



City Manager's Report

September 18, 2023

*Offices of the City Manager
& City Departments*

UPDATES FROM CITY MANAGER SAMUEL SANDERS, JR

- Responses to Community Matters
 - Many thanks to Marta Keane for presenting the JABA 2022 Annual Report. It was nice to see and hear the great things being done to support seniors in our community. Aging in Place is important, and the residents are blessed to have JABA committed to tending to their needs and independent living, where possible.
 - As affordable housing remains one of the most critical issues facing Charlottesville, the most vulnerable are those who remain unhoused in our community. We remain focused on the issue and on exploring the various gaps that exist in serving the continuum of needs of the unhoused. We have multiple conversations in progress, and the goal is for the city to determine what specifically our staff may be able to do to help reduce the number of people needing permanent supportive intervention. We know this issue requires a collaborative response, so we seek opportunities to address these critical needs jointly.
- Administrative Matters
 - The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority (RWSA), Albemarle County Service Authority, and City of Charlottesville Utilities Department report that they are prepared to meet the community's public drinking water needs despite below normal rainfall. However, water conservation is encouraged for public and private well users as drought-like conditions occur throughout central Virginia.
- Good News!
 - I join Chief Kochis in congratulating the recent additions to his leadership team:
 - Steve Knick was appointed Assistant Chief, overseeing the Administrative Services Division and Professional Services Division.
 - Daniel Meehan was appointed Assistant Chief, overseeing the Patrol Operations Division and Criminal Investigations Division.
 - Larry Jones was promoted to Captain to lead the Patrol Operations Division.
- Update on Manager's Transition
 - Below is a message that I shared this month with All Staff in our Cville360 Newsletter:

It has been a little more than 30 days since I took the short walk over to the big office where the load is heavy, and the days are long. But I have no regrets, and I feel good. I am inspired to give it my all and to always strive to do a great job. I have met a lot of people in the past few weeks, and I have been offered various thanks and appreciation for being willing to take the "hot seat". I have also been offered prayers for being able to occupy the seat for what many have expressed as a desire for a long time. All that I have said in response is: "Thank you, and I am here to serve for as long as I can". In serving, I hope to make a difference, to show others how to do the same, and to leave a lasting impact on this organization.

So, let's first talk about SERVICE. Service is doing something for or helping others. We, as public servants, are doing a host of things each and every day for a community with high expectations. Daily, we are providing general services, offering critical care, meeting various needs, prioritizing quality of life, delivering opportunities, enhancing

neighborhoods, connecting a community, designing a healthy future, and so much more. We are innovators and builders, developers and dreamers, motivators and instigators. We are so much more than our individual titles. But what we all are, no matter the assignment: servants of the public.

A public servant is not often thanked and many times underappreciated. They work hard and can be accused of not doing enough. They show up in the toughest of times. They give up hours away from their families. And they push hard despite sometimes being exhausted. The best of public servants never complains because they know they are needed and their service is bigger than anything.

It's the commitment to service that makes all the difference. We, as public servants, should strive to always be impactful. It's the impact that shows we have made the difference. We are mission-driven and purpose-built. We do our work, and we give it all that we have. We appreciate the recognition and fanfare when it comes, but we don't wait for it in exchange for doing a great job. Instead, we do our best and know that someone – even the City Manager – will recognize that we did well.

I offer this to you as my vision for the City of Charlottesville – the organization. I would welcome this statement as a clear and evident description of working for the city. I recognize that means I have some things to address and some problems to solve. I have some processes and a few procedures to define. As I work on those things, I remain inspired that the collective WE that forms this organization will be service-driven and impact-focused. We will do our jobs to the best of our abilities because people rely on us. They trust us to be responsible stewards of every taxpayer dollar that we spend. They hope we will remember to be inclusive. And they need us to be intentional.

So, as I continue to occupy the seat of the city manager, I will support you in the work that we do so we not only meet but exceed the expectations of our public. I respect that as our charge, and I applaud your commitment.

UPDATES FROM DEPUTY CITY MANAGER ASHLEY MARSHALL

- Commendation from Senator Mark Warner
 - The Parks & Recreation Department recently received a letter of congratulations from Senator Mark Warner on being selected as the 2023 Best Place for Outdoor Singles to Live by Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine. Sen. Warner noted that the award is “a testament to your hard work and dedication to providing meaningful outdoor recreational activities to Virginians”. The Department is deeply appreciative of the note from the Senator.

UPDATES FROM INTERIM DEPUTY CITY MANAGER STEVEN HICKS

- Staffing
 - Charlottesville Are Transit is hiring! Current positions available:
 - Assistant Director of Operations
 - Assistant Director of Maintenance
 - Sr. Project Manager
 - Marketing Coordinator
 - And we are always hiring bus drivers!
 - **Come work for CAT! Apply now!**
 - The Interim Deputy City Manager of Operations and the Public Works Engineering Division for Transportation attended the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Local Programs Workshop 2023 to hear from the VDOT’s Commissioner Stephen Brich regarding the challenges and success that the localities are having administering federally and state funded projects. The workshop is intended for local public agency staff to provide training for program management, project development and delivery of projects on-time and on-budget.

