City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft
City Council

Tuesday, May 13, 2025 | **7:00 PM** | **Council Chambers**

1. Roll Call

Present: 5 - Mayor Deanna R. Reed, Vice-Mayor Dany Fleming, Council Member Laura Dent, Council Member Nasser Alsaadun and Council Member Monica Robinson

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

2. Moment of Silence

Mayor Reed offered a moment of silence

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Reed led the Pledge of Allegiance

4. Special Recognition

4.a. Proclamation recognizing May 11, 2025 through May 17, 2025 as Police Week

Vice Mayor Fleming presented the proclamation recognizing Police Week to Interim Chief of Police, Rod Pollard.

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 Robinson, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

5.a. Minutes from the April 22, 2025 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Consider the special event application request for Priscilla May-Maiden's Wedding Reception on Sunday, June 8, 2025.

This special event application was approved on the consent agenda

5.c. Consider the special event application request for Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance's Levitt AMP Harrisonburg Music Series on Wednesday evenings from June 25-September 10, 2025 (July 5 - Saturday date).

This special event application was approved on the consent agenda

5.d. Consider the special event application request for the Valley 4th Run on Friday, July 4, 2025.

This special event application was approved on the consent agenda

6. Public Hearings

6.a. Consider a request from Miranda Ebersold to amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the minimum setback of accessory buildings on through lots in the UR, Urban Residential District

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented an ordinance amendment related to minimum setbacks of accessory buildings on through lots in the UR - Urban Residential District. He reviewed the ordinance amendments requested by the applicant and what was recommended by staff. He reviewed the properties in the city that may be affected by this request. Mr. Fletcher reviewed the reasoning as to why staff recommended a ten-foot setback.

He stated staff and PC (5-0) recommended approval of the ordinance amendment with staff's recommendations.

Discussion took place regarding the properties that could be affected by this ordinance amendment request, and the in-progress zoning ordinance re-write.

At 7:21 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 Wednesday, April 30, 2025, and Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Quinton Callahan, representative of the applicant, stated this request is due to an attempt to resolve the Board of Zoning Appeals variance denial via ordinance amendment. He stated 49 parcels could be affected by this amendment throughout the city, four of which have accessory buildings within the ten-foot set back (as shown on the recommended ordinance amendment by staff) and 22 have accessory buildings within the five foot setback (as shown on the recommended ordinance amendment by the applicant). He explains the reasoning behind the applicants request for the five-foot setback.

At 7:37 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Further discussions took place regarding line of site, safety, and parking if setbacks are reduced.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, to approve staffs recommended ordinance amendment of ten (10) foot setback as presented. The motion failed with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes: 2 - Vice-Mayor Fleming and Council Member Dent

No: 3 - Mayor Reed, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve the applicants requested ordinance amendment of five (5) foot setback as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

6.b. Consider a request from KP'S CARS LLC for a special use permit to allow multiple-family dwellings and/or mixed use buildings at 1812 Erickson Avenue

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a special use permit request within a B-2 district for property located at 1812 Erickson Ave. He reviewed the property, the surrounding properties, the development plan for the parcel, the owner/developer self-imposed conditions, and staff's additional recommended condition. He noted the applicant also requested a 12-month extension to provide a total of 48 months to begin construction

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval with the additional staff condition #6 and the additional 12 months to begin construction.
Council Member Alsaadun asked about any additional traffic signals for the area. Mr. Fletcher stated the new development of Bluestone Town Center will require additional traffic signals but not this project. Further discussion took place on the development plan of the project.

At 8:02 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the second public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, and Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Frank Gordon, applicant, stated this is planned to be permanent supportive housing. He spoke on chronic homelessness, the Community Services Board waiting list for housing, state funding, sidewalk and shared-use paths, and the wrap around services that will be located at this development. He noted he has been in contact with Walmart requesting to complete the shared-use path to Walmart from the development.
Amber Robinson, permanent supportive housing supervisor for the Harrisonburg

Rockingham Community Services Board (HRCSB). She stated the need for this type of housing in the city is urgent and follows the Housing First model. She stated they are in full support of this project.

At 8:23 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Council thanked Mr. Gordon for working on this project, and stated that it fills a need in the city for our most vulnerable residents.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the special use permit request omitting staff condition 6 and with the additional 12 months for construction as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

6.c. Consider a request from Jason Burch to rezone a property addressed as 380 Sunrise Avenue

Adam Fletcher, director of community development, presented a rezoning request from R-1 to R-8C for two parcels located at 380 Sunrise Avenue to bring into conformance with setback requirements. He reviewed the property, the long-term plan for the city, and the proffers submitted.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (5-0) recommended approval.
At 8:29 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the third public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, and Wednesday, May 7, 2025

There being no one desiring to be heard, Mayor Reed closed the public hearing at 8:30 p.m., and the regular session reconvened.

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

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

6.d. Public hearing regarding the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget

Ande Banks, city manager, presented the public hearing for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget and noted there is one requested amendment due to changes of Rockingham County fees at the Land Fill. It is requested that the proposed reduction

of sanitation fees of $3.00 be decreased to $2.00 to allow the extra $1.00 to cover the increase in fees.

At 8:33 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the fourth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Monday, April 28, 2025, and Monday, May 5, 2025.

Nadia Dames, Rockingham County resident, spoke on the need for affordable housing, and the need for a Housing Trust Fund.

Sam Nichols, spoke on the great efforts Council has made regarding affordable housing, the need for a Housing Trust Fund, where funding can be found for this fund and provided his recommended changes to the budget.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros spoke on the proposed pay increase of city staff versus school staff; funding for aesthetic nuisance enforcement; and housing insecurities.

At 8:44 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Council discussed uncertainties in State fundings,; possible need for conversations with JMU if transportation funding is cut; school funding; the cities healthy contingency fund; no real estate tax increase for FY 25/26; a Housing Trust Fund and the work that has gone into relieving the burden of housing needs in the city as well as previous ARPA funding towards housing; reductions made in the FY 25/26 budget versus the previous year; and the great job staff has done on the budget without increasing taxes.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget was presented to City Council at its April 8, 2025 meeting. A public hearing must be held prior to adoption by City Council.

7. Regular Items

7.a. Planning Commission Annual Report 2024

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented the Annual Report of the Planning Commission Activity, both for 2024 and for 2015 through 2024.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson to accept the report as presented. The motion carried with unanimous voice vote.

7.b. Weldon Cooper Report on Population and School Enrollment Projections for the City of Harrisonburg

Zach Jackson, researcher, Demographics Research Group--Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, introduced his colleagues who joined virtually: Quin Cai, director, and Sol Baik, researcher. He shared the following data on Harrisonburg Population

and School Enrollment Projections:

- Population growth 2010-current and projected out to 2030;
- Births 2010--current and projected out to 2030;
- K-12 Enrollment 2015-2024;
- K-12 Enrollment by Place of Birth, 2015-2024;
- Housing Development 2000-2023;
- K-12 Enrollment by Year Built - 2015 versus 2024;
- Enrollment Projections 2024-2033;
- 2024 Student generation rates per 100 Housing Units based on anticipated new housing developments;
- Conclusion of research.

Discussion took place regarding data collection from student records versus Census records; migration projections; annual data; birth rates; housing impact on student population;

This Presentation was received and filed.

8. Supplementals

8.a. Consider a supplemental appropriation for the General Capital Projects Fund

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation in the amount of $1,950,000 for capital projects - Station 5, the Sprayground, University Blvd project, and Public Safety Building roof replacement.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming to approve the supplemental appropriation as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

8.b. Consider a supplemental appropriation for various departments

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a supplemental appropriation in the amount of $235,740 for various grant funds distributions to several departments.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming to approve the supplemental appropriation as presented. The motion carried with a roll call vote as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Dent, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

No: 0

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)

James Sheets 265 N Main Street, spoke on the difficulties he has had with the Public Transportation drivers related to accessibility with his wheelchair at stops (grass and curbs) and the inability of the drivers to secure his chair while riding the bus; and his attempts to rectify the issues through HDPT.

Quinton Callahan, spoke on a development he is involved in and wanted to thank staff for their ease in getting the process for the development through.

9.b. City Council and Staff

Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on the Southern Cities Economic Initiative Grant awarded to the city; the Safe Routes to School event; Virginia Municipal League legislative update; recent Virginia First Cities meeting and his appointment as Vice Chair; Federal funding cuts; and a recent Chamber event;

Council Member Robinson thanked a member of the Public Work staff for her help on adjusting the electric bike for her to ride at the Safe Routes to School; her work with Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC); upcoming NLC Race, Equity and Leadership Team meeting; and the upcoming Resilient Amid Resistance Marker dedication on May 17, 2025, starting at 10:00 am;

Council Member Dent spoke on a recent Energy Summit meeting she attended; a meeting she had with Congressman Ben Cline; the NLC EENR Committee letter to repel the Inflation Reduction Act; the Safe Routes to School event;

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on a meeting with Valley Early Education Reimagined (VEER) related to their Early Child Care needs;

Mayor Reed spoke on EMU's commencement;

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 3 for the discussion of the disposition of publicly held real property and Subsection 7 for consultation with legal regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

At 10:48 p.m., a motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Dent, to enter into closed session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under: subsection 3 f for the discussion of the disposition of publicly held real property. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, 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 11:28 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

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CITY CLERK MAYOR