A RESOLUTION CONSENTING TO THE DECLARATION BY THE HARRISONBURG CITY MANAGER OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY DUE TO RECENT AND POTENTIAL SEVERE WEATHER EFFECTS ON THE HARRISONBURG WATER TREATMENT PLANT

WHEREAS, Virginia Code § 44-146.21 provides that a local director of emergency management may declare the existence of a local emergency with the consent of the local governing body in accordance with the provisions of such code section; and,

WHEREAS, heavy rains over the last several days in Harrisonburg and the surrounding area have resulted in high turbidity in the City's raw water supply. Turbidity refers to the amount of particles or sediment-like materials such as silt, clay and other inorganic or organic material present in the water. Such particles must be removed from the raw water at the City's Water Treatment Plant before the water is safe to consume or use. Removal is also necessary to prevent blockage of the filtration system with debris. The chemical water treatment techniques commonly utilized to eliminate high turbidity have been ineffective on many batches of water entering the Water Treatment Plant since the morning of May 14. This triggered a complete plant shutdown and no production of new potable water for 24 hours and a need to rely on the City's potable water storage and Rockingham County's potable water. Water production at the Water Treatment Plant was partially restored beginning May 15 by using different treatment techniques. However, the turbidity's continued lack of responsiveness to traditional chemical treatment techniques limits the ability to fully restore production. As of the morning of May 16, the City's supply of water in storage is greatly diminished and Rockingham County can no longer assist the City with supplying potable water to City customers. Additional high turbidity water could enter our system due to the prediction of more heavy rain over the next several days; and,

WHEREAS, the Harrisonburg Public Utilities staff at the Water Treatment Plant has been working nonstop to address and mitigate the effects of the high turbidity on the operation of the Water Treatment Plant and will continue such efforts as long as necessary; and

WHEREAS, the City is producing a diminished potable water supply due to the reduction in the functionality of the Water Treatment plant caused by the high water turbidity. This reduced functionality may continue for several days given the anticipated additional rain; and

WHEREAS, on May 14, 2025, the City issued a mandatory water conservation order in order to reduce the strain on the City's potable water supply until the Water Treatment Plant returns to normal functionality; and

WHEREAS, the Harrisonburg City Manager, in his capacity as the City's Director of Emergency Management, has determined it is in the best interests of the City and its residents to declare a local emergency and has requested Council's consent to such declaration; and

WHEREAS, the Harrisonburg City Council finds (i) that the reduced functionality of the Water Treatment Plant resulting from extraordinarily high water turbidity caused by the recent and potential severe weather events constitutes a local emergency as defined by Virginia Code Section 44-146.16 in that it significantly reduces the potable water supply in the City's water system thereby requiring mandatory water conservation and could escalate, if the situation worsens, to the need for City water customers to boil water before consumption, (ii) that such reduced functionality has caused and will continue to cause damage, loss, hardship or suffering to the citizens of Harrisonburg, and (iii) coordinated local government action is warranted to prevent or alleviate such damage, loss, hardship, or suffering; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BEIT RESOLVED BY THE HARRISONBURG CITY COUNCIL that pursuant to Virginia Code § 44-146.21 City Council hereby consents to the Declaration of a Local Emergency as determined and requested by the City Manager, in his capacity as the City's Director of Emergency Management, on this day.

IT IS FURTER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED: (i) that the City Manager's May 16, 2025 Declaration of a Local Emergency and the City's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan shall remain in effect until ended by Council; (ii) during the existence of said local emergency the powers, functions, and duties of the City Manager and the City Council shall be those prescribed by State law and the ordinances, resolutions, regulations and approved plans of the City of Harrisonburg in order to mitigate the effects of said local emergency; and, (iii) City Council calls upon the Federal and State governments to take steps to afford to the City of Harrisonburg and to the persons and business concerns and other organizations and agencies suffering injury and damage from this local emergency such public aid and assistance as is necessary and proper to meet this emergency.

Adopted this 16th day of May, 2025

Deanna Reed
MAYOR

ATTEST: Pamela Ulmer
City Clerk

CITY OF HARRISONBURG
OFFICE OF THE
CITY MANAGER

ALEXANDER "ANDE" BANKS, VI, CITY MANAGER
409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801
OFFICE (540) 432-7701 • FAX (540) 432-7778

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

May 16, 2025

Due to the reasons enumerated in the resolution before City Council I, in my capacity as the Director of Emergency Management, declare a local emergency effective as of 12:00 (noon) on this day May 16, 2025.

Alexander Banks, VI
City Manager