



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Sunday, January 11, 2026

9:00 AM The Hyatt Place, 1884 Evelyn Byrd Ave, Harrisonburg

Work Session: City Council Retreat

1. Roll Call

At 9:16 am the meeting was convened.

Present: 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Dany Fleming, Council Member Laura Dent, Council Member Nasser Alsaadun and Council Member Monica Robinson

Also Present: 3 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown and City Clerk Pam Ulmer

2. Legislative Update

Kelly Harris Braxton, executive director, Virginia First Cities, and Laura Bateman, legislative director, Virginia First Cities, presented a preview of the 2026 Virginia General Assembly. They reviewed the following:

- Who Virginia First Cities (VFC) is;
- The history of VFC;
- 2026 General Assembly overview;
- State political landscape;
- Why the General Assembly matters to VFC Cities including Harrisonburg;
- Housing Affordability - local context and state proposals;
- Education and school funding;
- Transportation and infrastructure;
- Economic development and workforce community wealth building;
- Community services and resilience;
- Advocacy strategy; and
- Virginia First Cities Coalition 2026 Priorities;

Discussion took place regarding some of Council's concerns such as: environmental programs; regulation of Data Centers; energy initiatives; health care; SNAP funding; housing and HUD support; economic development/small business development; immigrant concerns with ICE, education/school funding; after school programs, Para professionals; increase in smoke shops; and single stairway reform;

Recess

At 10:18 a.m. Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

At 10:26 a.m. Mayor Reed called the meeting back into session.

3. State of the Economy and City Revenue Forecast

Brian Shull, director of Economic Development, shared data on the state of the economy as follows:

- MSA Employment numbers statewide
- Local unemployment rate (2020-2025)
- Local employment trends (2020 - 2025)
- Employment by industry sectors
- New local business licenses (2020-2025)
- Total permits issued (2016-2025)
- Success story behind Farmers Focus
- Available support of the full spectrum of business growth:
 - Launch Harrisonburg
 - B-Cubed
 - Business loan program
 - Harrisonburg Entrepreneurship Development Initiative (HEDI)
- Economic Development strategic plan in progress

Discussion took place related to job availability versus trained individuals and the Community Development permitting process.

Larry Propst, director of Finance, provided a review of the General Fund Revenue for fiscal year 2026. He reviewed the following:

- General Fund comparisons of FY 2025-26 budgeted versus projected;
- Property Taxes FY 2025-26 budgeted versus projected;
- Other local taxes FY 2025-26 budgeted versus projected;
- Comparison Of Revenues - General Fund Prior Year Actual To Current Year Projected FY 24/25 actual versus FY25/26 budgeted
- Property Taxes FY 24/25 actual versus FY25/26 budgeted
- Other local taxes FY 24/25 actual versus FY25/26 budgeted
- Restaurant Food Tax revenue (01/2016 - 12/2025)
- Recap

Recess

At 11:30 a.m. Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

At 11:50 a.m. Mayor Reed called the meeting back into session.

4. Budget Obligations and Capital Needs

Ande Banks, city manager, reviewed upcoming budget obligations and capital needs.

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, reviewed the Harrisonburg City Hall Complex renovations project.

5. Vision and Goals Update

Brian Vandenberg, assistant to the city manager, presented an update on the 2025-2028 Action Plan. He reviewed the following:

City Council Vision

- Focus Areas and Priorities:
 - A harmonious community;
 - A thriving educational epicenter;
 - Available housing for all;
 - Community resiliency and the natural environment;
 - Economic development and financial empowerment;
 - High quality city services;
- Task Status
- Recent progress

Recess

At 1:00 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

At 1:15 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting back into session.

6. Priority Setting Activity

City Council members worked on choosing top five outcomes; goals, and specific budgetary items.

Results are as follows:

Outcome Areas are a major theme or category that reflects a core aspect of community well-being. Housing and Homelessness and Economic Health & Jobs were unanimous among Council, followed by Public Safety and Culture and Recreation. Other categories were transportation and mobility, environmental health and sustainability, neighborhood livability and social health, health and human services, high-performing government, equity and government transparency.

Goals among Council were quality of life, housing, equity and small business

development.

Specific Budgetary Items among Council included housing, sustainability, Human Rights Commission, lack of funding for families and children, language interpretation, technology, child savings accounts, small business support and Ukraine sister city.

7. Adjournment

At 2:30 p.m., there being no further discussions, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR