council discussed concerns regarding charging different amounts based on the number of carts at a residence and also discussed recycling participation and service reliability. Staff

noted that missed collection areas should be reported to County staff for correction and that a centralized recycling drop-off option may be worth exploring.

Council also discussed the property tax rate, including the possibility of reducing the rate from \$0.45 per \$100 valuation if Town public safety services continue to be provided primarily through the Sheriff's Office rather than through a full Town police department. Council further noted uncertainty regarding potential State legislation affecting local property tax limitations and future flexibility if rate adjustments become necessary. No formal action was taken.

Budget Development

Council discussed budget development priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, including the impact of public safety planning on budget decisions. Staff noted that a draft budget concept includes a public safety allocation, discussed as approximately \$138,000, to provide flexibility for camera purchases and supplemental law enforcement coverage as needed.

Council also discussed the need to align any future rate and fee schedule changes with overall budget needs. No formal action was taken.

Tri-Town Electric System / T-D Substation Update

Town Manager Hawley updated Council on Tri-Town electric system coordination matters and on proposed T-D substation upgrades, referencing a handout provided to Council. He reported on the April 28, 2026, site visit with engineers and committee members and outlined questions and requested clarifications to be addressed before a formal recommendation is brought forward.

These included a request for a documented condition assessment and remaining-life estimate for the existing 115 kV switch, which has been in service for approximately 30 years, and discussion of the long lead time, approximately two years, for a new 115 kV switch. Council also discussed whether installing one new switch for redundancy might be considered while broader replacement decisions are evaluated.

Additional discussion addressed phased or alternative approaches to reduce financial impact, such as proceeding first with relay replacement or addition, batteries and charger upgrades, and control house improvements while deferring major switch replacement pending assessment results. Mr. Hawley also noted the need for clearer information regarding redundancy and configuration options, including the reliability and outage implications of various equipment combinations, and requested a phased cost schedule for potential implementation paths as well as information concerning any financing, grants, or cost-sharing opportunities.

He emphasized the importance of transparent, inclusive Tri-Town coordination and procurement practices for a project of this scope, including use of an RFQ process consistent with the Mini-Brooks Act. No formal action was taken.

Closed Session

The agenda included a closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) for discussion of a personnel budget/pay matter. By consensus, Council deferred the closed session item to the May Council meeting due to time constraints.

Adjournment

Councilperson Jackie Grice moved to adjourn. Councilperson Carla Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Approved by:

Coley Rhodes, Mayor

Christie Cobb, Town Clerk