Morrisville Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

NOTE: Minutes are summaries only, reflecting Council action and main points of discussion. For the full meeting audio and/or video, the meeting agenda, presentations, and other related agenda materials please click here.

Present: Mayor Cawley, Mayor Pro Tem Garimella, and Council Members Fender, Johnson, Rao, Robotti, Scroggins-Johnson, Town Attorney Frank Gray, and Assistant Town Attorney Lori Jones.

Staff: Brandon Zuidema, *Town Manager*
Giselle Rodriguez, *Deputy Town Manager*
Jeanne Hooks, *Director of Management Services*
Kayla Bertling, *Town Clerk*
Rox Cruz, *Public Information Officer*
Rachel Cypher, *Planner II*
Byron Hayes, *Chief Financial Officer*
Brittany Johnson, *Planning Manager*
Cindi King, *Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Assistant Director*
Cacie Langley, *Financial Operations Manager*
Bret Martin, Transportation Project Manager
Shelly Mayo, *Planner III*
Tiffany McNeill, *Economic Development Director*
James Owens, *IT Support Technician*
Mark Spanioli, *Engineering Director*
Michele Stegall, *Planning Director*

1. **Call to Order –** Mayor Cawley called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. **Recognition of Sergeant at Arms –** Detective Johnson

3. **Invocation –** delivered by Mayor Cawley

4. **Pledge of Allegiance –** led by Mayor Cawley

5. **Adoption of Regular Agenda**
Town Manager Brandon Zuidema shared a request from staff to add a closed session item related to a personnel matter.

No conflicts of interest with the proposed agenda were reported.

MOTION: **Council Member Robotti moved to adopt the Regular Agenda with the addition. The motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).**

6. **Consent Agenda**
   - **6.a. Resolution and Capital Project Ordinance Amendment Authorizing Phase 1 Design-Build for the Public Works Facility Project (2025-385-0)**

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MOTION: **Council Member Johnson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Robotti and carried unanimously (7-0).**

7. Items Pulled from Consent (if any)
No items were pulled for discussion.

8. Proclamations

8.a. Proclamation Recognizing World Pancreatic Cancer Day (2025-386-0)
Council acknowledged a proclamation recognizing Pancreatic Cancer Day and urged residents to actively participate in raising awareness about pancreatic cancer, supporting research initiatives, and advocating for early detection and effective treatments. The proclamation was read by Council Member Johnson and was accepted by local volunteers of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

8.b. Proclamation Recognizing Lung Cancer Awareness Month (2025-387-0)
Council acknowledged a proclamation recognizing Lung Cancer Awareness Month.

8.c. Proclamation Recognizing Small Business Saturday (2025-388-0)
Council acknowledged a proclamation recognizing Small Business Saturday.

9. Morrisville Speaks: Public Comment
No comments.

10. Admin Reports – *For information only unless Town Council pulls for specific questions.*
10.a. FY2026 Q1 Financial & Budget Administrative Report (2025-399-0)
There were no questions on this Administrative Report.

11. Presentations

11.a. Alternative Transit Study Final Report and Recommendations (2025-389-0)
Bret Martin, Transportation Project Manager
Jorge Luna, South Atlantic Director - Transit and Rail, VHB
November 12 - Brief/Presentation
November 25 - Action

Bret Martin, Transportation Project Manager, and consultants from VHB, presented the final report and recommendations on the Alternative Transit Study. Staff highlighted alternative funding opportunities that would maximize the Town's contributions to support the recommendations.

Council Member Fender expressed concern over the outlined fixed route options, noting that they did not go into the Breckenridge, Kitts Creek, or Church St neighborhoods. Consultants shared some reasoning for the suggestions, including highest ridership and ability to expand. Council Member Fender thought past data had shown high ridership among those neighborhoods. She emphasized the importance of wait time and reliability. She expressed concern that solutions presented increased coverage but did not improve wait time. She recommended an advanced booking option. Consultants noted the recommendation included an advanced booking option along with additional vehicles to reduce wait times. Council Member Fender expressed concern that residents who were dissatisfied with the Smart Shuttle may have not taken the survey. In response to Council Member Fender, staff noted the lack of peer communities operating only one microtransit vehicle. Staff emphasized the need for increasing the number of vehicles to alleviate issues. Council Member Fender shared her own difficulty in booking. Staff noted some neighborhoods may have high ridership, but advised fixed route services focused on mass transit rather than individual neighborhoods. Staff noted that fixed route would be supported by microtransit which would service neighborhoods.

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Council Member Robotti supported all of Council Member Fender's comments, specifically noting her concern over a lack of service to the Breckenridge neighborhood. Council Member Robotti stated the original goal of the service was to support individuals with limited mobility and to alleviate traffic. She expressed concern that the first goal was not being achieved due to a lack of reliability, noting that anyone timebound could not rely on the Smart Shuttle. Council Member Robotti felt the presented fixed route options did not service areas where people would want to go. She felt the recommendations did not solve current issues with the service. Consultants advised Council that there were several route options considered and there would be significant investment to pursue that option. Consultants also advised Council that the study recommend concepts that the Town would refine during implementation.

Council Member Robotti felt the airport would be a destination residents would want, and she advocated for focusing on use cases identified by public engagement. Consultants noted the study did consider public engagement and the airport was identified. They advised that they focused on existing local service because including the airport would have a negative wait time tradeoff.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson noted the current service was provided to riders at no cost. She expressed concern over increased burden on the Town with expansion. She indicated support for expanded nodes and additional vehicles, noting value for riders. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson advocated for inclusion of the new Wake Med medical center. She was concerned about reliability. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson advocated for an advanced reservation system with a pilot program. She was not supportive of the fixed route options. She supported increased microtransit. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson noted advantages to using vans which had reduced licensing requirements. She cautioned against a focus on future increased density, stating there would be limited growth. She emphasized the importance of reliability and advocated for increased nodes.

In response to Council Member Rao, staff clarified the study was complete and Council would consider accepting the results at the November 25 Council Meeting. If accepted, the Town would then move to implementation planning.

Council Member Rao noted his personal increased use of transit. He advocated for Morrisville transit to connect with those in neighboring jurisdictions.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Garimella, consultants clarified the fixed routes were kept to a maximum frequency of 30 minutes based on public engagement results. Mayor Pro Tem Garimella felt fixed routes should be focused on commuters but was concerned the proposal would not meet that need. He also was concerned residents' routes would be too long with the proposal. Mayor Pro Tem Garimella suggested rotating the two proposed fixed routes to serve more residents with the same bus. He emphasized the importance of providing residents with more connection options. Consultants reminded Council that fixed routes were intended to complement microtransit service. Mayor Pro Tem Garimella advocated for fixed routes through neighborhoods, noting the ability to connect through to different areas beyond the neighborhoods. He also emphasized the goal of transporting residents. Mayor Pro Tem Garimella expressed concern that the proposed routes did not focus enough on destinations within Morrisville and did not support his preference for local connectivity over regional destinations such as the airport. Staff noted that adding more lines would increase costs and emphasized that outside funding opportunities rely on the Town following justified transit principles.

Mayor Cawley stated that the original intent of the service was not commuter focused. He emphasized reliability as a key issue and expressed support for fixed routes to improve reliability. He requested clarification on how many current nodes would be included in the

proposed routes and asked for combined maps. He supported fixed routes that would be slower and did not feel stops were needed every half mile. Mayor Cawley supported accelerating implementation of fixed routes along with increased microtransit vehicles to demonstrate reliability to residents.

Council Member Johnson expressed support for adding vehicles and nodes as well as advanced booking options to improve wait times and reliability. She noted that the program would never be perfect for everyone but emphasized the need to begin making changes now. She supported the phased approach and asked about the application period for funding. Staff clarified that increased vehicles and nodes could be implemented within the current agreement, while major changes would wait until the next application period in late 2026. In response to Council Member Johnson, Town Manager Zuidema advised that Council would need to reach consensus before staff could bring back a budget recommendation. Council Member Johnson expressed support for the recommendations as a means to begin addressing issues. She was interested in further discussion of fixed or hybrid options in future years. She highlighted the recommendations would allow for analysis and adjustments to improve reliability.

Council Member Robotti suggested discussing the topic further during the Council retreat. She proposed considering a nominal fee for riders to help offset costs, with possible exceptions for seniors and children. She noted this additional funding could support improvements.

Staff clarified that fixed route implementation could not occur immediately due to time needed to meet ADA standards.

Council Member Fender raised concerns about reliability for specific groups, including Wake Tech students and Early College High School students who lacked school bus transportation. She noted that parents had expressed interest in using the Smart Shuttle for these students but could not rely on the service. Council Member Fender questioned how proposed solutions would impact wait times. Staff clarified that the proposal would improve reliability compared to current service. Consultants noted that both options included additional vehicles and nodes. Council Member Fender strongly emphasized that the current system did not meet residents' needs and expressed frustration with waiting multiple years for improvements. She stated that continuing to underfund the system would waste prior investments. Staff emphasized that the system could not meet every need. Consultants reiterated the importance of nodes and microtransit to support a fixed route. Council Member Fender suggested designing fixed routes to align with nodes. Consultants emphasized that the proposed routes were conceptual and could be refined during implementation.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson noted the lack of a clear border with Cary and asked how many nodes were mutual stops with Cary. Staff advised there were currently four. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson suggested identifying additional nodes near the border to provide riders with more options. In response to Council Member Scroggins-Johnson, staff noted Cary offered door-to-door service for seniors and individuals with disabilities as well as fixed routes. Staff advised that Cary also conducted a transit study. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson emphasized the need to understand Cary's plan as Morrisville developed its own. She expressed concern that proposed fixed routes focused solely on Morrisville and lacked interconnectivity. She noted adding more shuttles would improve reliability and suggested reviewing costs during the retreat.

Mayor Cawley advocated for Council to fast-track implementation of the recommendations. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson stated she was not in favor of fixed routes and felt there was not consensus from other members. Council Member Fender expressed support for fixed routes and believed Mayor Pro Tem Garimella did as well. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson was not supportive of accepting the results at the time. Council Member Johnson clarified that

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the November 25 action would be to accept the study results, not adopt next steps. Town Manager Zuidema confirmed the goal was to accept the information for future consideration. Staff noted that fixed route planning would take time and could be ready by Fiscal Year 2028.

Council Member Cawley asked for consensus on quick wins. Staff advised that implementation should occur gradually to monitor reliability and gather feedback. Council Member Johnson expressed comfort with accepting the study and continuing discussion at the retreat. Council Member Robotti supported accepting the study immediately, noting that it would not change before November 25. Council Member Cawley expressed interest in beginning implementation on November 25, while Council Member Robotti stated that Council did not give consensus for his recommendation.

Recess – 8:06 p.m.
Reconvene – 8:26 p.m.

11.b. FY 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report Presentation & Fund Balance Presentation (2025-373-0)
Byron Hayes, Chief Financial Officer

Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Byron Hayes and Engagement Director Lee Ann Watters from auditing firm, Cherry Bekaert, presented the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (FY25) Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and fund balance report. The Town received a clean audit, an unmodified opinion, and the GFOA Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting. There was one finding in the audit which had been corrected and staff implemented corrective action to prevent similar recurring findings.

Director Watters noted a delay in the single audit report due to the federal government shutdown. She noted the firm was prepared to issue the report once guidance from the federal government was received.

Council Member Robotti sought clarity on an uncorrected misstatement noted in the audit presentation. Staff explained the note resulted from a logistical reporting change between FY25 and FY26, in which the length of time sales and facilities tax accrued past the fiscal year end was reduced from 90 to 60 days. The change meant one less distribution of the taxes was recorded for FY25 to improve year-end process efficiencies. With the change now in effect, FY26 would show correct reporting.

Addressing the audit's one finding, CFO Hayes explained to prevent the issue in future years, an additional level of review to all invoices had been added.

12. New Items

12.a. Annexation of 0 Watkins Road (2025-382-0)
Shelly Mayo, Planner III
November 12 - Brief and Action (Resolutions A & B)
November 25 - Public Hearing and Action (Ordinance)

Shelly Mayo, Planner III, presented the annexation request for 0 Watkins Road.

Council Member Robotti sought clarity on the area to be considered.

MOTION: **Council Member Johnson moved to adopt Resolution 2025-382-0A of the Morrisville Town Council Pertaining to the Sufficiency of the Petition to Extend the Town of Morrisville Corporate Limits to Include 0 Watkins Road (ANX-25-0014). The motion was seconded by Council Member Robotti and carried unanimously (7-0).**

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MOTION: **Council Member Johnson moved to adopt Resolution 2025-382-0B of the Morrisville Town Council Setting a Date for a Public Hearing on the Question of Voluntary Annexation for Property Located at 0 Watkins Road (ANX-25-0014). The motion was seconded by Council Member Robotti and carried unanimously (7-0).**

12.b. Annexation of 429 Airport Boulevard (2025-341-0)
Rachel Cypher, Planner II
November 12 - Brief and Action (Resolutions A & B)
November 25 - Public Hearing and Action (Ordinance)

Rachel Cypher, Planner II, presented the annexation request.

MOTION: **Council Member Robotti moved to adopt Resolution 2025-341-0A of the Morrisville Town Council Pertaining to the Sufficiency of the Petition to Extend the Town of Morrisville Corporate Limits to Include 429 Airport Boulevard (ANX-25-0013). The motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).**

MOTION: **Council Member Robotti moved to adopt Resolution 2025-341-0B of the Morrisville Town Council Setting a Date for a Public Hearing on the Question of Voluntary Annexation for Property Located at 429 Airport Boulevard (ANX-25-0013). The motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).**

13. Future Meetings, Events and Resident Involvement Opportunities

For a full listing of events, please see the Town Calendar at www.MorrisvilleNC.gov

14. Council and Manager Comments

Mayor Pro Tem Garimella congratulated the incoming Council Members. He congratulated Mayor Cawley on his reelection and called for them to work together for the town.

Council Member Johnson congratulated and wished luck to the incoming and returning Council Members.

Mayor Cawley noted his attendance at Veteran's Day events and thanked staff, the Morrisville Veterans Foundation, and Preston Pointe. He also noted his attendance at the recent Police vs Fire Turkey Bowl. He issued thanks for the recent election and a commitment to make Morrisville better for all. He congratulated the new Council Members. Mayor Cawley shared excitement for the upcoming Green Day and noted a desire to continue sustainable efforts.

Council Member Robotti congratulated those elected. She encouraged candidates who were not elected to view their campaigns as a success for all their efforts leading up to election day.

Council Member Fender echoed Council Member Robotti's comments and spoke to the courage needed to run for office. She congratulated those reelected. She thanked all residents and neighbors who voted, noted the small percentage of voters in municipal elections. Council Member Fender was sad to be ending her time on Council, noting the opportunity was an honor. She enjoyed being present at the polls, stating it was fulfilling. She encouraged the public to come to Green Day. She encouraged those attending to bring their electronics to recycle and advised the public to create a place to store used electronics until the annual event.

Council Member Rao congratulated those elected and Mayor Pro Tem Garimella for his

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campaign. He spoke about his upcoming term ending. Council Member Rao thanked staff for recent events around small businesses and veterans. He spoke about Veterans Day events in the area and their inspiring messages.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson thanked all who voted. She stated there were 50% more voters than the 2023 election and shared her excitement for residents engaging about the future of the town. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson was honored to be reelected for a fourth term. She was humbled by the conversations had with residents and commented on the importance of the conversations had by all the candidates. She wanted to determine the best way to use the information gathered from residents.

Town Manager Zuidema reminded Council of ongoing advisory committee recruitment, new microphones, and the upcoming Council retreat.

Recess – 9:20 p.m.
Reconvene – 9:28 p.m.

15. Work Sessions

15.a. Airport Boulevard Phase I Extension (2025-400-0)
Michele Stegall, Planning Director
Mark Spanioli, Town Engineer

Michele Stegall, Planning Director, and Mark Spanioli, Town Engineer, led Council discussion on the Airport Boulevard Phase 1 extension. Staff provided history on the project.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson thanked staff for compiling the extensive information on the history of the project and encouraged the public to read the information. She noted recent concerns from residents in the area over safety of children walking to nearby schools. She expressed concerns over this project coming before the McCrimmon flyover project. She also shared concerns over losing a small town feel, safety of the schools, and lost tree canopy.

Planning Director Michele Stegall noted the schools were involved in discussions. She highlighted the creation of school speed zones and enhanced pedestrian safety features. She also shared the schools and the Town would be kept informed during construction. Engineering Director Mark Spanioli highlighted the multi-use paths and sidewalks that would be constructed.

