



City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Roll Call

Present: 4 - Vice-Mayor Dany Fleming, Council Member Laura Dent, Council Member Nasser Alsaadun and Council Member Monica Robinson

Absent: 1 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed

Also Present: 5 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, Chief Matthew Tobia, Police Chief Joseph Tucker and Brian Vandenberg

2. Moment of Silence

Vice Mayor Fleming offered the moment of silence.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Mayor Fleming led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Special Recognition

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)

Vice Mayor Fleming highlighted the special events that are upcoming.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 4 - Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Mayor Reed

5.a. Minutes from the March 24, 2026 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the Consent Agenda.

5.b. Consider the special event application request for Massanutten Regional Library's Summer Reading Kick-Off Celebration on Sunday, May 31, 2026, at Turner Pavilion.

This Special Event Application was approved.

- 5.c.** Consider the special event application request for the Shenandoah Valley Pride Celebration on Sunday, September 20, 2026.

This Special Event Application was approved.

- 5.d.** Consider the special event application request for the Harrisonburg Half Marathon on Saturday, October 3, 2026.

This Special Event Application was approved.

- 5.e.** Consider a supplemental appropriation for the General Fund and the Water Capital Projects Fund

This Supplemental Appropriation was approved on second reading.

- 5.f.** Consider a supplemental appropriation for the General Fund, Water Fund and the Stormwater Fund

This Supplemental Appropriation was approved on second reading

- 5.g.** Consider a supplemental appropriation for the Harrisonburg City School Board (HCPS)

This Supplemental Appropriation was approved on second reading.

6. Public Hearings

- 6.a.** Consider a request from Katherine S Moran and Marcie E Harris to rezone (proffer amendment) 361 Franklin Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, provided an overview on the current zoning and land use for the property, mentioned its status as one of the few undeveloped properties in the area, and reviewed the proffer to extend the roof overhang beyond the setback limitations. He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked about the frequency of these types of occurrences. Council Member Dent asked for clarification on the second floor layout.

At 7:09 p.m., Vice Mayor Fleming closed the regular session and called the first public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on April 1 and April 8, 2026.

Matthew Robertson, representative for the applicant, spoke on a potential future bedroom on the second floor.

Panayotis Giannakouros spoke on principles of zoning to reconsider as ordinance is being rewritten.

At 7:14 p.m., Vice Mayor Fleming closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

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

6.b. Consider a request from Center for Health and Human Development to rezone 851 Madison Street

Adam Fletcher, Director of Community Development, explained how the applicant would like to remove parking minimums, described zoning and land use of the property, and that the property is requested to be rezoned to R-8 to reduce setbacks and allow different dimensions of the property. He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommend approval on conditions this only apply to the two planned units. He mentioned the property is within the flood plain and the requirements of properties within the flood plain.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked for clarification on the applicant's plan for slab height vs. what was required. Council Member Dent mentioned this property could be a good candidate for affordable housing at a future date.

At 7:22 p.m., Vice Mayor Fleming closed the regular session and called the second public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on April 1 and April 8, 2026.

Mary Ta, Center for Health and Human Development (CHHD), explained nonprofit's purpose to develop affordable housing for the project and how this could work for people with housing vouchers as well.

Panayotis Giannakouros spoke on familiarity with the property and the need to follow procedure with projects.

At 7:29 p.m., Vice Mayor Fleming closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Council Member Robinson spoke on the merits of the model being employed by the project.

Council Member Dent asked if there would be case management with the project and the applicant stated that is the intent. Vice Mayor Fleming clarified that the supportive services would be recommended but would not be a requirement.

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

6.c. Consider a request from Center for Health and Human Development for a special use permit at 851 Madison Street

6.c. was presented concurrently with 6.b.

A motion was made by Council Member Alsaadun, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the Special Use Permit as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 4 - Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Mayor Reed

7. Regular Items

7.a. Planning Commission Annual Report 2025

Adam Fletcher, Director of Community Development, presented the data of planning commission activity over the last year.

Council Member Dent asked why there was lower activity compared to years past.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked how the activity compares to other similar cities. Mr. Fletcher did not have that data but pointed out how robust the discussion is in Planning Commission meetings.

Council Member Alsaadun suggested the number of rezonings is indicative of the need for the zoning ordinance rewrite currently underway. Mr. Fletcher suggested that there is unlikely to be a reduction even after the rewriting process.

Council Member Robinson stated that the activity level appeared to be in line with broader economic conditions.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.b. Consider approval of the proposed sculpture design by Maxwell Emcays for the roundabout at the Spraygrounds at Ralph Sampson Park

Steve Carpenter, the applicant, talked about the Spraygrounds site and the desire to install three pieces of art. He explained the level of community engagement that went into the art considerations, and discussed how only one proposal, for the roundabout, is being presented now as they would like to receive more proposals for the other two sections.

Council Member Robinson expressed satisfaction with the artist's proposal.

Council Member Dent asked if the same artist will design for the other sections and applicant said that may be how it works out, but there may be others.

Council Member Alsaadun asked if lights are included in the design or if the city would need to illuminate it. Deputy City Manager Amy Snider stated that the city has plans to enhance the area after art is installed.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked if the structure could be climbable and applicant stated it was designed to not be a hazard but was not designed specifically to climb. Vice Mayor Fleming asked and the City Manager confirmed that Public Works would oversee the structural integrity of the art during the installation process.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, to approve this item as presented. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 4 - Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Mayor Reed

7.c. Update on the Harrison House Project

City Manager Banks explained the history of the project and how it got to this point.

Tom Hartman, Director of Public Works, presented on history of the property, and that since the City was not selected for a competitive grant for the project, the City proceeded in a different direction with an architect. He explained how some demolition will take place to open up a terrace space and to connect the site to Denton Park. He stated how the project scope is for the exterior and how the interior will need to be looked at in the future. He explained the funding plan and timeline for the project.

