



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, April 23, 2024

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Roll Call

Council Member Robinson arrived at 7:04 PM

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: 4 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer and Police Chief Kelley Warner

2. Invocation

Vice Mayor Dent offered the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Special Recognition

4.a. Proclamation recognizing May 11, 2024 as Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Day

Mayor Reed presented the proclamation to John Semisa, recognizing May 11, 2024, as Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Day.

4.b. Proclamation recognizing the 55th Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week May 5 - May 11, 2024

Mayor Reed presented the proclamation to Pamela Ulmer, City Clerk, recognizing the 55th Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week the week, May 5 - 11, 2024.

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 Fleming, seconded by Vice Mayor Dent, 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 from the April 9, 2024 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Consider a request from Bismark LLC for a rezoning to amend proffers at 325 and 335 North Liberty Street

This rezoning request was approved on the second reading

5.c. Consider a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$150,000 for the Fire Department

This supplemental appropriation was approved on second reading

5.d. Consider a request from S&K Contracting to add a new subsection to Section 10-3-96 of the M-1, General Industrial District to allow mercantile establishments that supply parts and equipment for over the road tractors, their trailers, and heavy equipment

This ordinance amendment was approved on second reading

5.e. Consider the special event application request for the Harrisonburg Youth TryAthlon on Saturday, August 10, 2024.

This item was approved on the consent agenda

5.f. Consider the special event application request for the Hispanic Festival on Sunday, August 4, 2024.

This item was approved on the consent agenda

5.g. Consider the special event application request for the 2024 July Fireworks display on Friday, July 5, 2024.

This item was approved on the consent agenda

6. Public Hearings

6.a. Public hearing regarding the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget

At 7:07 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, March 26, 2024.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke on tall grass and weeds, the budget for Community Development, the speed cameras, and a petition for No Mow May.

Candy Phillips, executive director, First Step, thanked Council for the Civic and Community Organization Grant Funding, and stated in 2022, 675 hotline calls were received, they served 242 individuals, and 59% were from the city; in 2023 there was

a 20% increase in hotline calls and a 17% increase in the number of individuals that were served. She stated First Step is also able to use funding provided towards the match for Federal and State funding. Council thanked Ms. Phillips for the information.

Cole Scrogham, 1315 Carrera Ln, thanked Council for their service to the community. He spoke on the tax rate and how the continual raise of these taxes may be in contradiction of city goals of expanding housing opportunities.

At 7:24 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

This Public Hearing - No Action was no action taken.

7. Regular Items

7.a. Update on Work Zone Speed Cameras

Tom Hartman, director of Public Works, and Kelley Warner, Chief of Police, stated it has been a year since the work zone project started on Rt 33 (Market Road), and shared the reasoning behind installing the speed cameras. They shared the goals of the program, the program effectiveness, and how complaints are responded to. Chief Warner stated along with social media notices staff will also reach out to the local colleges to remind them of the speed zone in that area. She stated our goal is education and awareness and believes the program is working.

Mayor Reed stated she noticed the sign stating the fine amount and she thinks that will help with deterring speed.

Council Member Jones stated as the capital of Shenandoah Valley, staff should reach out to all colleges and universities within the valley.

Council Member Fleming stated he appreciates seeing the decline in speed in that area, he shared his concerns about the processes of the tickets.

Sgt. Wayne Westfall, Harrisonburg Police Department, reviewed the process from the point the photo is taken, to the review of all violations by an officer to confirm validity before issuing a summons.

Council Member Robinson asked if there has been an increase in speeding violations on Country Club Road and Reservoir Street due to traffic using those streets to avoid Market Street. Sgt. Westfall stated there hasn't been an increase in those areas.

Holly Cooper, CEO, AltumintCo., shared the company history, the practices they follow, efforts they made to correct issues, the process of issuing notices of violation,

and the process of addressing complaints.

Council Member Jones asked for the fees from Altumint. Ms. Cooper provided a breakdown. Council Member Jones spoke further in regard to the speed cameras, the perception by the public, and the effectiveness of this program.

Vice Mayor Dent spoke on speed modification systems for speed behavior, in particular the flashing sign stated how fast one is going. Mr. Hartman stated the placement of that in this area would not be feasible.

Council and staff spoke further on other options for speed control, education to the public, and community outreach.

This Presentation was received and filed.

- 7.b.** Consider approving a donation to the City of Harrisonburg Homeless Services Center Capital Project from The Presbytery of Shenandoah.

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, presented a request to approve a donation from the Presbytery of the Shenandoah, in the amount of \$50,000 to the Homeless Services Center for completing and equipping a commercial kitchen. She stated the donation is contingent upon City Council agreeing to fully fund the remainder of the expense to construct and equip the commercial kitchen which was not part of the original construction contract and is not currently funded. She stated the total cost to the city would be \$137,000 approximately. She stated staff recommends approval as this kitchen would be critical for the operator to fully meet the needs of the community.

Council Member Fleming stated there was a lot of conversation previously regarding a commercial kitchen. Ms. Snider stated the original plan was to have a small kitchen, but once an operator was chosen for the center, they expressed their need for the commercial kitchen.

Ms. Snider reviewed the modifications already made to accommodate for the commercial kitchen space.

Nate Riddle, Executive Director, Open Doors, stated the model Open Doors has used for the past 17 years and the studies they have done with their partners, they will need for the commercial kitchen. He stated they have been preparing dinner during the thermal season for about 40 people, since the center will operate for 72-100 people, and in inclement weather, where they would be housing people throughout the day, more meals would need to be provided.

Mr. Banks stated we are recommending accepting this potential donation in large part because of Mr. Riddle and Open Doors' efforts to help try to fundraise for this project.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, that this item be approved as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

7.c. Consider nominations for the 2024 VML Policy Committees

Mayor Red asked to table this item until May 14, 2024, so that Council can review the committees in more depth and choose which one they would like to serve on.

This Action Item was tabled.

7.d. Consider the selection of the city's external auditor

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented the request to appoint the city's external auditor. He stated this is needed every five or six years, an RFP was done, responses were reviewed by a committee, and it is recommended to appoint Brown Edwards & Company, LLC and to enter into a 3-year contract with option to renew for 3 additional 1-year terms.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Fleming, that this request be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

8. Other Matters

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

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke on how the signatures were collected for No Mow May and repealing the tall grass and weeds ordinance, Blacks Run cleanup, and living in harmony.

Sue-Anne Scrogam, 1315 Carrera Ln., spoke on the traffic cameras and thinks they are great and are working well in reducing speed.

8.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Jones and Chris Brown, city attorney, spoke on No Mow May and the city's ordinance for tall grass and weeds. Council Member Jones spoke on the National League of Cities (NLC) Roadshow and the Great Community Give.

Vice Mayor Dent stated it was wonderful to have NLC in the city, and her participation in a climate panel with Council Member Robinson hosted by the Sierra Club and

Climate Action of the Valley.

Council Member Robinson stated that it was very interesting to see the intersectionality of those on the climate panel and the different perspectives on some of the work of the Environmental Performance Standards Committee (EPSAC); she stated she went to Prince Edward County for a celebration of Barbara Johns Day and shared the history of the reason for the celebration.

Council Member Fleming spoke on the NLC's visit; the Blacks Run Cleanup Day having the most volunteers ever for this event; the Harrisonburg Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the Unified Work Program was passed;

Mayor Reed stated Council needs to decide if a budget work session will be held. She gave a special thank you to Parks and Recreation staff that did an incredible job organizing the NLC Roadshow; she met with a group called Old School Alumni of James Madison University that shared their vision; the upcoming Harrisonburg Rockingham Chamber of Commerce Award banquet;

Ande Banks, city manager, stated a public meeting will be held at the Lucy F. Simms Center soliciting input for the Spray Park on April 24, 2024, in the afternoon.

Mayor Reed asked Council if they wanted to schedule a Budget Work Session, Council agreed and direct staff to coordinate. Council Member Jones asked for Council Members to submit discussions in advance of the work session. Further discussion took place on this matter.

Ande Banks, city manager, stated that on April 25, 2025, Amy Snider, deputy city manager, will be recognized by James Madison University's Master of Public Administration Program for the 2024 Excellence in Public Service Award. He stated she is an amazing part of our team and an amazing member of our community and a true, down to the core, public servant.

9. Boards and Commissions

9.a. Planning Commission

Vice Mayor Dent spoke on her reasoning to recommend appointment of Ms. Sullivan to the Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Dent, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to appoint Kate Nardi Sullivan to the Planning Commission to serve an unexpired term to expire on January 4, 2025. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

10. Closed Session

10.a. Closed Session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia

Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under: Subsection 8 for a discussion with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters involving contractual negotiations requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

At 9:14 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Vice Mayor Dent, to enter into closed session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under: under: Subsection 8 for a discussion with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters involving contractual negotiations requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

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

No: 0

11. Adjournment

At 9:24 p.m. the closed session ended and the regular session reconvened. City Attorney Brown read the following statement, which was agreed to with a unanimous recorded vote of Council: I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Chapter 37 of Title 2.2 of the Code, of Virginia, 1950, as amended, and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting by the City Council.

At 9:25 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR