



# **City Manager's Report**

*Offices of the City Manager  
Elected & Appointed Officials*

**3-2-2026**

## **City Manager – Sam Sanders (he/him)**

- Attended the 100th Anniversary of the Jefferson High School held at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center; it was a great event and a wonderful opportunity to meet former Mayor Charles Barbour, a legend and a changemaker in the Charlottesville community.
- Congratulations to the City on the new Fire Station #1, which was recognized for Honorable Mention at the 2026 APWA Mid-Atlantic Chapter's Project of the Year Award. Our Fire Department leadership and Capital Division Team in Public Works did a great job bringing this critical infrastructure online to continue to serve our community well.
- Spoke at the Annual Chamber State of the Community held at the Bolick Center at PVCC. We will broadcast this session on Channel 10 and encourage members of the public to tune in to hear from Hamilton Lombard, Jeff Richardson, and me as we discuss the regional economy and outlook on the City and County as your community that you call home.
- Joined members of the Charlottesville Police Department at Trailblazer Elementary for ComStat in the Community. This was a great opportunity for our officers and leadership to engage with the public for a review of crime statistics for the northern district and to hear feedback on the efforts of this department in maintaining and building trust.
- Attended the monthly Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority Board Meeting.  
Meeting highlights:
  - Review of recent public presentation regarding the South Rivanna and Central Water Line projects.
  - Received an update on the various construction projects underway.
  - City Council will eventually need to approve easements along Rivanna River for the Central Water Line.
  - Approved a \$40k grant to Rivanna Conservation Alliance for streambank restoration.
  - Received an infrastructure update presentation to assess the current condition across the entire water/wastewater system based on what is being seen around the country.
  - Reviewed the FY27-31 Capital Improvement Program (CIP): \$604M program (\$348M water/\$129M WW).
  - Davenport Presentation on the financial health of the agency: Aa2 & AA+ bond rating for Rivanna. Received a review of the Authority's financial position with comparisons to peer utilities.

**Office of Communications & Public Engagement (CAPE) – Director Afton Schneider (she/her)**

- As CAPE continues strengthening the City’s communications and public engagement practices, we are in the process of launching a monthly Communications Coordinator Roundtable to align messaging, surface upcoming issues, and support consistent, accurate communications across all City departments. It will also serve as a space to share ideas, highlight effective practices, and build collective awareness around communications and engagement approaches that support our organizational goals.
- With this new group, we hope to improve advance planning, reduce communications risks, and enhance cross-department awareness and coordination, ultimately leading to more effective and meaningful community engagement.

**Office of Budget & Grants Management – Director Krisy Hammill (she/her)**

- The FY2027 Proposed Budget will be released on the [Budget webpage](#) tonight following its presentation to City Council.

**Commissioner of the Revenue – Todd Divers (he/him)**

- Business License renewals are due on March 2, 2026. Visit [www.charlottesville.gov/BusinessPortal](http://www.charlottesville.gov/BusinessPortal) to file and pay online. You will need the following to access your account:
  - Mailing zip (5-digits)
  - Account number (do not include leading zeros)
  - Federal tax ID # or SSN (nine digits, no dashes)
  - Call 434-970-3170 or email [citycorbiz@charlottesville.gov](mailto:citycorbiz@charlottesville.gov) if you have questions. PLEASE DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE!!!
- Business tangible personal property filings were due on January 31. If you have not yet filed, you can do so through the business portal.
- Applications are being taken through April 1 for Real Estate Tax Relief for Elderly and/or Disabled. Visit [www.charlottesville.gov/relief](http://www.charlottesville.gov/relief) to apply or call 434-970-3160 with questions.

**Office of Sustainability (OS) – Director Kristel Riddervold (she/her)**

- This March the City, Albemarle County Service Authority, and Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority are hosting a free and virtual event to help encourage the community to save water and participate in the fix a leak Home Scavenger Hunt. This is in support of Fix A Leak Week (March 16-22) – a national campaign put

on by the Environmental Protection Agency focused on finding and fixing water leaks in homes and businesses. March 22 is also World Water Day! To find the scavenger hunt worksheet, check out all the events happening in March, and learn how to fix a leak: <https://www.charlottesville.gov/498/Fix-a-Leak>.

- The Office of Sustainability was invited to present at the Unitarian Universalist Social Action Fair to encourage attendees to attend upcoming events, utilize resources such as the [Energy Resource Hub](#) and the [Climate Action and Sustainability Dashboard](#), and discuss the City's recent designation as a Biophilic City.
- Join the Rivanna Stormwater Education Partnership at Green Drinks Charlottesville on March 11 from 5:30 – 7:00 PM at Firefly Restaurant. Learn how to love your watershed and conserve water in the community.
- The second Climate Cafe of 2026 will be held on March 13 at 9:30 – 11:00 AM at The Bradbury, focused on water resources. The cafe invites water organizations including Rivanna Stormwater Education Partnership, Charlottesville Water Conservation, Rivanna Conservation Alliance, and Rivanna Water & Sewer Authority to connect attendees with insight into the current challenges associated with providing clean water to our community.
- The Charlottesville Invasive Plant Partnership was the recipient of a proclamation from City Council officially designating February 23-27 as Invasive Species Awareness Week. Partners of the coalition, including the Office of Sustainability and Parks and Recreation, developed programming spanning the whole week for community members to learn more about the impact of invasive vines on our urban tree canopy and how they can play a role in safeguarding vital shade-providing trees and native species
- OS Director delivered a presentation at the Virginia Local Government Management Association Winter Conference on solar deployment in the municipal and community sectors.

### **Office of Economic Development (OED) – Director Chris Engel (he/him)**

- OED has released its 2025 Annual Report, highlighting a year of strong economic momentum, expanded workforce pathways, and continued investment in entrepreneurship and placemaking. The report outlines progress made in year two of OED's 2024–2028 Economic Development Strategic Plan, with coordinated action across equitable entrepreneurship, business growth, workforce development, creative placemaking, and storytelling for investment.
- In 2025, OED assisted more than 325 businesses and served more than 550 employees and jobseekers. Entrepreneurship initiatives included two successful GO Start-Up cohorts, as well the inaugural Piedmont Ascent Business Conference and Piedmont Pitch Competition, which was held in collaboration

with Albemarle County Economic Development and the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center.

- Workforce development remained a priority, with programs such as Ready to Work, GO Cook, GO Hire, and NextGen Skilled Trades Day connecting residents to certifications, employers, and high-demand career pathways. In 2025, GO Cook received statewide recognition from the Virginia Economic Developers Association for its impact in preparing participants for culinary careers and advancing inclusive workforce development.
- The Downtown Mall also remained a central focus of OED's efforts. In 2025, visitation increased by 4% to approximately 2.8 million visitors, while retail vacancy rates remained at or below 5%.
- To read the full report and learn more about OED's accomplishments in 2025, visit the Office of Economic Development website (<https://charlottesville.gov/201/Economic-Development>).

#### **Office of Human Rights – Director Todd Niemeier (he/him)**

- At its regular meeting on January 15, the Human Rights Commission re-elected Heather Roberson Gaston as Chair. During their meeting on February 19, Commissioners elected Elizabeth Stark as Vice Chair.
- The Human Rights Commission will hold its annual Planning meeting on March 5 at 5:30 PM, in the Parks & Recreation Conference Room.
- Commissioners conducted a public poll soliciting input from community members to inform their planning process. The poll ran from February 9 – 23.
- The Office of Human Rights currently has 21 open discrimination complaint cases: one is awaiting response to offers of alternative dispute resolution, five are in the process of alternative dispute resolution, 11 are under investigation, three are under review for determination after investigation, and one is under review for appeal by the Human Rights Commission.

#### **Office of Emergency Management (OEM) – Emergency Coordinator John Oprandy (he/him)**

- OEM has had a busy start to the new year. The most significant activity over the past couple of months was the City's response to Winter Storm Fern, which impacted the Charlottesville area from January 24 through January 26. In advance of the storm, the City and Albemarle County jointly declared a local emergency to ensure resources were positioned and coordination was in place across jurisdictions. OEM activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which remained operational for approximately two and a half days with representatives from four to five City departments. EOC operations focused

primarily on the collection and dissemination of information to support decision-making and field operations across the organization.

- One effort worth highlighting from the storm response was the partnership between the EOC, the Department of Human Services, and United Way of Greater Charlottesville to recruit volunteers willing to help shovel sidewalks for residents who were unable to do so on their own — particularly seniors and individuals with mobility challenges. Residents in need of assistance were able to call 211 to request help, and the City and United Way worked to connect them with available volunteers. Coordination with Albemarle County and the University of Virginia throughout the event was smooth, and the regional approach to planning, communication, and shared situational awareness served the community well.
- Outside of storm operations, OEM has been leading a citywide effort to bring staff into compliance with foundational emergency management training required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The current focus is on two courses — IS-100 (Introduction to the Incident Command System) and IS-700 (An Introduction to the National Incident Management System) — which establish a common framework for how we organize and coordinate during emergencies. This training is an important step in building a shared baseline of readiness across departments.
- OEM has also been working on revisions to the City's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which will inform an upcoming EOC workshop scheduled for late March. That workshop will give participants an opportunity to continue refining the EOP and work through roles and responsibilities within the EOC in a hands-on setting. In addition, OEM has been attending regional coordination meetings, state-level planning sessions, and planning meetings for upcoming exercises with our partners.
- Looking ahead, OEM is preparing for additional tabletop exercises throughout the spring and summer as we continue building the City's overall readiness and strengthening coordination across departments and with our regional partners.