Council Member Alsaadun asked about additional details concerning project timeline and increasing costs that may come up over the duration of the project.

City Manager Banks mentioned how there will be some independent archaeological work around the building exterior. If there are changes to the budget, it will be brought up to Council.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.d. Overview of the Artificial Intelligence Policy

Bud Ritchie, Cybersecurity Specialist in Information Technology, presented on the reasoning for creating an artificial intelligence policy, how AI is being used in the City currently, how it may be used, what the policy states, and how the City selected a particular AI tool to launch across the organization.

Vice Mayor Fleming explained how GovAI acts as other market products but information remains in the City, making it a secure alternative.

Council Member Robinson expressed how she likes that the AI tool can navigate internal policy documents and asked if Council members can have access to it, which Mr. Ritchie affirmed.

Council Member Dent asked if Council could receive training and Mr. Ritchie answered affirmatively.

Vice Mayor Fleming talked about future applications for residents on City websites or other platforms, and about the importance of being proactive with cybersecurity.

Council Member Alsaadun asked if all employees had access to the platform. Mr. Ritchie said yes but everyone may not be using it based on their job responsibilities.

Discussion took place on public access on city websites, including with permitting.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.e. City Manager's Proposed FY 2026-2027 Budget Presentation

City Manager Banks read Council's 2045 Vision Statement and how it informed the budget process; explained the budget development process; presented highlights, challenges, council priorities, full-time positions added, and non-profit organizations funded. He indicated that in the proposed budget, real estate tax rates would remain the same, and utility rates would slightly increase to accommodate future infrastructure needs. He then presented figures for revenues and expenditures, pointing out noticeable changes between the current year's budget and the proposed budget. He indicated that while the City's transfer to HCPS would decrease for the first time in ten years, their overall budget is increasing.

Council Members asked clarifying questions throughout the presentation and credited City staff for their stewardship of public money.

City Council indicated their consent to proceed in the budget process with the real estate tax rate proposed. Discussion took place on if there were other fees or taxes that could be raised to offset the need to raise utility rates.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.f. Overview of Automated License Plate Readers

Joe Tucker, Chief of Police, discussed the number and locations of Automated License Plate Readers in the city; what they do and do not capture; the number of crimes they have helped solve; state statute governing the use of ALPRs; the auditing requirements to provide oversight of improper use; and court precedence about the use of ALPRs.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked about the process of other agencies requesting

Harrisonburg data. Chief Tucker said that data can only be shared within state and that other agencies are held to same standards of use by law.

Council Member Robinson questioned why people are afraid of ALPRs and Chief Tucker said the profession as a whole could have done better at informing communities prior to implementation.

Council Member Alsaadun asked if there were plans for adding more cameras and Chief Tucker said there were no plans to at this time.

City Attorney Brown stated that whatever law enforcement technology the City were to use, it has to be on an approved, vetted list by the State.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.g. Presentation of the Proposed Restoration and Renovation of the City Hall Complex

Amy Snider, Deputy City Manager, provided a status update on the City Hall Complex, including the phases that existing structures were built over time; new nomenclature for the North and South portions of the complex; the need and historic plans to expand City Hall across both structures; renovation floor plans; renderings of the space; and project cost and timeline.

Vice Mayor Fleming asked about how the contingency for the project was determined. The project architect, Anna Campbell of LDDBlueline, explained the process of cost estimation.

Council Member Alsaadun asked if the building would have solar power and Ms. Snider explained how the power generated from Turner Pavilion will be directed to the building.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.h. Consider nominations for the Virginia Municipal League (VML) Policy Committees 2026

Vice Mayor Fleming indicated his desire to move to the Finance Committee and other Council Members indicated their desire to remain in the same committees. Council decided to follow up with Mayor Reed before voting.

This Action Item was tabled.

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)

Sam Nichols, 240 Maryland Avenue, asked clarification on budget item, asked City Council to write letter to U.S. Supreme Court about a pending case.

Panayotis Giannakouros, asked for support of No Mow May and announced helping individuals run for City Council seats.

James Sheets, expressed dissatisfaction with public services.

8.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Alsaadun: Attended immigration roundtable, JMU president inauguration

Council Member Dent: Attended groundbreaking of I-81 project and a ribbon cutting for local business attended by Governor and State leadership. Participated in Black's Run cleanup project. Attended inauguration. Filmed video about City solar panels. Will go on a tour of local waterways. Will speak with NLC representatives.

Council Member Robinson: Attended event against mining in DR Congo, spoke with Sheriff about services provided to inmates and victims of crime. Attended inauguration. Introduced Senator Warner at local event. Attended events with the Governor. Met with Goodwill Industries on improvements for Northeast neighborhood.

Vice Mayor Fleming: Attended AI meeting with NLC, JMU Inauguration, Point in Time announcement event; mentioned JMU liaison meeting this week; and commented on events with Governor.

9. Boards and Commissions

9.a. EPSAC

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun to appoint Rob Alexander to a second term on EPSAC to expire on April 25, 2029, and Camryn Raynes and David Husain to first terms. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Yes: 4 - Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Mayor Reed

9.b. Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA)

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, that Joyce Sampson-Franklin be appointed to HRHA for the unexpired term expiring on February 11, 2028. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

Yes: 4 - Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

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 7 for consultation with legal counsel and staff regarding actual or probable litigation where such consultation in open session would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of City Council.

At 11:04 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to enter into closed session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under: subsection 7 for consultation with legal counsel and staff regarding actual or probable litigation where such consultation in open session would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of City Council. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 4 - Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

11. Adjournment

At 11:27 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 11:27 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

DEPUTY CITY CLERK

MAYOR