City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft
City Council

Tuesday, May 27, 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

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 . 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

5.a. Minutes from the May 13, 2025 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Minutes from the May 16, 2025 City Council Special Meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.c. 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

This ordinance amendment was approved on the second reading

5.d. Consider a request from Jason Burch to rezone a property addressed as 380 Sunrise Avenue

This rezoning request was approved on second reading

5.e. Consider a supplemental appropriation for the General Capital Projects Fund

This supplemental appropriation was approved on second reading

5.f. Consider a supplemental appropriation for various departments

This supplemental appropriation was approved on second reading

5.g. Consider the special event application request for the Salvation Army's 100 Year Anniversary on Friday, June 27, 2025.

This special event application was approved

5.h. Consider the special event application request for the 2025 July Fireworks display on Saturday, July 5, 2025.

This special event application was approved

5.i. Consider the special event application request for the Hispanic Festival on Saturday, August 2, 2025.

This special event application was approved

5.j. Consider the special event application request for the Harrisonburg Youth TryAthlon on Saturday, August 9, 2025.

This special event application was approved

6. Public Hearings

6.a. Public hearing regarding the real estate tax rate for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 to be set at $1.01 per $100 of assessed value

Larry Propst, director of Finance, stated the general reassessment of real property, performed by the Commissioner of the Revenue's office, resulted in an increase of 5.9 percent in real property assessments in the city. The real estate tax rate is being proposed to remain at $1.01 per $100 of assessed value.

At 7:04 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, May 19, 2025.

There being no one desiring to be heard, Mayor Reed closed the public hearing at 7:05 p.m., and the regular session reconvened.

Discussion took place on how the tax rate is staying the same from last year.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that this Item be approved. 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

7. Regular Items

7.a. Consider Approval of the CDBG 2025 Action Plan

Kristin McCombe, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Manager, presented the Action plan for CDBG 2025. She stated the total allocated funds for 2025 are $512,366 and reviewed the projects that will be distributed in the following categories:

- Housing and Property Improvements
- Community and Public Facilities
- Planning and Administration
- Public Services

Council Member Dent stated she received information from NLC to continue to urge the Federal Government to continue CDBG Funding.

Vice Mayor Fleming stated there are concerns about all federal funding and we hope funding continues as planned. Council Member Robinson suggests that everyone writes letters to Congress to fight for funding for all the organizations who get federal funding. Council Member Alsaadun asked about process of how CDBG fund recipients are decided. Ms. McCombe reviewed the process.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Dent, that this Item be approved. 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

7.b. Consider adopting the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget by approving the Appropriation Ordinance

Ande Banks, city manager, presented the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget for approval and the Appropriation Ordinance associated with it. He stated it does reflect the finalized funding for the CDBG Plan and amendments of the sanitation fees.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, that this Ordinance be approved. 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

7.c. Consider approving the Vine Street Roadside Memorial

Ande Banks, city manager, stated the family of Sarah Monger, the EMU student that was tragically killed on Vine Street in 2023, request a memorial sign be erected at the site and city staff recommends following the statewide VDOT program of roadside memorials. The requestor would be responsible for costs associated with the application and installation. He noted a few other requests that were approved similar to this one in the past.

Discussion took place how Ms. Monger meant the world to EMU and this community, the efforts that went into this request, and condolences and prayers to the family.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that this Action Item be approved. 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

7.d. Presentation on the Severe Weather Events Effects on the Harrisonburg Water Treatment Plant

Mike Collins, director of Public Utilities, presented an update on the recent severe weather events that effected the water treatment plant from May 12 - 25, 2025. He reviewed the following:

- Current ordinance related to conservation of water during emergencies or drought;
- Harrisonburg Raw Water Source at North River from Jan 1, 2024, to May 22, 2025, reflecting turbidity;
- The water treatment process;
- The cause of the water plant event on May 12, 2025;
- Water storage effects during the event;
- Post action recommendations;

Mr. Collins assured everyone that water quality to the public was never jeopardized.

Council Member Dent spoke about how ground water may possibly be an additional option; Council Member Alsaadun spoke on the tremendous work the Public Utilities staff did during the event and research on possible alternatives to water treatment; Council Member Robinson spoke on how difficult it is to prepare for unforeseen circumstances and growth. Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on the use of water storage and flow;

Mr. Collins spoke on how important it is to keep reviewing the CIP and financial model each year.

Further discussion took place regarding the processing and treatment of water.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.e. Consider adopting a resolution ending the Local Emergency related to recent and potential severe weather events effects on the Harrisonburg Water Treatment Plant

Ande Banks, city manager, presented a resolution ending the local emergency related to the recent event and effects on the water treatment plant.

A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, that this Resolution be adopted. 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

7.f. Consider approval to use a portion of Saufley Farm as a Stormwater Best Management Practice

Tom Hartman, director of Public Works, presented the Saufley Farm Land Conversion project which will help the city reach the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements that must be met by October 2028. He reviewed the following:

- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) removal requirements;
- Map of Saufley Farm (owned by the city)
- Goals to plant 30,000 trees (finishing in the fall of 2028)

Discussion took place on this project and nitrogen credits.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that this Item be approved. 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

Recess

At 8:57 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

Mayor Reed left the meeting at 8:57 p.m.

At 9:01 p.m., Vice Mayor Fleming called the meeting back into session.

7.g. Presentation on the N. Mason Street Complete Streets Demonstration Project

Michael Parks, director of Communication, presented information on the following:

- Grant program called Community Connectors through Smart Growth America;
- The focus area of the project within the city (Mason Street);
- Losses during Urban Renewal;
- Complete Streets Leadership Academy and participants of the academy;
- Quick-build demonstration projects;

Mr. Hartman, director of Public Works, presented the following:

- What a Complete Streets project is;
- Timeline of the Academy beginning January 2025;
- Road changes beginning July 7, 2025;
- Community Event on July 12, 2025, to review the quick-built improvements;
- Walk Audit of the academy participants;
- Concept Sheet of road changes;
- Safety monitoring and monitoring of traffic and pedestrian counts;

Mr. Parks stated communications will be provided through canvassing, yard signs, community events and direct communications from organizations within the community area.

Discussion took place about the harms done during Urban Renewal, and how this project will connect the Newtown neighborhood.

This Presentation was received and filed.

7.h. Presentation on the HB Flex On-Demand Rideshare Pilot

Elliot Menge, transit superintendent, of Harrisonburg Public Transportation, presented the new HB Flex Connect Rider Pilot rideshare program. He reviewed the application used to schedule pickup, the service area, service times and safety. He noted the vehicles used are ADA Compliance and there currently are no age restrictions;

Discussion took place on what a great pilot program this is, impact on uber/lift businesses, and how this could be beneficial to many in the community.

This Report was received and filed.

7.i. Update on Kids Castle Construction

Brian Mancini, director of Parks and Recreation, provided an update on the removal of the old Kids Castle and the anticipated increase in costs for the new Kids Castle. Mr. Banks asked for a consensus from Council for staff to review the current year budget for possible funding as we don't want to jeopardize the integrity of what the community came together with staff to design.

Council discussed the need for the new playground as planned and agreed to the request.

This Report 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 $2.5M for capital projects for Public Works Mt. Clinton Pike Shared Use Paths and the University Blvd realignment project.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, that this Supplemental Appropriation be approved. 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

9. Reallocations

9.a. Consider a reallocation of funds in the General Capital Projects Fund

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a reallocation request related to the Mt. Clinton Pike project in the amount of $67,000 from a closed capital project.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, that this Reallocation be approved. 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

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)

Randy Kline, 480 Hartman Drive, spoke against the collective bargaining agreement that the Harrisonburg City Public Schools joined.

Javier Calleja, 257 Fairway, spoke on elected official behaviors and tax or assessment increases.

James Sheets, 265 N Main Street, spoke on the difficulties he has had with the Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation drivers' inability to secure his chair while riding the bus; ADA requirements; and his attempts to rectify the issues through HDPT.

10.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on a recent CSPDC meeting; a meeting with Matt Tibbles, executive director of Our Community Place;

Council Member Dent spoke on the recent Commonwealth Transportation Board special meeting at Blue Ridge Community College she attended;

Council Member Robinson spoke on the Resilience Amid Resistance historical marker installation;

Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on the Resilience Amid Resistance historical marker installation; the recent HRMPO meeting; upcoming Virginia Transportation Association meeting; recent Build Our Park meeting; recent Stormwater Advisory Committee meeting;

11. Boards and Commissions

11.a. Economic Development Authority

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to appoint Jared Burden to the Economic Development Authority to a partial term to expire on

February 26, 2028. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

12. Adjournment

At 10:15 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK MAYOR