Staff advised Council that both the Airport Blvd project and the McCrimmon project were needed independently of each other. They also clarified that delay of the Airport Blvd project would not result in the money being redirected to the McCrimmon project. They noted the McCrimmon project was waiting on right of way acquisitions. Staff spoke about the benefits of both phases of the Airport Blvd project. Staff advised that upcoming years would have multiple roadway projects and creation of a new route would be beneficial to the community.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson advocated for pausing the Airport Blvd project. She called for reallocation of Town budget prioritizations and noted her understanding that NCDOT funding would be lost.

Council Member Fender expressed concern over the proposed 45 mph speed zone, noting other major roads throughout town were 35 mph. She called for 35 mph and for a barrier to be added between the road and school. Staff advised on the speed determination. Council Member Fender noted delaying the project was not an option and advocated for the road to be 35 mph. She felt strongly that the residents should determine the speed limit rather than NCDOT. Responding to Council Member Fender's comments about a barrier for the school, staff advised that buffers are

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typically negotiated by property owners during right of way acquisitions.

Council Member Johnson was glad to have the conversation to make the project as safe as possible for residents walking in the area. She felt that NCDOT would connect the roads whether now or in the future, and it would be better for Council to be involved. Council Member Johnson sought clarity on Council's ability to dictate speed limits and asked about crossing guards. Staff stated the Town paid for crossing guards at schools in town. Council Member Johnson felt a delay would not happen but acknowledged concerns about safety. She echoed staff's comments about the need for an additional route while McCrimmon was under construction. She felt most users would be Morrisville residents. She wanted to focus on the safety of everyone involved.

Council Member Rao sought clarity on how a delay could happen. Town Manager Zuidema noted the Town still owed some funds for the project due to increased costs but advised that invested money would not be returned if delayed. He also noted that NCDOT may not delay due to agreements in place or they could return at a later time when costs would be even higher to the Town. Council Member Rao was concerned that a delay would cause NCDOT to not return to the project and the Town would lose the funds invested. He was not happy to continue but wanted to address safety concerns moving forward.

Council Member Robotti agreed safety of residents was paramount. She noted there had been active work on the project for six years and that safety measures were built into the design. She did not see a path to delay or cancel. If the speed limit was set to 45 mph, she advocated for police officers to serve as crossing guards. Council Member Robotti noted the project had been on the Comprehensive Transportation Plan since 2002, and while she empathized with those who moved to the area without knowing, she did not think it reasonable to call off the project right before groundbreaking. She felt NCDOT would likely not look at future projects in the town favorably. She advocated for heavy enforcement of the speed limit. She did not feel there would be an issue with reducing the speed to 35 mph and advocated for Council to do so if possible.

Staff advised Council on the negative tradeoffs of delaying the project including negative impacts on several future funding opportunities for this and other projects, requirements to still pay remaining expenses on the project, no control over when the project would be brought back, reduced trust with regional partners, and the potential for the Town to be required to pay back any federal funds received for the project.

Council Member Scroggins-Johnson spoke about past challenges with Morrisville Carpenter Rd. She encouraged staff to explore restriping the new portion of Airport Blvd down to two lanes until Phase 2 of the project was completed. Council Member Robotti supported the suggestion.

Mayor Pro Tem Garimella felt the project would alleviate traffic, give additional options to drivers, and would improve internal circulation.

In response to Council Member Rao, staff noted they would share Council's concerns and would make clear Council's request for reduced speed. Staff and Council discussed Council Member Scroggins-Johnson's suggestion.

Mayor Cawley agreed with staff's recommendation to continue the project while working with NCDOT on safety concerns. He advocated for 45 mph once Phase 2 was completed.

Council indicated consensus for staff to pursue the speed limit reduction, along with crossing guards and other safety measures for the schools.

16. Closed Session

15.a. Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a)(4) to Discuss a

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Matter of Economic Development.

15.b. ADDED: Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a)(6) to Discuss a personnel matter.

MOTION: Council Member Rao made a motion to enter Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11 (a)(4)(6) to discuss a matter of economic development and a personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Council Member Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).

Town Council entered Closed Session at 10:27 p.m.

MOTION: Council Member Robotti made a motion to end Closed Session and resume Open Session. The motion was seconded by Council Member Scroggins-Johnson and carried unanimously (7-0).

Town Council resumed Open Session at 10:57 p.m.

17. Adjournment

MOTION: Council Member Robotti made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Scroggins-Johnson seconded the motion which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mayor Cawley adjourned the meeting at 10:59 p.m.

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