

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

RUSSET W. PERRY
31ST SENATORIAL DISTRICT
PART OF FAUQUIER AND LOUDOUN COUNTIES

P.O. Box 6434
LEESBURG, VIRGINIA 20178



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
COURTS OF JUSTICE
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Honorable Christopher Bertaut

Mayor, Town of Purcellville
PO Box 355
Purcellville, VA 20134

December 7, 2025

Mayor Bertaut,

I received your response to my statement on the ongoing crisis in Purcellville. Your assertion that "there is no corruption within the Town Council majority" and that concerns stem from "unfounded accusations" are in conflict with the ongoing legal proceedings, the publicly available information on events that have occurred under your leadership, the decision by the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT) to suspend you in April of this year, and the recent filing by the appointed special prosecutor of the recall petition against the Vice Mayor—based on sufficient evidence of misconduct warranting removal from the Council. Some, though not all of this, is of course separate from the ongoing criminal prosecution of the Town Manager and Vice Mayor. Your framing of your constituents' concerns dramatically understates both the volume and seriousness of the accusations and overlooks the responsibility of any governing body to build-----not dismiss, public trust.

You also noted in your letter that certain Council actions were taken in public, within the scope of local authority. However, transparency and good governance require more than simply conducting votes in open session. They require creating conditions where the public can **meaningfully participate and trust their leaders**. What I have heard from Purcellville residents and seen with my own two eyes reflects widespread and merited alarm—not mere policy disagreements. They describe irregular processes, hostility toward dissent, opaqueness, and a pervasive sense that accountability has been abandoned. To disregard these deeply invested community members is not only insulting, it underscores the leadership crisis plaguing Purcellville.

As you may be aware, in Virginia, towns operate with authority the General Assembly has granted. When a local government experiences sustained dysfunction, repeated allegations of misconduct, or significant erosion of public confidence, the legislature, and my office specifically when it relates to towns within my district, has a duty to evaluate whether intervention is warranted.

In your letter, you state your belief that "ethical conduct, responsible governance, and trust in public institutions are essential to Purcellville's wellbeing." I would note that these principles are not optional aspirations—they are expressly articulated in the Town of Purcellville's own Code of

Ethics, first adopted in 2015 and re-adopted by the Council in September of this year, which commits town officials to integrity, transparency, accountability, and the responsible stewardship of public resources.

Yet, as I mentioned, many Purcellville residents have shared concerns that recent actions by town leadership do not reflect those core values or the standards set forth in your Code of Ethics. If you are committed to restoring the trust you referenced, I would strongly encourage you to demonstrate that commitment by implementing—at a minimum—the good-governance best practices outlined below as part of a serious effort to rebuild public confidence in the integrity of your government:

- Publish full agendas and any supporting documents at least three days before meetings
- Require supermajority votes for agenda changes made less than three days before meetings, to include agenda amendments made at the start of meetings
- Publicly post vacancies, selection criteria, and hiring rationales for leadership positions, and ensure every member of council has the opportunity to interview candidates for these positions
- Refrain from writing motions privately, and instead include them in the official, published agenda packet
- Mandate disclosure of financial interests and/or other conflicts, with recusal requirements as outlined in the Code of Ethics
- Re-adopt and publicly review the Code of Ethics annually, ensuring every member understands and affirms their obligations

I would appreciate if you would please confirm in writing your willingness to implement these most basic good governance and transparency measures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russet Perry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Senator Russet Perry