

Board of Aldermen Special Called Pay Study Meeting
Flossie White Board Room, Maggie Valley Town Hall
Thursday January 22, 2026, 10:00 am

Members Present:

Mayor Mike Eveland, Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Owens (Left at 10:27am), Alderman John Hinton, and Alderman Tim Wise

Members Absent:

Alderman Phillip Whight

Staff Present:

Interim Town Manager Sam Cullen, Town Clerk Kathy Johnson, Finance Director Misty Hagood, Police Chief Matthew Boger, Public Works Director Seth Boyd, Acting Planning Director Noah Taylor.

Others Present:

Becky Veazey and Richard Self with the MAPS Group (Management and Personnel Study).

Media Present:

No media were present.

Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Eveland called the meeting to order at 10:00 am on Thursday January 22, 2026, in the Maggie Valley Flossie White Boardroom 3987 Soco Road, Maggie Valley, NC 28751.

Before beginning the formal agenda, Town Manager Sam Cullen asked Board members to confirm the budget calendar that had been previously presented, noting that some dates had been adjusted based on Board members' availability.

Becky Veazey from the MAPS Group (Management and Personnel Services) presented the findings of the town's pay and classification study. She began by sharing her background, including her education at UNC Chapel Hill and her 35 years of experience working with local governments across North Carolina through the MAPS Group.

Ms. Veazey explained that classification and pay plans have two sides: the classification side addresses job duties, titles, and descriptions, while the pay side determines appropriate salary ranges based on market data. She emphasized that having an accurate and up-to-date classification and pay plan helps organizations recruit, retain employees, maintain internal equity, maximize cost effectiveness, and create a legally defensible system.

Ms. Veazey detailed the methodology used in the study, which included:

- Employee orientation meetings.
- Questionnaires completed by all employees about their job duties.
- Individual interviews with at least one employee from each job classification.

- Analysis of job duties and classifications.
- Market salary data collection.

She explained the distinction between positions (individual jobs) and classifications (groupings of similar positions), emphasizing that the study focused on jobs rather than the individuals holding those positions. She clarified that factors like volume of work, length of service, and employee qualifications do not determine classification levels, while factors such as mental difficulty, complexity, variety of work, public contact, education requirements, work environment, and supervision do factor into classification decisions.

Ms. Veazey presented the organizational chart with recommended job titles, noting that some positions (like Planning Director and Public Services Supervisor) appeared with dotted lines as potential future positions. She provided an overview of the comprehensive report, including:

- The market position analysis
- Two implementation options with different cost impacts
- A compression analysis showing employee distribution across pay ranges
- The recommended pay chart and grade assignments
- Personnel policy recommendations and management recommendations

Staff Presentation and Recommendations

Manager Cullen reviewed the staff's recommendations based on the study. He recommended implementing Option 1 from the study at a cost of \$35,728 for the remainder of the current fiscal year, which would address compression issues and adjust employees to their proper market positions. This implementation could be done without using fund balance, as there were sufficient funds in the salary line items from vacant positions, turnover, and the town manager retirement.

Mr. Cullen noted that the annual cost would be approximately \$103,346 going forward, representing slightly less than 2 cents on the tax rate. He explained that this implementation would be sustainable due to anticipated increases in tax revenues and the town's sound financial position.

He recommended adopting the new personnel policy and organization chart at the February meeting, which would provide guidance for the budget process. The policy updates included changes to comply with recent legislation like the Pregnant Women's Fairness Act, improved disciplinary procedures, adverse weather policy language, increased vacation time for certain employees, and adjusted longevity bonuses.

Board Discussion

The Board engaged in a thorough discussion about the financial implications and sustainability of the recommendations. Mayor Eveland asked about the tax rate impact of the proposed changes, wanting to ensure the town could afford the implementation now and in the future.

Mr. Cullen clarified that the initial \$35,728 would bring employees to their minimum grade levels, followed by the annual cost of \$103,346 to maintain those positions. He explained that in previous years, the town had failed to move pay grades along with cost-of-living adjustments, causing some employees to hit the tops of their ranges and miss out on raises.

Board members discussed how the recommended changes would address compression in the pay plan, where employees with different experience levels were clustered at the lower end of their pay ranges. Manager Cullen noted that the turnover costs in the past year had exceeded the \$35,000 recommended for addressing market position issues.

Board members reviewed the importance of continuing performance evaluations, which had been implemented recently after a period of non-use. They discussed how future merit pay and career development systems would need to be tied to these evaluations.

Board members expressed appreciation for the clarity of the presentation and recommendations, noting the town's fortunate position to be able to implement these changes without financial strain. They acknowledged that neighboring towns were also conducting similar studies.

Adjournment

Alderman Tim Wise made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:26 am. The motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

S: Mike Eveland
Mayor Mike Eveland

S: Kathy Johnson
Kathy Johnson, Town Clerk

S: Sam Cullen
Sam Cullen, Town Manager