



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Roll Call

Present: 4 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Council Member Christopher B. Jones, Council Member Dany Fleming and Council Member Monica Robinson

Absent: 1 - Vice-Mayor Laura Dent

Also Present: 6 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer, Police Chief Kelley Warner, Chief Matthew Tobia and Acting Deputy City Manager Amy Snider

2. Invocation

Mayor Reed offered the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Special Recognition

4.a. Police Promotional Ceremony

Chief Warner recognized the promotions of Lt. Wes Douglas and Sgt. Evan Peirce. She shared their backgrounds and introduced their families.

Chaz Haywood, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Rockingham County, officially swore in the officers.

4.b. Proclamation recognizing Arbor Day

Mayor Reed presented a Proclamation recognizing April 14, 2023, as Arbor Day to Jeremy Harold and Brittany Clem-Hott, Public Works Department.

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, that this be approved. The motion failed with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Vice-Mayor Dent

5.a. Minutes from the March 28, 2023 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

6. Public Hearings

6.a. Consider approving the FY2023-2024 through 2027-2028 Capital Improvement Program

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2023/24 to FY 2027/28. He reviewed the purpose of the CIP, how to read a project request form, and how the projects are ranked.

He stated the Planning Commission recommended approval (7-0) with suggested changes to the following projects: Fire Station Four, Ralph Sampson Park Splashpad and the Kids Castle.

Council Member Fleming asked if the delay in the Fire Station Four project is due to an operational issue. Mr. Fletcher stated they want to wait until Fire Station Five is operational before taking Fire Station Four out of operation. Further discussion took place regarding the timeline for this project.

Mayor Reed asked for clarification on how the projects get prioritized. Mr. Fletcher reviewed the process. Ande Banks, city manager, explained how the process works and how priorities change over the years.

Council Member Fleming asked for additional information on the Citizen Inquiry Application project and the transparency of it. Mr. Fletcher clarified what this project involves, how transparent it is, and how some programs similar to this project are already being done in different ways. Mr. Banks stated this was part of a larger information technologies strategic plan from years ago. He stated this is often used in much larger localities. Further discussion took place on this project.

Council Member Fleming spoke on the Harrison House project, he can see this as part of our tourism profile and tourism draw, is it \$1M worth. He understands it is a historical building and it needs updated, but he is wondering if is worth the cost. Council Member Jones provided the history of this building and feels this is a solid investment and shared his reasoning why. Mr. Banks shared the history of the project in collaboration with the Margaret Grattan Weaver Foundation. Further conversation took place on the history of the property. Council Member Robinson stated this project is priority 3 and asked what the likelihood of this project being done anytime soon. Mr. Banks stated the Foundation was interested in pulling their funding for this project because of the several year hiatus, the board of the Foundation wants to close

the estate, the house has been sitting vacant for several years, and if Council was not interested in moving forward on this project he suggests direction be given to look at other entities who might have interest in preserving it.

Council Member Fleming stated the project for the Westover Pool, that is slated for 2025, sounds like the liability of something happening in the interim is a concern. Mr. Fletcher stated he trusts the director of Parks and Recreation on this when timelines are provided.

Council Member Fleming asked if the high school enhancements project for 2025/2026, was part of the original bond for HHS2. Mr. Banks stated not to his knowledge. Further discussion took place regarding this project. Larry Propst, director of Finance, stated the school is going for additional funding to go towards this project as well.

Council Member Fleming asked what the Rural Potable project is. Mr. Fletcher stated it is for potable water provided to residents in Rockingham County. Further discussion took place regarding this project.

At 7:53 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 27, 2023, and Monday, April 3, 2023.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, stated the outdoor learning spaces for the schools sound excellent and perhaps we can move the Thomas Harrison outdoor learning spaces to align with the plans for the fields. He stated can we attend to the fact that COVID is airborne and HVAC retrofits would protect from that and future outbreaks. He asked Council to pass a resolution forbidding high PAH Sealant for city paving projects due to its toxins that cause cancer. He recommends further improvements to the Golf Course should be paused since we lost of public wilderness adjacent to it, maybe we should rewild the golf course. He stated for water and street widening we propose \$5M in street widening, evidently for the poultry industry. He spoke further on poultry plants, gray water, and credentials of our Council Members.

At 7:59 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

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

Yes: 4 - Mayor Reed, Council Member Jones, Council Member Fleming and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Vice-Mayor Dent

7. Regular Items

7.a. Presentation on the proposed FY 2023-24 Budget

Ande Banks, city manager, presented the proposed budget for FY 23/24. He reviewed City Council's 2039 Vision, the budget preparation process, the focus of the proposed budget, the budget development challenges, the budget highlights that includes the Classification and Compensation Study Implementation, proposed new full-time positions, and the civic and community organizations grant funding recommendations.

He reviewed an overview of the budget which included at \$0.03 real estate tax increase, the population estimates, all fund expenditures, the General Fund revenues and the comparisons between FY 22/23 and FY 23/24 of that revenue, and the General Fund Expenditures and the comparisons between FY 22/23 and FY 23/24 of those expenditures. He noted the State budget has not yet been passed. He stated the total city budget is proposed at \$362,217,042.00.

He reviewed City School highlights of the proposed budget which included the comparison of FY 22/23 and FY 23/24 budgeted services for supporting city schools, local appropriations to city schools from FY 13/14 to FY 23/24, and local school expenditures for the same time frame.

He provided the proposed budget calendar, with a final approval of the budget at the May 31, 2023, City Council Meeting and noted the proposed budget is available for review on the city's website.

He acknowledged the Executive Leadership Team, Mr. Propst, the best finance director in the Commonwealth, Amy Snider, interim deputy city manager, and Michael Parks, director of Communications working as a team to bring this proposal to Council.

Council Member Fleming provided kudos to staff for fitting so much stuff into the budget and addressing our most valuable asset which is our city employees.

Council Member Jones stated the proposed budget matches the conversations he has had with employees, the schools, and the residents of the city. He stated he doesn't see a need for a work session and doesn't really see anything major that needs changed. He stated he is so proud of the city and all that staff is doing.

Mayor Reed stated this budget feels good, it matches the desires and the visions of Council, taking care of our staff, and our city gets recognition.

Council Member Fleming stated the compensation study shows that our staff has been operating below market rate, this study will allow us to get our staff to market rate. Mr. Banks stated Ms. Angela Clem, director of Human Resources has been the champion in this project, her and her staff have done most of the heavy lifting and supplementing the analysis the consultant has been doing because we understood the need.

Council Member Robinson stated it is important to note that living in a town that has such a high ALICE population it is very good to see that the city is willing to put pay and compensation where it needs to be and lead by example.

The City Manager will present the proposed FY 2023-24 Budget and upon concurrence of City Council a public hearing will occur at the April 25, 2023 City Council meeting.

8. Special Event Application Requests

- 8.a. Consider the special event application request for the Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance's Downtown Dinner Party on Saturday, May 20, 2023.

Matt Little, recreation and special events manager, Parks and Recreation, presented a special event application request for HDR's Annual Downtown Dinner Party on Saturday, May 20, 2023. He stated they are requesting the closure of Warren Street and the use of the Turner Pavilion between 2pm - 11pm. He stated the assistance of Public Works and Harrisonburg Police Department are requested; the estimated cost will be approximately \$1100.

A motion was made by Council Member Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the request as presented. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote:

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Vice-Mayor Dent

- 8.b. Consider the special event application request for Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance's Best.Weekend.Ever on Saturday, June 17, 2023.

Matt Little, recreation and special events manager, Parks and Recreation, presented a special event application request for HDR's Annual Best Weekend Ever on Saturday, June 17, 2023. He stated HDR is requesting multiple road closures in the downtown area and a Sip and Stroll ABC License. He stated the assistance of Public Works, Harrisonburg Police Department, Harrisonburg Fire Department, EMS Team and Harrisonburg Downtown Public Transportation are requested; the estimated cost will be approximately \$11,000.

A motion was made by Council Member Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the request as presented. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote:

- 8.c. Consider the special event application request for Magpie's Juneteenth Celebration on Sunday June 18, 2023, from 3-8pm.

Matt Little, recreation and special events manager, Parks and Recreation, presented a special event application request for Magpie's 3rd Annual Juneteenth Celebration on Sunday, June 18, 2023. He reviewed the road closures requested and stated the assistance of Public Works and Harrisonburg Police Department are requested; the estimated cost will be approximately \$3,800.

A motion was made by Council Member Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the request as presented. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote:

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)

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, stated he is disappointed that Council Member Fleming has not responded to queries regarding his degrees and profession and spoke further on his activities. He spoke on Senator Warner's visit to the city, and photographs that were taken.

James "Bucky" Berry spoke on public safety, response time, and his disagreement of removal of Volunteer Engine #4.

9.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Jones stated he hopes the public will continue to voice their challenges, concerns, issues and needs to City Council and staff, but he strongly encourages the public, business owners, residents, students, etc. to let Council and staff know when things are going good too. He stated staff may not always have been paid at the highest compensation level, but the services never went down. He stated we are in the service delivery business and we need to keep that focus as a community. He gave a big shout out to all the 1st and 2nd grade students at Keister Elementary for their presentation on ladybugs.

Council Member Robinson stated each week she is more amazed at how efficient the city is run, for those residents that think we don't hear them or their voices aren't being heard she sees the citizens voices in each one of the one-on-one meetings, and she sees how tenderly the thoughts and wants of community members are held in the hands of city staff and city manager. She is very thankful to be a part of it. She stated this is a very efficient running machine.

Council Member Fleming stated he attended the HDR Board meeting last week and they will be doing an accessibility survey of downtown businesses and once complete training will be available as well as putting a funding plan together. He stated this is a great step for our downtown community to address accessible issues we may not even be aware of. He stated he attended the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization meeting and on April 20th they will release to the public the Unified Planning Work Program, it will contain lots of transportation budget items. He

stated in October of 2022 there was a meeting around JMU students and residents talking about issues that have come up regarding students and residents. He stated he had someone ask him if this will happen again as there are still issues and concerns. He stated perhaps Council can explore creating a University / Residential / City Relations Committee.

Ande Banks, City Manager, stated he would like Council to consider moving the Special Event Application agenda items to the Consent Agenda, generally they are always approved with no concerns, and if there were concerns it could be removed from the consent agenda for further discussion. Council Member Jones stated he would agree to that but would like to review the race and walk routes. Mr. Banks stated that can certainly be done.

10. Boards and Commissions

10.a. Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA)

Mayor Reed stated since Vice Mayor Dent is absent for this meeting she is requesting the boards and commissions appointments be tabled until the next meeting. Discussion took place amongst Council Members and consensus was to table.

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to table this item until all Council Members are present. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

10.b. Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee (EPSAC)

A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Fleming, to table this item until all Council Members are present. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

11. Adjournment

At 9:03 p.m. There being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR