



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Thursday, June 2, 2022

7:30 PM

Council Chambers

Special Meeting

1. Roll Call

Present: 4 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice Mayor Sal Romero, Council Member Christopher B. Jones and Council Member Laura Dent

Also Present: 5 - Deputy City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer, Police Chief Kelley Warner and Mayor Matthew Tobia

2. Regular Items

Authorize the remote virtual attendance by Vice Mayor Romero

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated Vice Mayor Romero is unable to join the meeting in person as he is out of town on business and per the policy adopted by Council permitting Council Members to attend electronically, a vote is required to authorize Vice Mayor Romero to participate remotely.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones seconded by Council Member Dent, to approve Vice Mayor Romero to remotely attend the City Council meeting. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice Mayor Romero, Council Member Jones and Council Member Dent

No: 0

- 2.a.** Consider adopting a resolution accepting the resignation of Council Member George Hirschmann and authorizing the City Attorney to file with the Circuit Court of Rockingham County necessary documents to call a special election to fill the vacancy resulting from such resignation.

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated the special meeting is called to address several items due to the unfortunate resignation of Council Member George Hirschmann. He reviewed the items that need to be addressed.

Mr. Brown read the resolution accepting Council Member Hirschmann's resignation and authorizing the city attorney to file the appropriate court documents with the Circuit Court Clerk of Rockingham County for a special election.

Council Member Jones thanked Mr. Hirschmann for his dedicated service through the years at WHSV and on City Council. He stated has always enjoyed laughing and

joking with George and tackling serious issues, he is appreciative of his dedication to our public safety members and his affection for increasing teacher salaries and supporting education. He wishes the best for Mr. Hirschmann.

Council Member Dent stated she extends her gratitude to Mr. Hirschmann, he always had a ready wit and a deep appreciation for many things that weren't often seen. She shared a story of a book he loaned her. She stated she hopes he will be recovering and well in his new chapter of his life.

Vice Mayor Romero, stated he sends Mr. Hirschmann his most sincere gratitude for all that he did over the many years he served the city, he loves the community and the city, and his sense of humor will be greatly missed. He hopes he stays connected with Mr. Hirschmann, hopes he recovers, and perhaps he will come back and serve the city again.

Mayor Reed stated she will miss Mr. Hirschmann, he was so witty, and she hopes people continue to reach out to him. She wished him to get well and will see each other again.

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

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice Mayor Romero, Council Member Jones and Council Member Dent

No: 0

3. Consideration of filling the vacancy created by the resignation of George Hirschmann from City Council with an interim Council Member

- 3.a.** Closed session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under subsection 1 for the discussion and consideration of prospective candidates for appointment as interim member of City Council.

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated Council will need to consider candidates for appointment as an interim City Council Member that will serve until the winner of the special election in November is qualified.

At 7:38 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Jones, to enter into closed session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under: under subsection 1 for the discussion and consideration of prospective candidates for appointment as interim member of City Council. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

At 7:53 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.

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice Mayor Romero, Council Member Jones and Council Member Dent

No: 0

3.b. Consider adopting a resolution appointing an interim member of City Council

Chris Brown, city attorney, stated he has prepared a resolution with a space for whoever is chosen by Council to be interim City Council Member. He read the resolution.

Council Member Dent stated she has been impressed with Mr. Baugh's depth of institutional knowledge and thorough analysis while working with him on Planning Commission as well as his whole history previously on City Council. She stated she is thrilled to have the opportunity to overlap with him and her special gratitude is for the renewable energy resolution that he crafted. She stated she is looking forward to working with him on further steps of how to implement those aspirations.

Vice Mayor Romero stated as he looked at other candidates, he really took into consideration that this is an appointment for six months or so, there will be a very steep learning curve for anyone stepping in that roll if they haven't had that experience. He stated he has worked with Mr. Baugh on Council and he believes it was important that Council look at someone that was already elected by the community and hopefully people will see that as a benefit. He stated there were other great candidates, but his vote was for Mr. Baugh.

Council Member Jones stated he appreciates the enthusiasm of all the individuals that reached out, there is still an opportunity for all those individuals to serve with the special election, but for right now, he feels it is more appropriate to appoint a former Mayor or former Vice Mayor who is a leader of a Planning Commission and someone that has continuously served the community for over a dozen years. He stated Mr. Baugh's resume and the continuity means that he is most abreast with all of the issues the city is facing and his institutional knowledge, dedication, and ability to have time to serve is what is also impressive. He stated he welcomes Mr. Baugh back to the dais and looks forward to serving with him again. He stated it was a wonderful idea and under his leadership that we moved forward with EPSAC. He stated staff really enjoys working with Mr. Baugh as well.

Mayor Reed stated as a Council we do not take things lightly, this was an appointment that was important. She stated she looked at other localities to see what they did, and this has been done before. She stated Mr. Baugh is beyond qualified to fill the seat for five months or so, she appreciates those that reached out, but there is another election and another opportunity for others to run. She stated we needed someone with the experience as Council Member Dent can agree there is a learning curve. She stated she looks forward to serving with Mr. Baugh.

Council Member Dent nominated Richard Baugh, Vice Mayor Romero seconded the nomination, to appoint Richard Baugh as interim City Council Member and approve the resolution with his appointment. The motion carried with a recorded vote as follows:

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice Mayor Romero, Council Member Jones and Council Member Dent

No: 0

4. Adjournment

At 8:03 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR