



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Roll Call

Note: Council Member Dent was not physically present at the meeting but participated via GoTo Meeting electronic/video platform.

Present: 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice Mayor Sal Romero, Council Member Christopher B. Jones, Council Member George Hirschmann and Council Member Laura Dent

Also Present: 4 - City Manager Eric Campbell, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer and Police Chief Kelley Warner

2. Invocation

Mayor Reed offered the invocation

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Special Recognition

Mayor Reed stated Samuel Bucher, a 3 ½ year old, loves the Toters, and asked Mayor Reed to ask the other Council Members if they could be red instead.

4.a. Introduction of the new Deputy Chief of Support Services, Marques Bush, Harrisonburg Fire Department

Matthew Tobia, Chief of Harrisonburg Fire Department, introduced Deputy Chief Marques Bush, who is in his seventh week with the Fire Department commanding the Support Services Bureau of HFD and noted he is doing a tremendous job and is a brilliant addition to our organization.

Marques Bush, Deputy Chief, thanked everyone and stated he is really happy to be in the city. He stated he loves serving this great city, there are so many friendly and authentic people, and he believes HFD stands for a Helpful Healing Faithful and Dedicated Fire Department. He stated he has seen members of HFD do things that are simply outstanding and they live to serve.

4.b. Remote participation policy

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated in accordance with the City Council's adopted policy for remote participation, Council Member Dent has requested to participate remotely for this meeting due to a temporary medical condition that prevents her

physical attendance. She will be participating remotely from her residence, which is not open to the public. A Quorum of the City Council is physically assembled at one primary meeting location, and arrangements have been made for the voice of Council Member Dent to be heard by all persons at the primary meeting location.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Romero, seconded by Council Member Hirschmann to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

5. Consent Agenda (any item placed on the consent agenda shall be removed and taken up as a separate matter, if so requested by any member of Council, otherwise all items will be voted on with one (1) motion)

Council Member Dent requested an amendment to the minutes for July 27, 2021, to Page four, agenda item 7a, page 4, paragraph 3 as follows:

“Council Member Dent asked what will happen to the old medical unit once the new unit is up and running. Mr. Newton stated it will be repurposed for mental health offices, or possibly for new 'restrictive housing' units. Council Member Dent rephrased that to the popularly known term 'solitary confinement'. Council Member Jones asked if the number of physicians and mental health professionals will increase. Mr. Newton stated in MRRJ's annual budget for FY21 four new medical staff were added and in FY22 two new medical staff positions will be filled. He stated they currently have four full time mental health staff, two of which are covered under a grant, the Valley Community Service Board received approval for a grant that will have professionals available to transition individuals back into the community. Vice Mayor Romero asked if there are required ratios of staff to inmate set by the state. Mr. Newton stated there is no state mandated ratio for medical staff.”

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Romero, to approve the consent agenda with the amended minutes. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

5.a. Minutes from the July 27, 2021 City Council meeting

These minutes were approved as amended on the consent agenda.

5.b. Consider adopting a resolution and ordinance approving a boundary line adjustment between the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County.

The ordinance was approved on second reading

6. Public Hearings

- 6.a.** Consider a special use permit to allow public uses to deviate from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance at 1181 Harrison Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a special use permit request to deviate from setback requirements for property located on 181 Harrison Street. He reviewed the property, long-term plans for the surrounding area, the reason for the request, and parking lot landscaping requirements and concerns.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval.

Council Member Dent stated she appreciated staff reaching out to the Public Works department regarding the Public Works department installing low maintenance vegetation.

Vice Mayor Romero stated it was interesting and stated he hadn't heard of any situation like this one before. Mr. Fletcher stated it is an opportunity for staff to convey they try to follow the city's zoning regulations for city property.

At 7:25 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the first public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Monday, July 26, 2021, and Monday, August 2, 2021

At 7:26 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Romero, seconded by Council Member Dent, to approve the request as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

7. Regular Items

- 7.a.** Consider request from Virginia Self Storage Partners II, LLC for the City of Harrisonburg to provide sanitary sewer service onto property at 2557 East Market Street within Rockingham County

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a public utility application for property located at 2557 E Market Street located just on the boundary of Rockingham County per City Code Section 7-2-4 for non-residential connection to city water and sewer. He reviewed the property, the long-term plans of the area, the route of the sewer connection and the reason for the request.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval.

Council Member Jones asked if we will ever get to a point where these requests will be denied or are we still so early in the stages of development that we continue to review on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Fletcher stated staff has had internal discussions regarding connections and at some point there will be a request that would not be to the benefit to the city.

Vice Mayor Romero asked that since this is an existing facility why are they requesting this connection. Mr. Fletcher stated the applicant's septic system is failing, the connection to Rockingham County utilities is quite a distance away, and this connection will be easier for the applicant.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Romero, seconded by Council Member Hirschmann, to approve the request as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

7.b. Consider adoption of the revised City Council 2039 Vision

Eric Campbell, city manager, presented the revised City Council Vision Statement drafted at the Council Retreat in July 2021. He reviewed the main focus areas.

Council Member Jones stated the retreat was a raving success, a lot of good things were accomplished, Council's relationship was strengthened, and he appreciates the city manager and staff for setting it up.

Council Member Dent thanked Amy Snider for helping pull together the Community Resiliency and Natural Environment section. She stated there was a discussion about not having too many specifics in the vision because it's a broader vision statement, and that the statement "new energy technologies" covers a lot of ground. She also appreciates moving the Sustainable Assets and Infrastructure to this section as well, and that we now have references in our vision to the natural environment and responding to and reducing climate change impact.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Hirschmann, to approve the amended City Council's 2039 Vision Statement as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

7.c. Consider approving amendments to Title 7, Chapter 3 of the City Code, "Sewer System," at the request of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented amendments to the city sewer ordinances related to the Harrisonburg Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority (HRRSA) and their compliance with Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) mandated changes to regulations. He stated this comes before Council every two or three years. He reviewed some of the amendments.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Jones, to approve the amendments to the ordinance as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

- 7.d.** Consider adopting an ordinance to vacate certain easements associated with the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community (VMRC)

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community (VMRC) submitted a subdivision plat to Council for approval at a previous meeting to adjust lot lines with the intent to build townhouses and other housing units. He stated as part of that plan VMRC installed a Stormwater Management System on site and are solely responsible for that system and this is the last step to the cleanup of this development and VMRC would like to vacate the easements no longer needed.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Hirschmann, to approve the ordinance as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

8. Supplementals

- 8.a.** Consider a supplemental appropriation for the Fire Department in the amount of \$366,284.07

Ande Banks, deputy city manager, presented a supplemental appropriation for grant funding already received to the Harrisonburg Fire Department.

A motion was made by Council Member Hirschmann, seconded by Council Member Jones, to approve the request as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

- 8.b.** Consider a supplemental appropriation for various departments in the amount of \$193,988.06

Ande Banks, deputy city manager, presented a supplemental appropriation for grant

funding already received to the various departments.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Hirschmann, to approve the request as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

No: 0

9. Other Matters

9.a. Comments from the public, limited to five minutes, on matters not on the regular agenda. (Name and address are required)

Charles Conner, Legislative Affairs Chair of the JMU Student Government Association (SGA), proposed that a permanent early voting spot be designated at James Madison University for community benefit, to encourage democratic engagement and to increase voter turnout. He stated many of the issues students face when going to vote or perform other civic duties is the inability to vote on election day due to their hectic schedules. He stated this proposal would involve creating a satellite office on campus in attempt to alleviate the student issues, it is a joint proposal from the student government leadership team, college republicans and college democrats. He stated the General Assembly recently approved \$3M for early voting technology and hopes these funds could be used for this proposal.

9.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Dent stated she did not physically attend tonight's meeting as she was awaiting the results of her test for COVID-19 as a precautionary measure. She stated this is a great message to the public, if you have any question at all regarding your symptoms get tested and above all, please get vaccinated. She stated she is vaccinated and while it does not absolutely guarantee one won't get COVID-19 but will almost certainly guarantee you won't die from it. She stated as the Delta variant is surging it is all the more important that we get vaccinated, in the meantime, please use precautions with masking, distancing etc. She stated yesterday the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) came out with its detailed report saying that what we had thought was the worst case to avoid of 1.5 degrees centigrade increase in temperature is now the best-case scenario, it is a whole lot worse than we thought. She stated the Senate passed the Infrastructure Bill which includes \$73B to modernize the nations electricity grid to carry renewable energy, \$7.5B for clean busses, and \$7.6B to develop electric vehicle charging stations across the country, and she feels that investments in sustainable assets and infrastructure should be considered.

Council Member Jones stated as an alumnus of JMU and former Senator for JMU SGA, he isn't for or against an early voting precinct at JMU, but the registration is key,

students are not registered to vote here, the numbers of registered voters are not rising as much as he would like to see them, active participation is a must. He stated students are very active in the community and we need to make sure they vote. He stated he owes emails to Laura Toni-Holsinger and Chris Quinn to continue conversations on the United Way, the Harrisonburg Rockingham County Chamber of Commerce (HRCOC) and City Council can work together regarding childcare, transportation, and housing. He stated he would also like to include Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) in these conversations.

Vice Mayor Romero stated he is super excited about the new Futsal Courts and he is hoping he will have support for additional courts throughout the city. He stated with school restarting next week he encourages everyone to be extra careful of the busses, the children at bus stops, and the young drivers on the road.

Council Member Hirschmann stated he urges everyone to get vaccinated, especially with the surge of the Delta variant of COVID-19, it will be for the benefit of all.

Mayor Reed stated thanked Mr. Conner for attending the meeting. She stated we all need to do what we need to do to protect each other, wear a mask, get vaccinated, continue all the things we have been doing as we need to protect our children. She stated she had a great breakfast with the HRCOC at the Spotswood Country Club for their annual presidential address. She stated on August 13, 2021, at 11:00 am the Lucy F. Simms Historical marker will be unveiled and Virginia Senator Jennifer McClellan will be attending. She stated on August 27, 2021, the City/County Remembrance Service for those that we lost to COVID-19 in front of the Court House beginning at 10:00 a.m.

10. Boards and Commissions

10.a. Economic Development Advisory Committee

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Romero, to reappoint Mary Ann Alger and Doug Light to the Economic Development Advisory Committee for terms to expire on July 9, 2025. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

11. Adjournment

At 7:57: p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR