



# City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

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Tuesday, October 12, 2021

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

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### 1. Roll Call

**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:** 3 - City Manager Eric Campbell, City Attorney Chris Brown and City Clerk Pam Ulmer

### 2. Invocation

Council Member Dent offered the invocation.

### 3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

### 4. Special Recognition

#### 4.a. Proclamation acknowledging Employee Appreciation Week October 11, 2021 - October 15, 2021

Mayor Reed presented a proclamation recognizing Employee Appreciation Week, October 12 - 15, 2021 to members of the City Ambassadors. Eric Campbell, city manager, thanked Council for recognizing the over 800 employees that workday in and day out to deliver services to the community. He stated it is easy to take for granted the public services offered in the city and we really depend on them, and we appreciate the work they all do. He stated the city ambassador team is an integral part of our city organization, the executive leadership team wanted to make sure that we had an inclusive organization and wanted all of our employees to be a part of our leadership and high performance organization and chartered the city ambassador team that own and promote the city's values, they are sought for feedback of policy changes and how they may affect employees and are a very important part of what the city administration does. He listed the names of the employees in the city ambassador team. He stated the ambassadors created a recognition program called "Got Five" which allows city employees or citizens witnessing an exemplary value to give an employee a value card associated with the exemplary service or value. He stated when an employee receives all five value cards they are given a recognition, a personal note from himself, a special pin, and a certificate. He presented three certificates, pins and note to CeCe Dodd, Aimee Londeree and Chase Martin for receiving all five value cards.

**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 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, Vice Mayor Romero, Council Member Jones, Council Member Hirschmann and Council Member Dent

**No:** 0

**5.a. Minutes from the September 28, 2021 City Council Meeting**

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

**5.b. Consider a supplemental appropriation for various purposes in the amount of \$179,049,945.20 for funds received from the Series 2021A&B General Obligation Bonds**

**The supplemental appropriation was approved on second reading**

**6. Public Hearings**

**7. Regular Items**

**7.a. Report on the City of Harrisonburg Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory**

Tom Hartman, director of Public Works, stated Dr. Sean McGinnis, Virginia Tech Green Engineering Program, will present the summary report. Mr. Hartman reviewed the need of a Greenhouse Gas Emissions inventory, the project scope, and analysis inputs and outputs.

Dr. McGinnis, thanked staff in doing an excellent job in providing clear, complete, and thorough data in a timely fashion to complete this analysis. He reviewed the inventory data for 2019 electricity use by total municipality, school system (broken down by school) and community sectors and noted the school system is the largest user of electricity which is common. He reviewed the types of fuel usages through Dominion from 2000-2019 and noted the coal usage dropped significantly from 2016-2019 and natural gas and nuclear source usages have increased which are renewable, low carbon sources. He reviewed the natural gas usage for the total municipality, and community sectors, the 2019 transportation and equipment fuels used, and the percentage of emissions based on road types (interstate, primary roads, or secondary roads). He reviewed waste and recycling and the benefits of the savings of CO2. He reviewed emissions by sector and source and noted Municipal Emissions are dominated by Buildings/Facilities and Electricity, but both have decreased significantly since 2016, mainly due to the utility electricity fuel mix. He reviewed the community emissions and noted these emissions are led by the

Transportation/Commercial sectors and Electricity and overall emissions are lower due to the utility electricity fuel mix, but Transportation emissions have increased slightly. He stated the first step in an environmental action plan is always knowing where you are starting and having good data as to where to go next.

Mr. Hartman reviewed the recommendations and next steps, which include to send this report to the Environmental Performance Standards Advisory Committee (EPSAC) to review the emissions report and to implement Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) for further review of Council and adoption to reach the targets needed.

Council Member Dent stated the most important line in the report is the key that local action plans start as soon as possible to reduce emissions sooner than later to minimize environmental and societal impacts.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Romero, to request EPSAC to review the emissions report and utilize the document to further implement phase 2 and phase three of the EAP. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

**7.b. Annual Update on the Raw Water Supply Management (RWSMP)**

Mike Collins, director of Public Utilities, stated if we fail to manage the raw water supply and sewer treatment capacity it would put a strangle hold on the city in the future and we will never accomplish the ultimate build out of the city. He stated reliability is an extremely important plan so the city always has an undisturbed water supply even in the worst draught, and we must be efficient and have stewardship in our normal operations for sustainability. He reviewed the required million gallons per day (MGD) for 2070 and reviewed the raw water supply sources: Dry River (1898), North River (1970), South Fork Shenandoah River (estimated completion 2024) and Silver Lake, he noted Silver Lake is used as a backup. He reviewed the six recommendations to reliability and sustainability based on projections of water supply needs in 2070. He spoke on the concerns during this year's draught. He reviewed the plan recommendations for the following:

- Virginia Administrative Code requirements update and re-approval in 2023
- Virginia Water Withdrawal Permit # 16-0730 requirement compliance
- Upgrade 55,000 raw water pipe (completed), transition 1959 pipe to potable water (2027 CIP), and decommission 1929 and 1898 pipe (2032 CIP)
- Lease renewal with Dayton (completed), configure intake for temporary connections (2022 CIP) and understand the need for long term supply at Silver Lake (identified)
- Complete construction of the South Fork Shenandoah River Raw Water Project (timeline provided)

He stated he appreciates Council for allowing him to provide an update, this is a very important part to the future of the city, and if this isn't managed correctly it will strangle anything associated with growth at some point in the city. He stated two days after he started with the city he was faced with a water shortage, that was his challenge and

here he is 30 years later still trying to solve the problem but with a good plan in place.

Council Member Dent stated she remembers when Council passed a resolution to recommend to Congress about the Wilderness and Scenic Area, he had the concerns about what if water usage expansion was needed by the city at Switzer Lake, and was told if the need to expand the dam was needed we still had the right. She asked him if that would be something needed in the future. Mr. Collins stated it would be beyond anytime soon. Switzer Dam was built as a flood control dam and the city spent funds to expand it as a water supply on top of it. He stated during the year, especially during flooding, silt continues to build in that dam, and someday the city will be forced to do something with all the silt in the bottom, but we can't do anything until the South Fork Shenandoah River raw water line is complete. He stated he doesn't see the need to build the dam bigger. He stated he is proud to have four water sources, not many municipalities can say that.

Council Member Jones stated at a recent conference many were shocked and amazed at how many water sources we have. He stated he appreciates his enthusiasm, his energy, and his ability to bring this knowledge to this subject matter that is palatable and easy to discuss. He stated this is extremely important to the city.

Council Member Dent stated one of the biggest chunks of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding is for water and sewer. Mr. Collins stated he is hoping funds will be made available and noted that all these projects are already included in the CIP for future planning.

Vice Mayor Romero stated he appreciates his leadership, vision, and commitment to the city, he understands this is a big challenge the city faces, and he likes there is a plan moving forward and asked if there is a local/regional plan for the surrounding municipalities as well. Mr. Collins stated the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission is involved, which consists of all the surrounding municipalities, and frequent discussions are had, but there could always be more.

**This Report was received and filed.**

## **8. Special Event Application Requests**

- 8.a.** Consider the special event application request for the VRPS Conference Social on Monday, October 25, 2021.

Matt Little, recreation and special events manager, Parks and Recreation, presented a special event application request for the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society Conference Social on October 25, 2021, the conference is being hosted by Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation for the first time. He stated after the conference educational sessions on Monday, conference delegates will be encouraged to walk downtown for dinner and then head to the Turner Pavilion for the social from 7-10 p.m. He stated the assistance of Public Works, and the Harrisonburg Police Department is requested, the estimated cost will be approximately \$1,500.

Council Member Jones stated it is great to see this request, it is the reason for the agreement we entered with the partners that created Hotel Madison and Conference center.

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

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

**No:** 0

## 9. Supplementals

- 9.a.** Consider a supplemental appropriation for the Children's Services Act (CSA) in the amount of \$293,973.33

Ande Banks, deputy city manager, in capacity as the city's representative for the Children's Services Act (CSA) office, stated this is one of the many shared services that we conduct with Rockingham County, and this program is by state mandate. He stated approval of a supplemental appropriation for funds set aside for the CSA. He reviewed the mission of the CSA and noted for FY 2021 the city contributed \$1.8M with an additional \$2.8 in state funds, however, an additional \$293,973.33 was spent to provide services. He stated in the past a fund balance had been maintained but with increases in costs and the pandemic more funding was needed and anticipates this to also be needed in upcoming budget years as well.

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

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

**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)**

Hannah Whitmer, 382 E. Elizabeth Street, spoke on MRRJ's expansion, the changes in the planned expansion, and feels it is critically important that we have an accurate understanding as to where we are, where we have been and where we are going regarding incarcerations. She stated she was deeply disappointed and concerned by the presentation from the Criminal Justice Planner that portrays a sharp increase in violent crime in our community and feels the presentation was misleading. She spoke on incarcerations, crime rates, and stated Council is part of the criminal legal system because they hold the purse strings, make high level choices that effect incarceration in the community, and she applauds their choice to oppose the expansions at MRRJ and encourages Council to take a couple of other steps. She states she hopes

Council prioritizes making sure the new city manager that has a strong and unwavering commitment to reducing incarceration and urges Council to do everything possible to withdraw our community from MRRJ.

Jayne Docherty, 2237 Deyerle Ave., spoke about the initial hiring request of a Community Justice Planner in 2019, but a Criminal Justice Planner was hired. She stated a community justice planner would have taken the whole picture of justice and figure out how we become a more just community and by tracking data on who is in jail and for what crime, track how we compare to our neighboring communities, how can we do things differently to prevent incarceration that destroys lives. She references a book by Ruben Miller, Halfway Home, and asked Council to take leadership in this issue and think about how we as a city become the city that prevents incarceration through providing other services.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, he referenced a recent law passed in California for gas powered lawn mowers and leaf blowers and stated he tested in the city for the increase in respiratory toxins in a block in which a yard was being mowed, which adds to emissions in the city, and it equaled the same as if following a dump truck. He spoke on the tall grass and weeds ordinance, threats against Council Members and School Board members, and the police departments sensitivity to the new federal COVID-19 Hate Crime Bill. He asked Council to repeal the tall grass and weed ordinance.

#### **10.b. City Council and Staff**

Council Member Jones stated he appreciates Hannah and Jayne's comments, mass incarceration has been around since the day the country started, and the majority of the crime and incarcerated offenders in the city are non-violent and it is abnormally safe to live and play in this area. He commended the city manager and the executive leadership team as their leadership helped to empower the city departments and he appreciates the confidence in which we provide customer service. He thanked all employees of the city in making his job as a Council Member easier by providing the information he needs as he needs it. He thanked the Mayor for the opportunity to speak at the Virginia Municipal League on the Bluestone Elementary School and the process of its build.

Council Member Dent shared her appreciation for the employees and staff, they are always willing to provide the information needed. She stated it was a wonderful learning opportunity to attend the VML Conference, she was able to get in the face of some of the Dominion people and spoke with Brian O'Dell of HEC about some of the things discussed at the conference, in particular the Green House Gas inventory and how we can move forward to reduce our carbon footprint. She stated as the report made clear if the city can lead by example, it will take the whole community doing whatever measures we all can to introduce renewable energy at the residential and commercial communities as well as incentives, education, and outreach to the community.

Vice Mayor Romero stated Tom Hartman and Kelly Adams joined him at Clayton and Suter Streets do discuss the flooding issues in that area. He stated there were at least 20 neighbors that were present and were able to get a lot of questions answered, the neighbors were able to organize and fill out applications for the Drainage Improvement Program and hopes the flooding issues will be resolved. He stated he heard many stories of the damage done to the homes due to flooding. He stated it was good to know the people felt they were heard and are excited about the process.

Council Member Hirschmann stated he had the chance to talk about and address the Employees Appreciation Week, it is nice our employees get the recognition, and the city is very lucky to have the employees and staff that we have, they do a great job with great confidence and attitude which makes is so much easier for all of us. He thanked all the city employees and stated they are much appreciated.

Mayor Reed stated she had the opportunity to go to the Virginia Transit Association Conference and the VML Conference and she learned a lot from both. She stated while we are celebrating our staff, we also need to acknowledge the fact that they have been stretched and stressed throughout the pandemic, especially those in the Transportation Department, everyone is working hard during these difficult times. Mayor Reed asked when the Council photo can be taken, discussion took place and it was decided to have it done just before the November 23, 2020, City Council meeting.

Eric Campbell, city manager, provided an update on the efforts city staff has taken to support retention and recruitment at the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT), which provides all transportation services for Harrisonburg City Public Schools (HCPS) and local transit routes. He stated the difficulty of hiring and retaining bus operators is a national problem, there was an article in the local media that referenced bonuses offered by the schools from HCPS, but that was only half of the drivers with HDPT, therefore bonuses will be provided to all drivers with HDPT. He reviewed the incentives being offered and support to current transit operators. He stated he is very grateful to Gerald Gatobu, director of HDPT and his team for all they have done to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and continuing to provide the services to the community despite the hiring challenges.

## **11. Boards and Commissions**

### **11.a. Planning Commission**

Council Member Dent stated she vouches for the appointment of Dr. Armstrong for her work done EPSAC and is particularly passionate about food security and is knowledgeable and cares about other aspects of zoning and land use.

**A motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Dent to appoint Dr. Donna Armstrong to the Planning Commission. The motion carried with a**

unanimous voice vote.

**12. Closed Session**

- 12.a. Closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under:

Subsection 1 for the discussion of the resignation of a specific employee of the City, namely the City Manager,

And

Subsection 3 for the discussion of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the City.

**At 8:44 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Jones, seconded by Council Member Hirschmann to enter into a closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under:**

**Subsection 1 for the discussion of the resignation of a specific employee of the City, namely the City Manager, and Subsection 3 for the discussion of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the City.**

**13. Adjournment**

At 9:19 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 9:19 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