



VALTA

Virginia Association of Local Tax Auditors

306 Cedar Road, Chesapeake, Virginia, 23322

P.O. Box 15285, Chesapeake, Virginia 23328

GENERAL & BUSINESS MEETING

Thursday, July 9, 2026

Berglund Center

710 Williamson Road, Roanoke, VA 24016

GENERAL MEETING

In President Robert Rush's absence, First Vice President Sidney Kuzmich called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., introduced herself, and led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Sidney then introduced the Honorable Ryan LaFountain, Commissioner of the Revenue for the City of Roanoke, who welcomed the attendees. Commissioner LaFountain then introduced Jonathan Taylor, Chief Deputy for the City of Roanoke, who also extended a warm welcome.

Break

9:20 – 9:30 a.m.

AI for Local Government

9:30 a.m. – 10:20 p.m.

Uma Marques, Director, Information Technology Department, Roanoke County

Today, Artificial Intelligence (AI) impacts four major areas: automation, predictive modeling, generative tools (creating new content from existing data), and AI assistants or chatbots capable of executing multi-step processes. The factors currently driving the need for advancements in AI are workload pressure, data growth, public expectations, and vendor adoption.

While AI offers numerous benefits, there are also many inherent risks. These include confidentiality issues, the accuracy or legitimacy of received images and content (as AI results can sound highly confident while being entirely wrong), bias and fairness, and cybersecurity threats like phishing and social engineering. Additionally, organizations face challenges with workforce adaptation, particularly when managing varying comfort levels with adopting new technology.

Break

10:20 – 10:30 a.m.

Trust Tax Enforcement Works

10:30 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

Ryan LaFountain, Commissioner of the Revenue, City of Roanoke

Jonathan Taylor, Chief Deputy, City of Roanoke

The Honorable Ryan LaFountain, Commissioner of the Revenue, and Jonathan Taylor, Chief Deputy for the City of Roanoke, began the presentation by introducing a modernized, structured framework the City of Roanoke has adopted



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to enforce the collection of delinquent Prepared Food and Beverage Taxes (commonly known as the meals tax) by transitioning from sporadic enforcement to a private-sector debt-collections model. Their goal is to systematically manage delinquencies through tiered severity, structured timelines, and escalating contact before resorting to severe legal actions, such as felony embezzlement charges.

The preliminary focus centers on establishing a standardized pipeline. Rather than treating tax collection as a purely administrative task, the city is adopting strategies used by professional collection agencies. These include establishing consistent and predictable communication schedules, providing clear escalation paths so business owners know exactly what to expect, tracking outstanding balances via data, and segmenting delinquent accounts to allocate city resources efficiently.

Three levels of delinquency have been established:

1. **Level 1 (Low Severity):** This level is for accounts that are 30 days delinquent, first-time offenders, or those with minor balance discrepancies that can be handled by automated reminders. These entries trigger immediate outreach; businesses receive an initial written or electronic notice of delinquency, followed by a phone call, an in-person visit from compliance staff, or an administrative bank inquiry depending on the severity.
2. **Level 2 (High Severity):** This level includes chronic non-filers, large unpaid balances, or businesses collecting tax from customers but failing to remit it to the City—which constitutes a misappropriation of "trust taxes" and a felony offense under Virginia law. This stage introduces more aggressive recovery tactics, transitioning from friendly reminders to legal warnings and potential administrative remedies, such as statutory distress warrants, the seizure of property or funds, and the freezing of merchant processing accounts.
3. **Level 3 (Most Egregious):** This level is reserved for accounts that are 90 days delinquent and repeat offenders. These accounts are referred to the Commonwealth's Attorney for prosecution if no contact has been made and no payment arrangement has been agreed to.

Additionally, the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Authority will begin the ABC license revocation process where applicable. Virginia ABC special agents have full police powers with a diverse range of duties, from investigating license applicants and conducting underage sale compliance checks to enforcing ABC laws in nearly 19,000 licensed establishments. They also investigate and prosecute criminal activities ranging from drugs, gangs, and gambling to money laundering and tax evasion.

The Virginia ABC is divided into nine regional offices and one satellite office. Localities can utilize their regional special agent to obtain Mixed Beverage Annual Review (MBAR) reports to compare with the gross receipts reported for the meals tax. Any tax collected by a business is held in trust for the state and must be remitted to the rightful taxing authority. Any amount over \$1,000.00 that is collected and not turned over is considered felony embezzlement and can be prosecuted by the State Grand Jury.



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Break

11:20 – 11:30 a.m.

Legislative Update

11:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

Ryan LaFountain, Commissioner of Revenue, City of Roanoke

Jonathan Taylor, Chief Deputy, City of Roanoke

A few highlights from the Hot Topics - 2027 Legislative Agenda Actions list that were discussed were:

1. Free Virginia Individual Income Tax software will be developed
2. Electric Landscaping Equipment.
3. Closing Salary Gaps, raises for everybody.
4. Study to see if standardizing personal property tax calendars, and uniformity of proration.
5. Change(s) to the Code giving localities authority to customer agreements and/or list of entities with equipment at data centers with contact information from data center owners/operators.
6. Address the Veteran Tax Relief growth, and the need for added sustainability guardrails.
7. Seek an 8-year term of Office for Commissioner of Revenues due to the length of time needed to learn the responsibilities and knowledge the job requires. Clerks have 8-year terms.

Business Meeting

12:20 p.m. – 12:40 p.m.

First Vice President Sidney Kuzmich called the business meeting to order and asked if there was any old business to be discussed. Ms. Kuzmich acknowledged that the minutes from the October 23, 2025 meeting held in Isle of Wight County, alongside the Treasurer's Report and the FY2026 Association Budget (both dated June 30, 2025), were distributed to the membership prior to or at today's meeting. Ms. Kuzmich received a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes, Treasurer's Report, and FY2026 Budget, to accept them as presented, and to enter them into the official Association records. The membership approved this motion unanimously.

The current slate of Executive Board Members agreed to stay on for the next fiscal year, subject to membership approval. The Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027) Association Officers will be as follows:

- **Robert Rush**, City of Charlottesville – *President*
- **Sidney C. Kuzmich**, City of Salem – *1st Vice President*
- **Latasha C. Bouldin**, County of Powhatan – *2nd Vice President*
- **Katrin Massey**, City of Norfolk – *Treasurer*
- **Stephanie L. Bristow**, City of Norfolk – *Corresponding Secretary*
- **June L. Khamis**, City of Manassas – *Recording Secretary*
- **Kristie D. Chittum**, COR, City of Salem – *Commissioner Liaison*



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A motion to approve the FY2027 Association Executive Board as listed above was received, and the membership approved the slate unanimously.

Announcements:

1. The next VALTA Meeting is currently in the planning stages and is scheduled to be held in Charlottesville on October 16, 2026.
2. VALTA Looking for a volunteer to perform the Annual Association Audit.
3. The Association is asking for new presentation topic ideas for future meetings. If you have any, please send them to Sidney Kuzmich, 1st Vice President at skuzmich@salemva.gov or to Latasha Bouldin, 2nd Vice President at lbouldin@powhatanva.gov
4. More information about the topics discussed during today's meeting can be found in the presentation portion of the VALTA.org Website.

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 12:40 p.m.

Minutes presented by:

June L. Khamis, VALTA Recording Secretary

July 16, 2026