CITY DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

- **Charlottesville Area Transit** – Director Garland Williams (he/him)
 - Hiring Trends (Pupil Transportation): CAT would like to note that 3 of 6 potential School Drivers have completed the Background Verification process and will complete the City Drug & Alcohol testing by Friday, September 22, 2023. All 3 potential drivers have obtained their CDL Learner's Permit. Additionally, 3 potential School Drivers from the Network2Work/PVCC program are in the Background Verification process. (The number of potential drivers from Network2Work has decreased by 2.)

- **Charlottesville Fire Department** –Chief Michael Thomas (he/him)
 - Community Events:
 - CFD actively participated in the Paint the Town Orange celebration. CFD provided the lead unit in the parade ahead of the marching band, clearing the way down the mall to the Ting Pavilion. CFD also had an ambulance on standby and Tower 10 hanging the UVA flag over the downtown mall.
 - On September 10th, CFD members participated in the 9/11 Stair Climb at Monticello High School. By making the climb, first responders demonstrate their reverence for those who sacrificed their lives to protect and serve the people of our country.
 - The Fontaine Fire Station Lobby was opened Monday, September 11, 2023, from 9 AM. to 5 PM as a space dedicated to reflecting and viewing the city's artifacts from September 11, 2001. Community members joined us as we remembered first responders who made the ultimate sacrifice on that fateful day.
 - CFD participated with Albemarle County Fire/Rescue in the 24-hour Rowing for Responders event to bring attention to first responders' mental health.
 - CFD was in the command post and provided fire and EMS services throughout the stadium at the UVA-JMU football game on September 9.
 - Staffing:
 - The Deputy Fire Chief Process is underway.

- **Charlottesville Police Department** – Chief Michael Kochis (he/him)
 - Recruitment and retention:
 - The Police Department currently has 16 vacancies. This is down from 30 vacancies that existed in January of 2023. Recruitment and hiring efforts continue.
 - Strategic Planning:
 - The Police Department has completed most of its focus groups and is reviewing the information to develop its three-year strategic plan. This will guide the department moving forward as it works towards building community partnerships, addressing gun violence, addresses recruitment and retention, and addressing the treatment and wellness of its staff.

- **Project Safe Neighborhoods:**
 - The Police Department has partnered with local and federal law enforcement to address gun violence and high-level drug trafficking organizations in the region. A recent investigation yielded the federal indictments of 19 individuals, the seizure of 20 firearms, and several thousand grams of fentanyl. These efforts will continue.
- **Community Partnerships:**
 - The community police academy will be advertised in the next several weeks. This is a ten-week program where community stakeholders attend once a week to learn about the police department and engage with its officers. The Police Department Community Action Team continues to meet monthly to discuss policy and make recommendations on best practices.
- **Human Resources – Director Mary Ann Hardie (she/her)**
 - The HR Department is excited to share that a new HR Analyst is joining their team. Sherika Baker will be starting on 9/27/23 and will be providing organizational support with employee and labor relations/collective bargaining and classification and compensation.
 - The Department of Human Resources continues to work on completing many hires in multiple departments. Please go to our website to see all openings and encourage eligible applicants to apply: <https://www.charlottesville.gov/695/Employment-with-the-City-of-Charlottesvi>
- **Human Services – Director Misty Graves (she/her)**
 - The Department of Human Services has three highlights to share for this City Manager's Report:
 - The Vibrant Community Fund will launch their application process on Sept. 20, 2023; the closing date is Oct 20, 2023. For technical assistance, non-profit organizations may contact him at smithha@charlottesville.gov.
 - Misty Graves and Daniel Fairley will present on a panel during the Karsh Institute's Democracy 360 symposium from 11:45-12:45 on Thursday, October 19, at the Colonnade Club titled Democratization of Data: Local Data, Local Governance. The panel will address how communities need locally relevant data to inform policymaking and hold local governments accountable. How can the collaboratively produced *Stepping Stones* report promote a shared understanding of and action to improve community well-being at the local level? The final *Stepping Stones* report will be released on September 18th.
 - CAYIP, the City's student internship program run by the Department of Human Services, will launch its fall school-year session on Monday, September 18th, with 18 city residents!
- **Information Technology – Director Steve Hawkes (he/him)**
 - The Department would like to share a few notable projects:

- Downtown Mall Wifi - The city's project with Ting to extend free Wi-Fi to the east end of the Downtown Mall has restarted after a long wait while required equipment for the project was on backorder. We hope the project will be completed sometime this Fall.
 - SAP Upgrade to S/4Hana- The core SAP team was recently given presentations by the consultant groups that are finalists for implementing the City's SAP upgrade. The selection of a vendor should occur in the next month or so.
 - City Attorney intake system - the IT Applications Team is partnering with the City Attorney's Department to develop a software system for managing requests made to the department. The App Team is currently in the design and development phase of the project.
 - Network Core Switch Upgrade - On Sunday, 9/10, the City's Networking and Operations Teams replaced the City's Core Switches. The City's core switches, essentially the brains of the City's network, have been due to be replaced for a number of years, so the project is a much-needed upgrade of our IT infrastructure.
 - City Website Refresh - As part of the City's contract with CivicPlus, our website vendor, we will be undergoing a refresh of the City's website. The project timeline is about six months and will focus on the website's design.
- **Neighborhood Development Services** – Director James Freas (he/him)
[Details Here]
 - **Parks & Recreation** – Acting Director Riaan Anthony/ Director Dana Kasler (he/him)
 - Farmers Markets (<https://www.charlottesville.gov/619/Charlottesville-Farmers-Markets>):
 - The Department is happy to announce that the City Market and Farmers in the Park now accept EBT/SNAP, Fresh Match, and Senior Farmers Market Nutritional Program Vouchers at the markets.
 - The Department celebrated National Farmers Market Week (August 6-12) and released a commemorative 50th Anniversary poster for sale at the markets.
 - Meadowcreek Golf (<https://www.meadowcreekgolf.org/>)
 - The City's municipal golf course hosted the City Four-Ball Championship on August 13.
 - Charlottesville High School golf team has begun their season at Meadowcreek with practices and matches.
 - Registration is open for the City's Ladies Amateur Championship on September 23. Interested golfers can register online at: <https://shorturl.at/yDST9>
 - Adaptive Recreation (<https://www.charlottesville.gov/368/Adaptive>)
 - Parks and Recreation is proud to announce that its Adaptive Recreation team was able to return to hosting full days and seven weeks of summer camps for youth and young adults who need more support than a traditional summer camp can provide. Last year, we ran for five weeks with shortened hours. Our camps were filled, and we had waiting lists that we could accommodate on certain weeks when additional staff could assist.

- Adaptive brought back overnight programs (the last one was in February 2020) with a three-day trip that included tent camping at Lake Anna, Rock Climbing, and White-Water Rafting. Participants had an excellent experience. Parents and caregivers were also excited about the return of this offering.
- Aquatic Recreation (<https://www.charlottesville.gov/276/Aquatics>)
 - Parks and Recreation’s Aquatics team was able to offer a regular swimming schedule and was open seven days a week throughout the summer at all our pools (Washington, Onesty outdoor Pool, and Smith AFC), including 30 classes/programs which had roughly 350+ participants.
 - The Swordfish, the City’s swim team, also had a great summer season participating in Jefferson Swim League. They placed 8th in the league at CHAMPS and secured our place in the second tier for the 2024 season. We had 164 participants -- an increase of about 20 new swimmers.
- **Public Works** – Director Stacey Smalls (he/him)
 - Environmental Sustainability:
 - The 2023 Climate Work Plan has been posted at <https://www.charlottesville.gov/1085/Climate-Action-Planning>
 - The City of Charlottesville has been approved by DEQ as a Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) Sustainability Partner for 2023. This approval is in recognition of the numerous significant environmental achievements of the City of Charlottesville and the ambitious sustainability goals you have set for the future. This status has been achieved in the 11th year in a row.
 - Jill Greiner, Water Efficiency Coordinator, is the recipient of the Alliance for Water Efficiency’s 2023 Volunteer Appreciation Award. Congratulations!
 - The Schenks Branch Tributary Stream Restoration project is kicking off. To learn more about the restoration project, please visit the following StoryMap: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/28dcc35f534e4ddcac5d26d934f0488a>
- **Utilities** – Director Lauren Hildebrand (she/her)
 - Charlottesville Utilities provides multiple ways to help residents prepare their homes for winter weather, especially homes that are potentially under-insulated, like the many in our area built before 1970 – the first year Virginia enacted insulation code requirements. Entering its fourth year, the Charlottesville Gas Energy Efficiency Program (CGEEP) provides qualified households with free home weatherization improvements, and with newly updated income qualification levels, even more, households can save energy and live more comfortably. Now, a family of four qualifies for CGEEP with a total household income of \$88,800, and a family of two with the primary account holder aged 60 or older qualifies with a total household income of \$108,500. And if you don’t qualify for CGEEP, Utilities also offers cost- and energy-saving rebates towards upgrading attic insulation and installing a programmable thermostat.

Postcards highlighting details on Utilities' weatherization resources will be sent to all area homes built before 1970, and Utilities encourages all residents, regardless of when their home was built, to visit www.charlottesville.gov/utilities for more information on our Utility Incentives.

- **Social Services** – Director Sue Moffett (she/her)
 - Should any member of the Charlottesville community need assistance, please contact the Department of Social Services at 434-970-3400 for additional information.
 - Comuníquese con el Departamento de Servicios Sociales al 434-970-3400 para obtener información adicional.