

**MINUTES**  
**BEL AIR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TOWN HALL MEETING**  
**JANUARY 20, 2026**

The Board of Commissioners Town Hall Meeting was held on January 20, 2026, at 7:00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Paula S. Etting, Chair  
Commissioner Steven T. Chizmar  
Commissioner Kristien S. Foss  
Commissioner Gavin O. Hanley  
Commissioner Jakob D. Taylor

**IN ATTENDANCE:** David Anderson, Media & Public Relations Specialist  
Edward Hopkins, Town Administrator  
Stephen Kline, Director of Public Works  
Michael Krantz, Director of HR & Administration  
Charles Moore, Chief of Police  
Angela Robertson, Director of Economic Development  
Kevin Small, Director of Planning  
Elizabeth Thompson, Town Counsel  
Pamela Wockenfuss, Deputy Director of Finance  
Jane Sudbrink, Recording Secretary

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Etting called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and read the roll call of commissioners.

**II. INVOCATION**

Commissioner Taylor offered a prayer of thanks for bringing citizens and elected officials together to engage in discussion and dialogue, with the goal of serving the citizens of Bel Air and improving the town and communities that they cherish.

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Foss motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Hanley seconded the motion. Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the agenda. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5-0.

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Taylor motioned that the minutes of the Board of Commissioners meetings held on December 10, 2025, open and closed sessions; December 15, 2025, open and closed sessions; and December 22, 2025, be approved as submitted. Commissioner Chizmar seconded the motion. Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the approval of the minutes for December 10, 2025, and December 15, 2025. Ayes: Commissioners Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Abstention: Commissioner Foss. Nays: None. Motion

carried 4 Yeas—1 Abstention. Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the approval of the minutes for December 22, 2025. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5–0.

## **VI. PRESENTATION**

### **A. Certificate of Appreciation Presentation to Fire Police**

Chair Etting read the certificate of appreciation aloud. She said the town extends its thanks to the Fire Police for donating their time to support the police department and the town by ensuring safety and security at community events and responding to emergencies. Chair Etting said that over the past decade the Fire Police have provided hundreds of hours of free, reliable support to the town, assisting at events that draw large crowds and providing traffic control around emergencies. She said the Fire Police have faithfully supported first responders in Harford County since 1991, which has resulted in savings on police overtime costs, while still keeping the town and county safe and orderly.

Chief Moore said the Fire Police are his second team in the field. He emphasized how his department can always rely on them. He said they are humble, well-equipped, and trained, and they come out on short notice ready to work. Chief Moore stated he was not sure what the police department would do without their assistance and he felt lucky to have them. Chief Moore then presented a check for \$1,000 from the town to the Fire Police.

## **VII. PUBLIC HEARING**

### **A. Ordinance 851-25 Amending Bel Air Town Code Chapter 165 Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations § 165-53 Performance Standards and Development Guidelines by Use, § 165-53C(2)(g) Tavern, Tavern with Entertainment and Microbrewery/Winery/Distillery, § 165-53H(2)(a) Cannabis Business, and § 165-53H(2)(b) Liquor Store**

Chair Etting opened the public hearing at 7:09 pm.

Tricia Miller, Crabby Axe Throwing, 331 Baltimore Pike, said she came to the public hearing looking for more clarification. She noted that the second version of the ordinance is clearer and seemed it would not adversely affect her business. Ms. Miller said that her business is currently planning to add a kitchen to its location. She said she would like to acquire a Café B license from the liquor board. She was concerned that the ordinance could be a hindrance to businesses because Bel Air is a “quaint town” with churches, schools, and daycares at nearly every corner. Ms. Miller asked for clarification about the distance regulations—are they door to door or property line to property line.

Brook Voss, 21 S. Main St, Boyd and Fulford, asked for clarification about café licenses. He said he will be opening a butchery business at the Boyd and Fulford location and was concerned about lunch business. He noted that established restaurants will be grandfathered in with their liquor licenses. Mr. Voss was concerned that new businesses may not have that advantage and his business would be adversely affected.

John Streett, 911 Old Fallston Road, said he owns real estate in Bel Air, including Boyd and Fulford. Mr. Streett said has just signed a five-year lease with Mr. Voss that includes a five-year renewal. Mr. Streett said the Boyd and Fulford location is an anchor on Main Street and the new facility will be 4,800 sq ft. He emphasized the importance of revitalization on Main Street and the need for businesses to

know the rules and regulations. Mr. Streett said he and Mr. Voss have invested a lot of money in this location with the goal of making Main Street a destination and Mr. Voss's business the anchor store. Mr. Streett stressed the need for everyone to work together.

Phillip Rhudy, 418 N. Main Street, Independent Brewing Company, said that he and Mr. O'Neill have been actively involved for more than twelve years in bringing positive changes to state, county, and local laws affecting breweries and distilleries. He admitted that he was, at first, "stunned" by this new ordinance because it would have eliminated any possibility for his business to expand, as well as preventing any new breweries/distilleries/wineries from opening in the town. Mr. Rhudy said that thanks to the staff's and commissioners' hard work, including doing research; consulting town commissions, like the Planning Commission; and listening to community input, the ordinance has been satisfactorily revised and appropriately addresses the intent of Senate Bill 215. He noted that the revisions keep the town business-friendly while avoiding a dangerously prohibitive precedent. Mr. Rhudy said this revised ordinance demonstrates how, through working cooperatively with all interested parties, legislation can work as it is intended to do. Mr. Rhudy thanked everyone for their time, dedication, and willingness to work on this legislation.

Casey Brooks, Brookside Market, said he has the "same agenda" as the previous speakers. He said he, too, is looking for clarification on the final legislation. Mr. Brooks stated that he is excited to be a part of downtown Bel Air. He noted that the initial legislation was concerning and he thanked staff and commissioners for the revision.

Chair Etting closed the public hearing at 7:17 pm. She noted that the board received a letter from Michelle Cartellini on behalf of Charlie Caitlin, LLC and the board will consider her letter as well.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **A. Ordinance 851-25 Amending Bel Air Town Code Chapter 165 Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations § 165-53 Performance Standards and Development Guidelines by Use, § 165-53C(2)(g) Tavern, Tavern with Entertainment and Microbrewery/Winery/Distillery, § 165-53H(2)(a) Cannabis Business, and § 165-53H(2)(b) Liquor Store**

Commissioner Foss motioned that Ordinance No. 851-25, Version No. 2, revising Town Code Chapter 165, Article VII, related to setbacks from cannabis businesses, liquor stores, and taverns be approved by the Board of Town Commissioners. Commissioner Hanley seconded the motion.

Mr. Small provided background on the ordinance. He listed the state codes that regulate cannabis businesses, liquor stores, and taverns. He also listed the particular town codes that regulate these establishments. Mr. Small said the town's code is currently not consistent with the state's code. Mr. Small said this ordinance will establish amendments that will bring the town into compliance with the state. These changes include a 500 ft separation between cannabis businesses and sensitive uses such as schools, parks, and places of worship; and a 300 ft separation between liquor stores/taverns and sensitive uses. Mr. Small further clarified that the separation measurement is building to building for liquor stores/taverns, and property line to property line for cannabis businesses. In addition, for cannabis businesses, he said that the town reduced separation from residential uses to 100 ft from the original 500 ft as per state law.

Mr. Small said that based on staff research and recommendations from the Planning Commission, the revised ordinance avoids creating excessive non-conforming uses while still allowing new businesses to come into town. He specifically stated that, “[T]he amendments received by the Board of Town Commissioners on December 15, 2025, included as Version No. 1 – Exhibit A, are rescinded and superseded by Version No. 2.”

Commissioner Taylor thanked the business partners for coming to the public hearing to voice their concerns. Commissioner Taylor then asked Mr. Small to confirm that the legislation will not adversely impact the businesses. Specifically, Mr. Small confirmed that Crabby Axe is not considered a tavern. He said he will need more information about the business going into Boyd and Fulford but stated that the business will also not be adversely impacted.

Mr. Small confirmed for Commissioner Chizmar that the only change to the town’s code for liquor businesses and taverns was the addition of 300 ft from places of worship, as mandated by state law. Commissioner Chizmar clarified that this ordinance is in place because of mandates from the state dictating that the town cannot treat alcohol and cannabis businesses differently except via the setback distances established by the state. He said it is not the board’s intention to adversely impact any business in town.

Ms. Thompson added information. She said that after considerable discussions with the liquor board, there are several provisions of the state code that are not in the town code. She noted for the public, that nothing she and Mr. Small will be proposing for revision will affect tonight’s legislation. Ms. Thompson said there is a waiver provision under the state code regarding alcohol establishments that the town does not provide. She said an applicant can seek a waiver of the setbacks through the liquor board with recommendations from the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Thompson said she and Mr. Small will be establishing this waiver in the town code to comply with the state.

Mr. Small clarified for Commissioner Hanley that property line to property line is the default in the town’s code unless specified.

Chair Etting said she echoes Commissioner Chizmar’s statements. She felt that the state law does not consider the interplay between liquor establishments and cannabis. Chair Etting said that state law mandates that the setback for cannabis businesses is 500 ft and the board will maintain that setback. She noted that the Charlie Caitlin, LLC letter asked the town to reduce the setback to 300 ft, but said it is not in the board’s power to make that reduction. Chair Etting noted there have been questions regarding why the town would permit cannabis businesses. Again, she said that it is a state referendum where the public voted to make cannabis legal. The state followed up with statutes to implement cannabis businesses. Chair Etting noted that the state wants liquor establishments and cannabis businesses treated equally, but did not provide much guidance to municipalities on how to implement these statutes. She said the staff and board have considered the matter carefully, and it is not the intention of the board to make “life difficult for taverns.”

Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the approval of Ordinance 851-25, Version 2. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5–0.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Commissioner Liaison Responsibilities (Boards, Committees, and Commissions)**

Chair Etting moved that the amended administrative policy IA.1 Town Commissioners Assigned Liaison Responsibilities be adopted by the Board of Town Commissioners. Commissioner Chizmar seconded the motion.

Chair Etting read into the record the commission and liaison assignments for each commissioner. Mr. Hopkins said there are still liaison openings on the Sustainability Work Group and the Neighborhood Transportation Management Program. Chair Etting concluded that the board will consider these additional liaison assignments.

Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the revised Procedure 100 Assigned Liaison Responsibilities. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5–0.

### **B. Policy I.E.6 Signing of Checks Amendment**

Commissioner Chizmar motioned that amended Operations/Administration/Finance Policy I.E.6 authorizing the withdrawal of town funds on deposit with any commercial banking institution within the State of Maryland be approved by the Board of Town Commissioners. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion.

Ms. Wockenfuss explained that the town's commercial banking institution, M&T Bank, requires the filing of a board-approved policy specifying the town officials who may withdraw funds. She said signature cards are required to be filed with the bank, and Commissioner Foss's signature must be added to the policy.

Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the approval of the amendment to Operations/Administration/Finance Policy I.E.6. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5–0.

### **C. Appointment to the Board of Appeals**

#### **1. John A. Krajewski**

Commissioner Hanley motioned that the appointment of John A. Krajewski to the Bel Air Board of Appeals for a term of three years, effective immediately, be approved by the Board of Town Commissioners. Commissioner Foss seconded the motion.

Commissioner Chizmar said Mr. Krajewski is a 35-year resident of the town. He said Mr. Krajewski has worked in regional planning with state and agricultural agencies. Commissioner Chizmar said Mr. Krajewski has also been involved with private construction so he is familiar with zoning. Commissioner Chizmar concluded that this background is a good foundation to serve on the Board of Appeals. Chair Etting said she has spoken with Mr. Krajewski and he is enthusiastic about bringing his skills and background to the board.

Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the appointment of John A. Krajewski to the Board of Appeals. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5–0.

## **2. David E. Starleper**

Commissioner Taylor motioned that the appointment of David E. Starleper to the Bel Air Board of Appeals for a term of three years, effective immediately, be approved by the Board of Town Commissioners. Commissioner Chizmar seconded the motion.

Commissioner Chizmar said Mr. Starleper has worked in the home mortgage banking business for over ten years. He said Mr. Starleper also has experience in finance and real estate, so he is a great candidate for the Board of Appeals. Commissioner Chizmar added that he has known Mr. Starleper for several years and he was recommended by the chair of the Board of Appeals. Commissioner Hanley also supported Mr. Starleper as a candidate for the Board of Appeals.

Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the appointment of David E. Starleper to the Board of Appeals. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5–0.

## **D. Appointment to the Historic Preservation Commission**

Commissioner Hanley motioned that the appointment Liliana Norkaitis of to the Historic Preservation Commission for a term of three years, effective immediately, be approved by the Board of Town Commissioners. Commissioner Chizmar seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hanley said that Ms. Norkaitis grew up in Bel Air, and had lived in a 125-year-old house. He said she attended University of Maryland graduating with a degree in government and politics. Ms. Norkaitis currently works for the general assembly. Commissioner Hanley said she is a good fit for the commission and will work to preserve the historic character of the town.

Mr. Krantz asked for a vote on the appointment of Liliana Norkaitis to the Historic Preservation Commission. Ayes: Foss, Chizmar, Taylor, Hanley, Etting. Nays: None. Motion carried 5–0.

## **X. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Winter Dance Lessons start on January 26 at the armory. Classes are Intro to West Coast Swing and Intro to Latin Salsa/Bachata. The six-week course runs through March 9 and classes are on Mondays. The American Red Cross will hold two blood drives at the armory on January 22 and 28 from 10 am to 3 pm on both days. The Police Department's Explorer Post 9010 and the Bel Air Lions' Club are hosting Bingo Night on January 30 at the armory. The doors open at 6 pm and the games begin at 7 pm. All proceeds benefit the Explorer Post. The Starving Artists show and sale runs through February 28 at the Harford Artists Association Gallery in the Armory Marketplace. The gallery is open from 10 am to 6 pm Wednesday to Friday and 10 am to 4 pm on the weekends. The Cultural Arts Commission will meet on January 21. The Committee for Seniors and Citizens in Need will meet on January 22. The Historic Preservation Commission will meet on January 22. The Board of Town Commissioners will meet on January 27 and February 2. Mr. Small said the Board of Appeals will not meet on January 28. The applicant had withdrawn the submission.

## **XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

John Stump, 523 E. Broadway, described the purpose of the Downtown Alliance, which is to enhance and preserve the downtown's appearance and provide economic stability. Mr. Stump focused on

community identity. He said identity is not a slogan, rather it is the character of the town. He said community identity does not survive without public safety. He said if people do not feel safe, businesses will not want to invest in the town. Mr. Stump said that everything the town values will erode. When safety declines, economic stability will also decline. He said he is aware of municipalities that were too late in investing in public safety. Mr. Stump said Bel Air is not immune and that on June 24, 2025, a large amount of an illegal hallucinogenic was seized on its way to Harford County. He said drug threats are real and without a well-staff police department, the police are forced to react defensively to situations rather than preventively. Mr. Stump said a well-staffed department is not an option, it is essential in order to protect residents, businesses, and the future of the town. Without strong public safety, progress stalls, and residents will be fearful. He said our culture and quality of life matter and he asked the board to consider fully funding the request for two new police officers in the FY27 budget.

Donna Dickey, 1206 Midwood Ct, said the Rockfield Foundation is excited to have Commissioner Foss on board as liaison. She said the Winter Wonderland committee was able to make a \$500 donation to the Explorer Program and \$1,500 to the Fire Police. Ms. Dickey asked for volunteers to help take the lights down in town.

Logan Forest, 708 Jesse Court, said he is a member of Troop 810 and thanked the board for letting the public attend this meeting.

## **XII. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Chair Etting thanked the IT Department for their work during the recent Verizon outage. She appreciated the special network set up for town phones so that she could remain in communication.

Commissioner Taylor offered words of encouragement and confidence to the Public Works Department regarding the potential upcoming snowstorm.

Commissioner Chizmar thanked Mr. Hopkins and staff for the informative AAR report regarding the recent pole fire. He appreciated that the backup systems were effective and that the report provided an understanding of what occurred. He said he looks forward to reviewing the BG&E report.

Commissioner Hanley congratulated Senior Officer Jose Maldonado on his recent retirement.

Commissioner Foss spoke about the passing of George Harrison who owned Harrison Paint Store in town. She described his involvement in the town and county and expressed her condolences to his family.

Mr. Hopkins listed what residents can do for snowstorm preparation to prevent any dangers and to enable snow plows. He noted that he will be on daily conference calls with Chief Moore and Mr. Kline. Mr. Kline added that during the snowstorm, residents who rely on street parking may park anywhere in the parking garage but must be out by Monday.

Chair Etting said she checked on the status of the Maryland American Water rate application. She said there was a filing in the court schedule detailing that the parties had notified the commission that they had reached a settlement in principle and resolved all contested issues. Chair Etting said they requested a suspension of the current procedural schedule. The commission granted that request. She said she will continue to monitor the situation.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Foss motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.

**APPROVED:** February 2, 2026

Signature on file  
Paula S. Etting, Chair  
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file  
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk