THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GRETNA TOWN COUNCIL WAS HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, AUGUST 11, 2026 AT 6:30 PM WITH MAYOR R. KEITH MOTLEY PRESIDING.

The following were present for the meeting:

R. Keith Motley, Mayor — Bill Gillespie, Interim Town Manager — Michael G. Turner, Attorney
John Hewitt, Chief, GPD — Crystal Grubbs, Clerk/Treasurer — Stacy Hedrick, Asst. Clerk/Treasurer
Shannon Kelly, Star Tribune — Janet Mease — Kim Burnette — Stuart Burnette — Wayne Wood
Arlene Creasy — Jacob Hancock — Kendall Ward — Barbara Hubbard — Aubrey Myers
Isaac DeGarmo — Lexi Shelhorse — Kathryn Scott — Carissa Mulahn — Michelle Motley

Council Present:

Riverra Jackson — Mike Bond — Dianne Jennings — Mike Burnette — Deborah Moran

Council Absent:

James Gilbert

Meeting called to order 6:32 PM

1. Prayer
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. **Approval of Minutes:**

   A motion was made by Mike Bond seconded by Deborah Moran to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting July 11, 2026.

   Motion carried/Vote was unanimous

4. **Invoice Review** – Council reviewed and discussed the invoice list – invoices paid $64,227.77
5. **Council Agenda**

Kendall Ward – Martial Arts Studio – Keith Motley stated that Kendall Ward was here to address Council concerning possibly opening up a martial arts studio. Kendall Ward introduced himself and spoke of his background in martial arts, and his background as a Chef and in nutrition. Mr. Ward stated that he's been listening to the citizens in Town and on the 434 Facebook page; they want something to come into Town. With that said, Mr. Ward said that he would like to partner with the Town and the Police Department to create a first responders activities league to be mentors for the youth in the area. Mr. Motley asked if a site had been chosen. Mr. Ward stated that he was looking at some of the vacant buildings on Main Street. Council asked what Mr. Ward was looking for from the Town. Mr. Ward stated that funding would be appreciated and that he is currently working on being a non-profit. So, sponsorships from local businesses in and around the community would be great. There was discussion of his business plan and business license application and helping Mr. Ward get in touch with the right agencies for financial support.

7:00 PM – Public Hearing – Possible transfer of ownership of the Gretna Industrial Park to Pittsylvania County – Open

Keith Motley stated that at this time, we'll open the public hearing on the potential transfer of ownership of the Gretna Industrial Park located here in the town to the Pittsylvania County Industrial Development Authority. Mr. Motley informed the public of the rules for the public hearing and that each person that wishes to speak would have 3 minutes. Michael Turner suggested that Mr. Gillespie inform the public of what this public hearing is about so they will have the correct information for their questions or concerns.

Bill Gillespie stated that I think everybody here knows that the property we're talking about was given to the town by Pittsylvania County at no cost about 10 years ago or more. The company that is located in this park has a business that connects to the other industrial park. One of the understandings that we had, not necessarily town, but with the county, was that there would be a road built between the two manufacturing areas. But the town couldn't afford to do that. So, that generated some discussion with the Pittsylvania County's Economic Development Director, as to what we could do to use this park for economic development for the town and the county. The Town will receive 50/50 on the real estate taxes from the businesses that go into the park, then after 10 years, the Town will receive 100% of the real estate taxes.

Mr. Gillespie stated that the acreage is a little over 100 acres but the lots will be sold in 4 – 5 acre lots. The topography of the land will not permit any larger lots without a lot of grading work. That being said, only small to medium-sized businesses will be there. The roadway itself will cost $2.7 million dollars, and the Town does not have that kind of money. The County is willing to take the property and develop it, put in the roadway that will become state maintained. They are willing to install the water and sewer infrastructure in the industrial park.

Mr. Gillespie stated that a data center will not come to the industrial park. There are 2 reasons that a data center will not be there. One, the town does not have enough water supply to support it and two, there's not enough power to support it. That's why the solar farm is next to Dominion's substation, so Dominion can have the extra power source. A data center is not going to happen.

Mr. Gillespie reminded the public that the Town does not have the financial resources or the marketing resources to get businesses to come. The County, however, has those resources. They plan on building 2 shell buildings and market them. This will be a win, win situation for the Town and the County. This will still be within town limits.

Michael Turner asked what an investment amount would be to improve the road, add water and sewer, build the buildings, etc.

Mr. Gillespie stated that an easy $3 million to $4 million and that's probably a low figure. The roadway that's already there would have cost the Town around $200,000 just to get to VDOT standards. The County is taking in and making the necessary repairs to get it up to VDOT standards.

Stuart Burnette introduced himself and stated that he owns property near the industrial park in question. Mr. Burnette stated that he was glad that Amthor is located in the industrial park, was not happy about the solar project but I understand that it generates revenue for the Town. Mr. Burnette stated that if the County takes over, then the Town will not have any say in what comes in. Mr. Burnette also stated that he's concerned that the County has something in mind already to come into the park and is not telling anyone. It bothers me that the Town has given up and is leaving it up to the County. Thank you.

Mr. Gillespie reiterated that no mega businesses would be coming into this industrial site. The County wants smaller lots.

Stuart Burnette stated that one of those lots had 40 acres, I would think more of that could be developed as opposed to 4 or 5 acres. Mr. Burnette asked about the zoning and when it was zoned.

Mr. Gillespie stated that the industrial park is already zoned an M2. It was rezoned a couple of years ago. A data center would be zoned as something else. Mr. Gillespie mentioned that due to the wetlands inside the industrial park, the lots had to be broken down smaller. The more companies you have, the more people you have spending money in town.

Stuart Burnette stated that he's worried about contamination of the secondary water supply which is White Thorn Creek. Especially with water being a big issue lately.

Mr. Gillespie stated that everyone is concerned about that.

Jacob Hancock I am Jacob Hancock, and I did not come tonight prepared to talk or anything, but I just moved here to Huffman Street a few months ago. But I've grown up around Gretna, and my whole family's been here. Moving to town made me see Gretna in a different light. It is a lovely quiet little town that is an amazing little town full of amazing people, and I just want to see positive progress. I like progress. I can go to downtown Lynchburg and see the progress that's happened there and the progress that's happened in downtown Danville, and we see that some neat progress, really cool stuff that's happened. I'm 34 years old; I'm probably going to live in Gretna or in the Greater Gretna area for the rest of my life. I want to see positive things happening, and I know that we have talked about whether there's not going to be data centers there, but we've heard that across the whole country there is a lot of money in data centers. What is to stop those little tracks from being turned into larger tracks? I know that you've said that that can't happen. And that it might not actually be viable land for a data center, but I'm terrified of a data center coming to town because I see that as negative progress. So, what's to keep them from merging that into one big mega site, even though it's not a huge site? What is it to keep them from merging all the little tracts, plus that 40-acre tract that we still don't know about? What's to keep them from merging with that into one huge entity or something? That's my question.

Bill Gillespie stated that what is keeping them from doing that is, it's already been a site development approval of the lots, the road system has been laid out, the water/sewer system has been laid out. That's all been approved so if they decided to do something different, they would have to go back through the rezoning process. And I'm not sure what the zoning would be for a data center. I know in the development plan that has been approved, they are looking for smaller businesses.

Riverra Jackson asked Bill to state what an M2 zoning is.

Bill Gillespie stated that M2 zoning is light industrial. I am not sure how you would zone for a data center. The water structure is not there to support a data center. We've looked at what would be the best use for that area, and small to medium-sized businesses are better suited.

Keith Motley stated that the roadway is the key. The road needs to be put in place; Amthor needs the ability to go from one plant to the other without being on the main road with newly built trucks.

Aubry Myers stated that the town manager covered everything he had a question about.

Keith Motley asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak.

Arlene Creasy stated that she wanted to say that I'm proud of what you're doing. Years ago, I was on economic development board when a supervisor insisted that we buy that property, and I mean we heard that day and night. So, the county bought it and gave it to Ozzy Miller in economic development. The supervisors marketed the piece of property. But we could do nothing with the property. I'm the one that made the motion to give it back to Fred Ingram, so he could do whatever he thought was possible. It's been sitting there all these years, and I know it's not a wonderful piece of property, but I'm pleased to hear that you're doing something, and this is the way to go. I think it's a good idea. Thank you.

Keith Motley thank you, Arlene. We've had that property for close to 20 years. We have attempted at times past to show it to a larger industry. It never fit the scope of what they were looking for. It had no water, no sewer, no natural gas. It would always die on the vine, and so we showed it to a second entity, and that died on the vine. This is the first time we've had any real option of being able to develop that into what needs to be. Time and time again, we've had people say, "Well, how are we ever going to grow?" We're not going to grow if we don't have something to make it grow. If you're not working here, there's not something to bring people here for jobs. You're not going to have the activity of what the tax revenue will bring in, or for those people to shop here, or eat here, or buy here, or live here. So, it's a small footprint, but we either do that, or we continue to hear folks say we're not growing, and we're not growing because we squash everything. All right, is there anybody else who would like an opportunity to speak?

Kathy Scott, I live right here in Gretna, I've been here for about 5 years now. My question is about the wetlands, has that been addressed. I have master naturalist tendencies, and I would like to know if there's any plans on preserving that wetlands and protecting them from industry.

Bill Gillespie Wetlands have their own protection. If you want to try to go through the wetland, you're going to fight the Corps of Engineers, and fight DEQ. So, all the wetlands are not being touched because it costs too much to be able to. It's just too much to get into it. So, all of that area is basically just staying like it is, and the runoff is going to go through it like it's always done. But no, the wetlands will not be touched.

Keith Motley stated that the state of Virginia has an extremely complicated process. If you just try to disturb a wetland, you can be fined and many other things. Some of the metropolitan areas, if you were in Northern Virginia, Metro Richmond, and if a wetland is destroyed, then that developer has to buy wetlands in another part of the state. We actually have a businessman here in the Chatham area that has wetlands that he sells to people from Northern Virginia because you have to go through this strict process and it has to meet all these regulations, and you pay 1000s upon 1000s of dollars to say, okay, I destroyed the wetlands on Kathy Scott's property to build the road, and that has happened in Northern Virginia. But then I went to Southside Virginia to Deborah Moran, and I bought $25,000 worth of wetlands. But the best thing to do with wetlands, Miss Scott, is simply leave them alone.

Stuart Burnette stated he has a question about the roadway. Will they need to build a bridge to get over to that part on the other side of the creek to get to Amthor? That's where the 40 acres are.

Bill Gillespie stated that in the preliminary plans that I saw, they are not crossing the creek.

Keith Motley stated that he's not familiar with the 40 acres, everything we have is 100 + acres. It's 110 total, but I'm not familiar with the 40 acres.

Bill Gillespie stated he didn't see anything in there outside of what the original industrial park looked like that was adjacent to it that was included in this.

Stuart Burnette stated that the notification in the paper mentions a 40-acre site, and from what I could tell, I thought it was on the south side of the creek. Again, the pin number didn't match up.

Keith Motley stated that South side of the creek, if I'm correct, would fall over on your side.

Stuart Burnette stated Yeah, but above my land.

Keith Motley stated that I'll be honest with you. Most everything we've got in the blueprint of the industrial park comes from 29 over, and White Thorn comes under the bridge. But everything is from 29 over to behind the dairy, behind the middle school, behind the existing park.

Riverra Jackson stated this would have been what was in the notice in the paper, right? It's what he just breaks down. 110 acres into 84-acre plot, 9 acres and 17 acres.

Keith Motley stated that he only saw 84 acres. Even when we thought we could do something more interesting, we were going to have to stop this side of the creek because you get into the creek and then you start getting into some wetland and it was a no-man zone because it goes over to that ravine and down in there and then here's Highway 29. We could never do anything there when we were trying to show it. All right. Is there anybody else that would like an opportunity to speak? Now's your opportunity. We don't want you to go out and put on Facebook that you didn't get the opportunity to speak, and that we didn't give you the chance to communicate. We don't want that. So now is your chance. So, hearing no other comment, we've got a motion on the table to close our public hearing on the matter of the transfer of property to the Pittsylvania County IDA from the town of Gretna. Do I have a second?

7:33 PM – Public Hearing – Closed

A motion was made by Mike Bond seconded by Riverra Jackson to close the public hearing.

Roll Call Vote:

Riverra Jackson – yes	Mike Bond – yes	Dianne Jennings – yes
Mike Burnette – yes	Deborah Moran – yes	

Motion carried/Vote was unanimous

Police Report – Keith Motley stated that Chief Hewitt was here to give the monthly police report. Chief Hewitt gave the report. Chief mentioned that the National Night Out went well and they had a lot of positive feedback. Chief also mentioned that he has talked with the potential new owners of Gretna Village Apartments. It was a very positive discussion about their plans for the property. The potential new owners suggested that Chief call other police localities to see how they run their other properties. Those police departments stated that if the new owners tell you something, they are going to do it. Mr. Motley asked about the potential takeover of the property. Chief stated around January or February. There was discussion of the potential new owners getting grants and renovating each of the apartments. There was discussion about equipment and staff. Chief mentioned that if Council approved, the police department would like to use some of the Hedrick Farm as a firing range. Council asked Chief to come back with information.

Cemetery update – Bill Gillespie stated that Jesse met with the surveyor to place the pins. The tree cutting has been done and the limbs that are hanging over should be trimmed within two weeks. Keith Motley mentioned that topsoil and seed would be needed so we can get some grass in that area.

Water Plant update – Bill Gillespie mentioned that we have applied again with the VDH to come up with the design work for the water plant. This can be approached in 2 ways. (1) is through VDH where they will come up with the design. But that grant will probably take about another year which pushes construction back another year. So, we are moving forward with an application to the US Economic Development Authority for a grant. Keith Motley asked if Rachel Gatewood was continuing to work on the grant application. Mr. Gillespie stated yes. If we can push hard for the Economic Development Grant, the Town's debt service would only be about $80,000 - $85,000 per year. USDA would be a 40-year loan with a possible 2% interest rate.

Whitethorn Creek application – Bill Gillespie stated that the permit application has been submitted to the Army Corp of Engineers and DEQ. Mr. Gillespie stated that DEQ has 60 days to respond. Mike Bond asked why it takes so long for them to review it. We are not asking for a new withdrawal, we are just renewing what we already had. Mr. Gillespie stated it's because we are applying for a 15-year permit, so they have to review everything, even future use.

Water issue update – Bill Gillespie informed Council that we've been flushing the system for 3 weeks. The biggest problem the Town has is that some of the lines are cast iron, some are ductile lines, and then you have some dead-end lines. We are testing the water, and everything is coming back passing. Mr. Gillespie stated that we need to be aware of these issues so we can hopefully isolate the problem and flush it out of the system. Keith Motley stated that some areas are complaining of an odor in the water, but others don't have this issue. Mr. Gillespie stated that is why we are doing a full flush of the system. If we get a new plant, carbon filters will be in place, and you shouldn't have these issues. The reservoir is not turning over like it did six months ago. Mr. Motley asked if the Town is still under the emergency notice. Mr. Gillespie stated yes that we are still under notice until the State lifts the emergency. Michelle Motley stated that she has to have a filter on her water line and that she is the 3rd house up from the end of the water line. Wayne Wood mentioned that the issue with one of his tenants, the one that went on the news, was that she wasn't using enough water to flush out the hot water tank. So then when she did use it, the water came out dirty because everything built up in the bottom of the tank. The hot water tanks need to be flushed out at least once a year. Ms. Motley stated that she's never flushed the hot water tank since she moved in. Mr. Wood stated that all you need to do is hook up a water hose to the tank, open the valve so the tank will empty. If there is a lot of sediment it may not flow out.

6. **Unfinished Business**

Town tours – Keith Motley informed Council that about 3 weeks ago, he was asked to go on "towns tour" with statewide city planners. They visited each locality, Chatham, Gretna and Hurt. Visited the schools, industrial parks, recreational parks, and we discussed our water plant project. Rachel Gatewood was involved and they wanted to know what each locality was looking at as far as projects. This group will go back and do some brainstorming about these areas. Should hear something back in about six months from this group.

Love sign – Keith Motley stated that the sign is in the painting process, they are hoping it will be completed by the fall of the year. Evergreen will handle the landscaping and the sitting of the sign.

Grass letters – Keith Motley mentioned that since we've put the grass letters on the back of the utility bills, we've had a lot of good response.

Flower baskets – Keith Motley informed Council that Jesse is looking at the flower baskets and taking them down when necessary.

7. **New Business**

Proposed new sports complex – Deborah Moran asked about the proposed sports complex. Riverra Jackson stated that there will be a community engagement meeting on September 1st and the Gretna Library at 5:30 PM. Danville Off Sports are the ones interested in doing this project. After some discussion, Mike Bond asked if the Town could connect with this group, so we don't duplicate what they are hoping to put in at this complex.

Cypress trees – Dianne Jennings mentioned that the Cypress trees on Main Street and Northside needed trimming back. You cannot see the oncoming traffic to pull out onto Main Street. Keith Motley mentioned that the trees on Franklin Blvd. near Martin Luther King Jr. Drive needed trimming back as well.

Pittsylvania County Resolution – Keith Motley stated that we need to sign the resolution. Michael Turner stated that this would give the Industrial Park to the Pittsylvania County Industrial Development Authority transferring by deed 3 parcels as advertised.

A motion was made by Mike Bond seconded by Dianne Jennings to adopt the resolution transferring the Industrial Park property to the Pittsylvania County Industrial Development Authority by deed, 3 parcels. Authorizing Keith Motley, Mayor of the Town of Gretna, to sign all documents on behalf of the Town.

Roll Call Vote:

Riverra Jackson – yes	Mike Bond – yes	Dianne Jennings – yes
Mike Burnette – yes	Deborah Moran – yes	

Motion carried/Vote was unanimous

Adjournment – A motion was made by Mike Bond seconded by Dianne Jennings to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried/Vote was unanimous

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM

R. Keith Motley, Mayor

Crystal Grubbs, Clerk/Treasurer