



# City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

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Tuesday, October 22, 2024

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

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### 1. Roll Call

**Present:** 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Laura Dent, Council Member Christopher B. Jones, Council Member Dany Fleming and Council Member Monica Robinson

**Also Present:** 5 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer, Chief Matthew Tobia and Deputy Police Chief Todd Miller

### 2. Invocation

Council Member Robinson offered the invocation.

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

### 4. Special Recognition

#### 4.a. Proclamation recognizing November 1, 2024 as Extra Mile Day

Mayor Reed presented a proclamation recognizing November 1, 2024, as Extra Mile Day

#### 4.b. Proclamation recognizing October 24, 2024 as National Lights On Afterschool Day

Vice Mayor Dent presented a proclamation recognizing October 24, 2024, as National Lights On Afterschool Day. Mayor Reed asked anyone that has a blue light to turn it on Thursday October 24, 2024. She stated the Lucy F. Simms Center, the Parks and Recreation Center, and the downtown Library will be lit up in blue as well.

### 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)

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

**No:** 0

- 5.a. Minutes for the October 8, 2024 City Council Meeting.

**These minutes were approved on the consent agenda**

- 5.b. Consider a request from Ritchie Vaughan to rezone 439 and 445 Myrtle Street

**This rezoning request was approved on the second reading.**

- 5.c. Consider a request from New Venture Partners LLC to rezone 715 North Dogwood Drive

**This rezoning request was approved on the second reading.**

- 5.d. Consider a request from Eastern Mennonite University for a master plan amendment (rezoning) for multiple properties on College Avenue, Hillcrest Drive, Mt. Clinton Pike, Park Road, Parkway Drive, Parkwood Drive, Smith Avenue, West Dogwood Drive, and Woodland Park Circle

**This rezoning request was approved on the second reading.**

## 6. Public Hearings

## 7. Regular Items

- 7.a. Northend Greenway Open Space Easement

Tom Hartman, director of Public Works, presented a request to authorize the city manager to execute a Deed of Dedication of Open Space Land for Northend Greenway open space. He reviewed the requested area dedicated to open space.

Council Member Fleming asked if there would be signage at the Suter Street location. Mr. Hartman stated there will be a wayfinding sign upon completion.

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

**Yes:** 5 - Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming, Council Member Robinson and Mayor Reed

**No:** 0

- 7.b. Presentation on the Operation of The Navigation Center

Nate Riddle, Executive Director, Open Doors, presented the following related to the Navigation Center:

- The history and mission of Open Doors;
- Renderings and blueprints of the Navigation Center;
- Information on the Daytime Drop-in Center;

- Low- Barrier Shelter schedule and requirements;
- Partner Organizations that will provide services at the center;
- Open Doors' Commitment;
- The needs from the community;

Council spoke on the staffing required by Open Doors, collaboration with Our Community Place, tracking of who is using the center, resources that will be available at the center, and workforce development. Council thanked Mr. Riddle for all Open Doors has done to coordinate the joint efforts.

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, stated the Navigation Center is facing a new construction challenge, therefore the opening will be delayed, and she will update Council at the November 26, 2024, City Council meeting. She stated temporary site(s) are needed for thermal sheltering and staff has been looking into potential sites, but the City requests that if anyone or any organizations have space that could possibly be used to reach out to her.

Council discussed the construction delay and urged the community to help Open Doors and the city for temporary thermal sheltering.

**This Presentation was received and filed.**

**7.c. Presentation of the Harrisonburg Police Department's Connect and Protect Grant Program**

Todd Miller, interim chief, Harrisonburg Police Department, stated the Connect and Protect Grant was obtained in late 2023 through the Bureau of Justice Assistance. He reviewed why mental health-related incidents were chosen to be the focus of this grant. He reviewed the issues of mental-health related calls and how the Co-Response Program model could help with those related issues. He reviewed the specifics of the Co-Response Program, the grant requirements, the goal and objectives of the program, key components of the program, the evaluation process, and the program measures assessed by independent evaluators from JMU: Dr. Amanda Teye, Dr. Lili Peaslee, who were present for questions.

Vice Mayor Dent stated this grant is only available for three years and asked if we would be able to continue the program afterwards. Chief Miller stated the evaluators will be able to determine if this program has been effective or not, and if so, additional grants may be applied for.

Council Member Fleming asked about the recruitment for mental health professionals for this program. Ande Banks, city manager, stated the recruitment for the mental health professional and a clinician, has already begun.

Council Member Robinson asked if the mental health professionals will be able to create relationships with those individuals affected by mental health issues, so trust is

built. Chief Miller stated that the hope is that police officers create those relationships, and that the community paramedics program is proactive with creating those relationships as well.

Council discussed recruiting in individual neighborhoods and at local universities/colleges and how this program might alleviate the demand for officer's time during these mental health crisis calls require.

Dr. Amanda Teye stated after reviewing the results from the data collected on service calls related to mental health, having a mental health professional on staff could reduce the rates of involuntary commitment by at least one third.

**This Presentation was received and filed.**

**7.d.** Consider adopting a resolution rescinding the Drought Warning and declaring a Drought Watch

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated on August 13, 2024, Council adopted a resolution declaring a drought warning for the city. He stated currently our systems are doing well, in fact the entire region for the most part is doing well. The Department of Environmental Quality has now downgraded the warning to a watch. He stated the resolution presented will rescind the drought warning and declare a drought watch. He stated our website will have information on the voluntary efforts the city is asking its residents to do during a drought watch.

Discussion took place about how the city has to follow the DEQ's regulations for the region even if overall region conditions do not necessarily reflect how the city is doing.

**A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Vice Mayor Dent, to adopt the resolution as presented. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

**No:** 0

## **8. Supplementals**

**8.a.** Consider a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$1,302,216

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$1,302,216 related to shared services with Rockingham County, \$262K for the plumbing repair work at the jail and \$1M for the Children Services Act (CSA).

Ande Banks, city manager, stated the funds for the CSA are very difficult to budget for as caseloads can fluctuate significantly year to year. This supplemental reflects a 20% increase in the city's families and children that are receiving services this year versus last year. He stated there was also state funds from the Qualified Residential

Treatment Program which has been suspended that was used by the CSA for many of the families.

Council Member Fleming stated he would like to have an update from the CSA in order to determine if this is a rising concern for next year's budget as well as perhaps bringing this up to the state legislature for possible additional funding.

**A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to approve the supplemental appropriation as presented. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:**

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

**No:** 0

**8.b.** Consider a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$1,186,239

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$1,186,239 for the Smart Growth Community Connectors Grant and the VDOT State of Good Repair grant for paving.

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

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

**No:** 0

**9. Reallocations**

**9.a.** American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Unobligated Funds Reallocation

Luke Morgan, grants and programs analyst, reviewed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) history and obligation deadline. He stated there are remaining ARPA project funds that will need to be obligated in the amount of \$13,144.50 from the Employee Retention Payment, Child Care Program and Small Business Assistance Fund. He stated all three projects have been completed under budget, leaving a balance of unobligated funds to be reallocated. He stated staff is recommending these excess funds be reallocated to the Navigation Center ARPA project which has been partially funded by city funds.

Discussion took place on how the funds were disbursed for the three original projects.

Ande Banks, city manager, stated Mr. Morgan has done a fabulous job for the city, and wishes him the best of luck in his career growth as this will be his last meeting with the city.

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

**Yes:** 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Dent, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

**No:** 0

## 10. Other Matters

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

Javier Calleja, 1243 Country Club Road, thanked Council Member Jones for his service to the city, he thanked the rest of the Council as their work has been recognized. He stated he is running for Council and hopes he will be serving next.

### 10.b. City Council and Staff

Vice Mayor Dent spoke on the recent Virginia Municipal League (VML) conference and the recent Virginia Clean Energy Summit.

Council Member Jones stated he attended the Congressional National Black Caucus conference and the National Association for advancement of Colored Peoples conference. He spoke on the VML Conference and how engaged the City Council was and how they all worked together. He thanked Harrisonburg Police Department for their service and thanked city staff for taking all of Council's ideas and implementing them.

Council Member Robinson spoke on the VML Conference, the Community Connectors Conference, and the Harrisonburg City Public School Safety Town Hall meeting.

Council Member Fleming spoke on the VML Conference, the JMU Economic Summit, some of the Urban Institute Workshops he attended, Virginia First Cities legislative agenda, and the opening of the Rockingham Harrisonburg Day Care Center.

Mayor Reed thanked Amy Snider, deputy city manager, for all her work on the Navigation Center. She spoke on EMU's homecoming and JMU's upcoming homecoming, the upcoming farewell party for Valarie Gbant, the VML Conference and the Black Maternal Health Summit.

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, spoke on her attendance to the Mid Atlantic Association of Women in Law Enforcement Conference held in Harrisonburg.

**11. Boards and Commissions****11.a. Harrisonburg Housing and Redevelopment Authority**

A motion was made by Council Member Fleming, seconded by Vice Mayor Dent, to reappoint Amanda Leech and Luciano Benjamin to the Harrisonburg Housing and Redevelopment Authority for a 2nd term to expire on October 13, 2028, and November 29, 2028, respectively. The vote carried with a unanimous voice vote.

**11.b. Harrisonburg Transportation Safety and Advisory Commission (TSAC)**

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to reappoint Marian Lebherz to the Transportation Safety and Advisory Commission to a 3rd term to expire on December 31, 2027. The vote carried with a unanimous voice vote.

**12. Closed Session****13. Adjournment**

At 9:13 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR