City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Meeting Minutes - Draft
City Council

Tuesday, August 26, 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, that the consent agenda 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

5.a. Minutes from the August 12, 2025 City Council meeting

These minutes were approved on the consent agenda

5.b. Consider a request to rezone 320 South Main Street

This rezoning request was approved on second reading.

6. Public Hearings

6.a. Consider adopting a VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant Resolution of Support

Tom Hartman, director of Public Works, presented a request for a resolution of support for a VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant for Safe Routes to School. He reviewed the program history, the grant request and next steps.

Discussion took place regarding funding start date, possible legislation pushes for additional and continued funding from Council, safety and education of the routes and continued work on these routes.

At 7:17 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 Tuesday, August 19, 2025

Panayotis “Poti” Giannakouros, spoke on the larger scope of pedestrian and bicycle projects in the city, if it is serving all of the community, and the destruction of wildlife in the city.

At 7:22 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to adopt the resolution as presented. 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

6.b. Consider approval of the disposition of real estate owned by the City of Harrisonburg at 2410 Reservoir Street to Frank Gordon, Trustee of the Valley Housing Trust, and update on surplus property disposition for residential development and adopt a resolution authorizing the sale of publicly owned real estate.

Liz Webb, Housing Coordinator, presented the request to approve the disposition of city owned real estate. She reviewed the following:

City Surplus Parcel Listing (5);
2410 Reservoir Street property;
Selected application and the specifics of the offer;

She stated staff recommended approval of this contract.

At 7:25 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 Friday, August 15, 2025.

Panayotis “Poti” Giannakouros, stated he urges Council to deny this request and keep all public surplus land available.

At 7:28 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Discussion took place regarding the affordable housing needs this development will bring.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Vice-Mayor Fleming, that this request 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 adopting a VDOT Revenue Sharing Grant Resolution of Support

Tom Hartman, director of Public Works, presented a resolution of support for the VDOT Revenue Sharing Grant for the I-81 Exit 243 improvement project. He reviewed the project site, current funding, project estimated costs and proposed funding.

A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to adopt the resolution 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

7.b. Consider removing delinquent Real Estate taxes for 2004 and delinquent Personal Property taxes for 2019

Jeff Shafer, treasurer, presented a request to remove 2019 Personal Property Tax and 2004 Real Estate Tax in the amount of $178,401.24 and $1,646.54 respectively, from the books per City Code. He stated collections rates are 99.9% for Real Estate taxes 99.10% for Personal Property taxes and noted this does not stop any collection initiatives.

Discussion took place on the collection practices and how Harrisonburg has one of the highest collection rates in the state.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the 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

7.c. Consider advertising Real Estate delinquent taxes for years 2022 & 2023

Jeff Shafer, treasurer, presented a request to advertise the delinquent real estate taxes for tax year 2022 and 2023

Discussion took place as to advertising practices.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, to approve the 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

7.d. Consider a refund for 2024 Business Personal Property (BPP) tax

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented a request to refund personal property tax in the amount of $22,417.64 as the personal property was located in Shenandoah County in 2024.

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

Yes: 0

No: 0

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

7.e. Consider Adoption of New Cost Basis for Bond Estimates

Matthew Huston, city engineer, presented an updated cost basis for bond estimates at the request of Council based on discussion from the July 22, 2025, City Council meeting. He stated the bonds are infrastructure bonds and stormwater management practices implementation. He stated he reached out to the development community and neighboring localities for comparisons of the bond rates. He reviewed the findings of the outreach.

Discussion took place on how this may impact increased costs for developers with the 130% -160% increase from current bond rates, but how this increase aligns better with other localities;

A motion was made by Council Member Alsaadun, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to approve the 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

7.f. Consider adopting a resolution approving the city's participation in the Proposed Settlement of Opioid-Related Claims against the Sackler Family and directing the city manager to execute the documents necessary to effectuate the city's participation in the settlement

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented a request to adopt a resolution approving the city's participation in a proposed settlement against the Sackler Family related to the Opioid -related Claims. He shared the history of the Opioid Settlement and noted that any funds received from this settlement must be used for law enforcement, drug treatment, public health etc.

A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, to adopt the resolution 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

7.g. Presentation of the Northeast Neighborhood Small Area Plan

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, stated this presentation is a culmination of over two years of work from the Community Connectors Team, and is the city's first ever Small Area Plan for a neighborhood. She reviewed the Community Connectors Grant Program, and she acknowledged the team for all of their work. She introduced the consultants from CH Planning: Charnelle Hicks, president, and Ms. Richa Vuppuluri

Ms. Hicks, stated it has been wonderful getting to know the city and work with the community members in this effort.

Ms. Vuppuluri reviewed the following:

1. Project Goal: Develop a Community-Driven and Actionable Neighborhood Plan for the City of Harrisonburg's Northeast Neighborhood;
2. Map of the planning area;
3. The history of Urban Renewal and the impacts then and now to the Northeast Neighborhood;
4. The Community Connectors Program;
5. The purpose of a Small Area Plan (SAP);
6. SAP Community Engagement;
7. Co-Creation of the SAP's Vision Statement;
8. Identified Guiding Principles, Goals, and Strategies;
9. Key Themes/Priorities:
    a. Gathering and Belonging
    b. Reconnecting to Downtown;
    c. Safety and Security;

d. Opportunity for All (Economic Mobility);
e. Heathy Environments;

Ms. Richa Vuppuluri reviewed the Small Area Plan report:

1. The nine focus areas:
    a. History and Culture
    b. Gathering and Belonging
    c. Community Connections
    d. Connection to Downtown
    e. Transportation and Mobility
    f. Housing and Public Safety
    g. Economic Mobility and Competitiveness
    h. Natural Systems and Sustainability
    i. Health
2. Goals and strategies associated with the focus areas
3. Summary of the SAP

Discussion took place about all the work that went into the Plan, Council thanked all of the organizations and community members that participated; thanked everyone for the exposure of what Urban Renewal had done and is still doing to the neighborhood; and expressed gratitude for the consultants' work on the SAP;

Ms. Snider stated the SAP will be presented to the Planning Commission for inclusion into the City's Comprehensive Plan and then onto City Council for approval, with public hearings available at both meetings. She stated staff will be getting the information out to the public of the report and neighborhood conversations will still be done.

No action required

This Presentation was received and filed.

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)

Doris Allen Wood, visitor to the city, spoke on unsanitary conditions of some of the motels/hotels in the city;
Sam Nichols, spoke on the arrests of members in the community by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE);
Betty spoke on the impact of ICE on families and businesses in the valley;
Greta spoke on the racist intention of urban renewal and how it is similar to today's ICE harassment. She stated the Harrisonburg Police Department should not be participating in helping ICE.

Laurie, spoke on perceptions of collaboration between Harrisonburg Police, Rockingham County Sherrif's Department and ICE. She spoke on the fear of some members of the community.
Johann Zimmerman, shared his immigration story and shared some comparisons of today's time with those he experienced in his past;
Dr. Javier Calleja, 257 Fairway Dr., spoke on his immigration story; how Harrisonburg Police Department keeps residents safe, does not show racism, and are good servants of the community; and the need for affordable housing for everyone;
Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke on fascism; Harrisonburg Police and lack of trust; tall grass and weed complaints; lack of trust with Community Development.

8.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on a meeting with the Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance Board and the recent HRMPO meeting.

Council Member Dent spoke on the recent CSPDC meeting; recent HRMPO meeting; the Block Party in the Burg; and the recent Elected Officials to Protect America meeting on clean energy;

Council Member Robinson spoke on the recent retirement party for the founder of Shenandoah Valley Black Heritage Project, Robin Lyttle; and upcoming International Women's Day.

Ande Banks, city manager, stated staff, five community facilitators and the developer of the Link project met up and a proposal will be presented by the facilitators of how community engagement can be structured.

Vice Mayor Dent spoke on the quick response from staff on Council's request regarding engagement of the Link project.

Mayor Reed spoke on her speaking engagement at JMU Dukes Make a Difference group; recent tour of the Navigation Center with elected officials and department heads from the New River Valley area; EMU move in day; Block party in the Burg; and her final meeting with the Hunts Institute Fellowship.

A discussion took place regarding the October 14, 2025, City Council meeting to make sure all Council Members are able to attend. All Council Members will be in attendance.

A discussion took place that on the October 26, 2025, City Council meeting, the city manager, deputy city manager and assistant to the city manager will be at an ICMA conference, possible cancellation of this meeting will be decided at a later date.

Chris Brown, city attorney, noted that the normally scheduled first meeting of Council in November falls on a holiday (November 11) and per city code the meeting must

take place on November 12, 2025.

9. Boards and Commissions

9.a. Economic Development Authority

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to appoint Benjamin Breeden to the Economic Development Board to a term to expire on August 26, 2029. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote. :

Yes: 5 - Mayor Reed, 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 3 for a discussion of the acquisition of real estate for a public purpose where the discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating position of the public body

At 9:36 p.m., a motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Vice Mayor Fleming, to enter into closed session as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A), under: Subsection 3 for a discussion of the acquisition of real estate for a public purpose where the discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating position of the public body. 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 9:48 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 9:48 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY CLERK MAYOR