



CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
June 1, 2026 at 4:00 PM
Council Chamber

The Charlottesville City Council met on Monday, June 1, 2026. Mayor Juandiego Wade called the meeting to order and Deputy Clerk of Council Maxicelia Robinson called the roll, noting all councilors present: Mayor Juandiego Wade, Vice Mayor Natalie Oschrein and Councilors Jen Fleisher, Michael Payne, and Lloyd Snook.

On motion by Payne, seconded by Snook, Council unanimously adopted the meeting agenda.

REPORTS

1. REPORT: Investing in Community

City Manager Sam Sanders introduced the presentation, which provided City Council with an overview of the City's community investment grant programs, compliance efforts, and the Vibrant Community Fund (VCF). Taylor Harvey Ryan, Grants Program Manager, reviewed the various grant programs, including Intergovernmental Contractual Agreements, Fundamental Organizations, VCF, the Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund, Housing Operations Program Support, CDBG, HOME, and the Small Business Energy Efficiency Incentive Grant Program. She also outlined updates to grant administration, including the implementation of Neighborly Software, revised application timelines, and a new compliance framework involving grant agreements, quarterly reporting, outcome monitoring, site visits, and technical assistance.

Reggie Allen, Human Services Planner, provided an update on the VCF and proposed changes to its monitoring and site visit process. He explained that the previous \$75,000 funding threshold would be removed in favor of a more targeted, risk-based approach considering program performance, compliance history, organizational changes, and the needs of new or emerging organizations. Staff also highlighted efforts to improve the VCF process through diverse community reviewer recruitment, applicant support, technical assistance, and ongoing evaluation, with the goal of creating a more equitable and strategic grant administration process.

Staff discussed challenges facing VCF, particularly the significant gap between funding requests and available resources and the difficulties associated with partial awards. Potential improvements included narrowing funding priorities, restructuring arts and cultural event funding, encouraging collaborative applications, and placing greater emphasis on measurable community outcomes. City Manager Sanders discussed a potential future structure in which arts organizations would be evaluated through a dedicated arts-focused process and community events through a separate community enrichment process, allowing VCF to focus more directly on programs, safety-net services, and strategic community priorities. Staff emphasized that significant changes would not be implemented until FY29 and that nonprofit partners will receive advance communication about major program changes.

Council expressed interest in exploring a more strategic and outcomes-focused approach to VCF while maintaining access for diverse and emerging organizations and recognizing the essential services provided by fundamental organizations. Council discussed potential models, including multi-year grants tied to specific outcomes, collective impact initiatives with shared goals and performance measures, a smaller innovation fund for emerging organizations, and incentives for collaboration or leveraging outside funding. Councilor Jen Fleisher also suggested considering the City's broader investment in organizations, including facility or space rental assistance, when evaluating funding requests. Staff will continue evaluating short-term improvements and potential long-term restructuring options and return to Council

for further discussion. City Manager Sanders indicated that staff will provide existing partners with advance notice of potential restructuring and changes to the various programs.

2. REPORT: Participatory Budgeting

City Manager Sam Sanders introduced a discussion on the potential implementation of a participatory budgeting (PB) process in Charlottesville. He explained that PB could increase resident engagement, strengthen trust in local government, and give residents a direct role in identifying projects for City funding. Staff also reviewed the City's FY19 PB pilot, during which Council allocated \$100,000 for the process, although the pilot was ultimately not implemented.

Staff explained that PB would allow residents to submit ideas, assist in developing project proposals, and vote on projects to receive funding. A community and staff steering committee would oversee the process. Potential projects could include capital improvements and community enhancement initiatives, such as neighborhood improvements, beautification, playgrounds, lighting, and other quality-of-life projects that could be completed within approximately 8 to 12 months.

Staff outlined a potential process beginning with community education and idea collection, followed by proposal development, voting, and project implementation. The earliest potential implementation would be FY28, depending on funding decisions, program design, and whether the City administers the process internally or contracts with an outside facilitator. Council discussed PB as a potential tool for reaching residents who may not traditionally participate in City processes and emphasized the importance of transparency, outreach, and ensuring projects reflect community priorities.

Councilor Michael Payne suggested starting with a demonstration project, noting that an initial allocation of approximately \$100,000 could provide an opportunity to test and refine the process while investing in community engagement. Council reached consensus to continue exploring a participatory budgeting cycle. Staff will develop implementation options addressing potential funding levels, program structure, community engagement strategies, and associated costs.

CLOSED MEETING

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Payne, Council voted 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none) to meet in closed session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) for discussion and consideration of prospective candidates for the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board.

On motion by Oschrin, seconded by Snook, Council certified by the following vote: 5-0 (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none.), that to the best of each Council member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the Motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed or considered in the closed session.

BUSINESS SESSION

City Council began the business meeting by observing a moment of silence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Payne announced that Charlottesville is accepting applications for vacancies on City boards and commissions. Anyone interested in learning more or applying for any of the available positions can

visit boards@charlottesville.gov. The deadline to apply is August 1, except for the Charlottesville Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board, which has an application deadline of June 1.

RECOGNITIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

Vice Mayor Oschrein recognized Charlottesville for winning Bike Month competitions. The City of Charlottesville won the competition for the locality with the most logged bike rides, hosted by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), beating Richmond, Roanoke, and Virginia Beach. Charlottesville also won the 2026 Bike Month Business Challenge in the company-to-company category.

Mayor Wade and Councilor Snook announced that they attended the dedication of Mel's Way, in memory of Melvin Eugene Walker, the owner and chef of Mel's Diner, a soul food restaurant located on West Main Street for nearly 40 years. Mayor Wade and Councilor Snook presented a proclamation honoring Mr. Walker's contributions to the Charlottesville community during the dedication ceremony.

Council members acknowledged the passing of Charlottesville resident Dr. Florence Bryant at the age of 104 and recognized her achievements and contributions to the Charlottesville community. Her funeral service will be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2026. Vice Mayor Oschrein also announced that the Eddie Harris Sr. Park bench dedication ceremony will be held on Friday, July 31, at 10:00 a.m. at Washington Park. Eddie Harris was a community advocate, mentor, and founder of *Vinegar Hill* magazine.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

Mayor Wade opened the floor for comments from the public and the following individuals spoke:

1. Laura Sirgany advocated for local government to take greater action to provide additional support and resources to individuals experiencing homelessness at the Rivanna homeless encampment.
2. Jan Webb, a representative of the Love Thy Neighbor Coalition (LTN), a local interfaith coalition formed in response to concerns about immigration enforcement practices, shared a statement endorsed by LTN condemning harmful immigration practices. She petitioned City Council to help protect immigrants and ensure their fair treatment regarding immigration enforcement.
3. Alicia Lenahan expressed her opposition to City Council's votes approving UVA luxury student housing and raised concerns about the potential impact of the developments on residents in the historic neighborhoods where the developments will be located.
4. Speaker did not provide their name. They expressed concerns that over-policing practices in the City of Charlottesville have contributed to an increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness who occupy homeless encampments within the City.
5. Sadhbh O'Flynn, a representative of the local organization Community Climate Collaborative (C3), petitioned City Council to decline a one-year contract for the purchase of carbon offsets from British Petroleum (BP), citing concerns about the types of projects toward which BP has allocated City funds during the past year. She proceeded to identify several projects that City funds helped support.
6. Letricia Giles, Executive Director of the Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR), expressed concerns regarding housing density in Charlottesville, fairness, and who is being asked to bear the burden of growth in the City.

7. Josh asked the City to provide resources, including bathrooms, water, dumpsters, and fire extinguishers, at the Rivanna homeless encampments for individuals residing there.
8. Emily Kingsley shared her thoughts regarding the treatment of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the City. She encouraged the City to take a greater role in supporting individuals residing at the encampment.
9. Joshua Ballou spoke about his personal experiences with homelessness in Charlottesville.
10. Maria spoke about her recent experience assisting a local refugee family in avoiding eviction from their home. She stated that local organizations were unable to assist the family, requiring her to seek donations from community members to prevent the eviction. She asked City Council to support additional affordable housing in the City.

CONSENT AGENDA

Deputy Clerk of Council Maxicelia Robinson read the following Consent Agenda items into the record, and on motion by Oschrin, seconded by Payne, Council by a vote of 5-0 adopted the Consent Agenda: (Ayes: Fleisher, Oschrin, Payne, Snook, Wade; Noes: none).

3. Ordinance repealing Sections 3-1 and 3-2 of Chapter 3, Amusements, of the Code of the City of Charlottesville, and Reserving Chapter 3 for future use (2nd reading)

ORDINANCE REPEALING SECTIONS 3-1 AND 3-2 OF CHAPTER 3, AMUSEMENTS, OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, AND RESERVING CHAPTER 3 FOR FUTURE USE

WHEREAS the City Council has directed and supported an ongoing review of the Code of the City of Charlottesville to identify provisions that are obsolete, unnecessary, outdated, or inconsistent with current City operations; and

WHEREAS Chapter 3 of the City Code, titled “Amusements,” contains two operative provisions: Section 3-1, regarding minors employed in or frequenting poolrooms or billiard saloons, and Section 3-2, regarding deposits required for carnivals and similar exhibitions; and

WHEREAS these provisions are antiquated and are no longer necessary for the City’s current regulatory, public safety, business licensing, or event permitting operations; and

WHEREAS the City retains other legal and administrative tools to address business licensing, public safety, special events, use of public property, and related matters; and

WHEREAS City Council finds that repealing these obsolete provisions will simplify the City Code and better align it with current City operations, while reserving Chapter 3 for potential future use;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville that:

1. Sections 3-1 and 3-2 of Chapter 3 of the Code of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, 1990, as amended, are hereby repealed, and Chapter 3 is reserved as follows:

Chapter 3

AMUSEMENTS

Secs. 3-1—3-25. Reserved.

Article II. Reserved.

2. all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

3. this ordinance shall be effective upon adoption.

4. Resolution to Authorize Donation of Easements in City-owned land to the Virginia Department of Transportation for the Route 250 and Route 20 Intersection and Corridor Improvements Project

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING DONATION OF EASEMENTS TO THE VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

WHEREAS the Virginia Department of Transportation (“VDOT”) will be constructing and maintaining the proposed Route 250 and Route 20 Intersection and Corridor Improvements Project along Free Bridge Lane along Rivanna River in Albemarle County, Virginia, identified as Project No. 0250-002-030, RW-201, UPC No. 123044 (“Project”), to include installation of drainage structures, which will necessitate the acquisition of certain easements for construction of the Project improvements; and

WHEREAS the donation of land owned by the City of Charlottesville, Virginia (“City”), to another public entity (VDOT) for a transportation project, per Virginia Code § 15.2-1800(B)(ii), is exempt from the usual legally required Public Hearing before the proposed land donation; and

WHEREAS VDOT has requested the City donate the easements identified on the Project’s preliminary plans submitted to the City, specifically being Permanent Easements and Temporary Construction Easements for drainage improvements and related improvements, which will be effective until the completion of the Project; and

WHEREAS City Staff has determined that the donation of the requested easements is in the best interests of the City and its citizens.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, hereby approves VDOT’s request to donate the necessary easements, subject to submission of final plans for the Project by VDOT; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Manager is hereby authorized and instructed to execute on behalf of the City the instrument donating the requested easements, when such instrument is prepared and presented by VDOT, subject to the same being approved as to form by the City Attorney, or his designee; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT this Resolution shall take effect immediately; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be filed with the papers of this Meeting.

5. Resolution to Authorize Donation of City Right-of-Way to the Virginia Department of Transportation for the Construction of a Roundabout at Route 631 and John Warner Parkway

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING DONATION OF EASEMENTS TO THE VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

WHEREAS the Virginia Department of Transportation (“VDOT”) will be constructing and maintaining the proposed Rouse 250 and Route 20 Intersection and Corridor Improvements Project along Free Bridge Lane along Rivanna River in Albemarle County, Virginia, identified as Project No. 0250-002-030, RW-201, UPC No. 123044 (“Project”), to include installation of drainage structures, which will necessitate the acquisition of certain easements for construction of the Project improvements; and

WHEREAS the donation of land owned by the City of Charlottesville, Virginia (“City”), to another public entity (VDOT) for a transportation project, per Virginia Code § 15.2-1800(B)(ii), is exempt from the usual legally required Public Hearing before the proposed land donation; and

WHEREAS VDOT has requested the City donate the easements identified on the Project’s preliminary plans submitted to the City, specifically being Permanent Easements and Temporary Construction Easements for drainage improvements and related improvements, which will be effective until the completion of the Project; and

WHEREAS City Staff has determined that the donation of the requested easements is in the best interests of the City and its citizens.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, hereby approves VDOT’s request to donate the necessary easements, subject to submission of final plans for the Project by VDOT; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Manager is hereby authorized and instructed to execute on behalf of the City the instrument donating the requested easements, when such instrument is prepared and presented by VDOT, subject to the same being approved as to form by the City Attorney, or his designee; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED THAT this Resolution shall take effect immediately; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Resolution be filed with the papers of this Meeting.

6. Resolution to Appropriate \$356,805 in Additional Funds to the Streets and Sidewalks Division Operating Budget (layover)

7. Resolution to Authorize Reallocation of \$6,300 of Previously Appropriated Funding to Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs (SEE) for FY 2027

**RESOLUTION
To Authorize Reallocation of \$6,300 of Previously Appropriated Funding to Social and
Environmental Entrepreneurs (SEE) for FY 2027**

WHEREAS, the City of Charlottesville the previously allocated Vibrant Community Funding awarded to SEE was not the correct amount based on the scoring matrix; and

WHEREAS, the FY 2027 budget already appropriated \$5,191 in unallocated VCF funds and \$1,109 in unallocated Citywide Reserve funds;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville that previously appropriated funding is hereby reallocated in the following manner to correct the mistake:

Transfer From:

\$5,191	Fund: 105	Cost Center: 9743056000	G/L Account: 540100
\$1,109	Fund: 105	Cost Center: 1631001000	G/L Account: 599999

Transfer To:

\$6,300	Fund: 105	Cost Center: 97430456000	G/L Account: 540100
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8. Resolution to appropriate Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Victims of Crime Act Grant Award FY26 - \$123,600 (layover)

9. Resolution to appropriate the Virginia Department of Social Services Family Assistance Management (FAM) grant in the amount of \$20,000 (layover)

CITY MANAGER REPORT

CY25 Human Rights Annual Report

Todd Niemeier, Director of the Office of Human Rights, presented the CY25 Human Rights Annual Report. Heather Robertson Gaston, Chair of the Human Rights Commission (HRC), explained that the Commission selects a focus area each year. The 2025 focus was housing access and stability across protected classes and economic status; the current focus has broadened to economic stability across protected classes because housing assistance alone does not address income and wealth inequality. The Commission is expanding outreach to stakeholders and service providers to better understand community needs and identify potential City-level solutions. Staff noted that mental health and the lack of mental health supports were among the most frequently identified concerns during recent stakeholder outreach. The Commission also expressed interest in strengthening communication with City Council regarding community needs and recommendations.

Mr. Niemeier provided an update on federal barriers affecting the City's human rights work. The City's application for participation in a federal Fair Housing Assistance Program was denied because the City's ordinance includes protections for gender identity and sexual orientation. Federal officials also indicated a preference for working with state-level agencies rather than localities. The City has not pursued a Fair Employment Practices Agency work-share arrangement while it evaluates federal trends and whether participation would be in the City's best interest. Mr. Niemeier noted that the City has the infrastructure to perform the work but is not currently being given the opportunity through the federal programs.

Development Services Update

Deputy City Manager James Freas provided an update on delays in building inspections and plan review, citing high permit activity, several large projects, the loss of two building inspectors, and extended employee leave. The City previously created a residential plan review position but has been unable to fill it and recently increased its pay. The City also secured two on-call companies for inspection and plan review services, although certification remains pending, and one additional plan reviewer was expected to begin work that week. Mr. Freas emphasized that inspections and plan review are essential to public

safety and economic development. Following a meeting with approximately 60–80 members of the building community, the City plans to expand third-party inspections, continue monitoring activity, and consider additional resources during the upcoming budget process. Councilor Payne supported third-party inspections and encouraged a flexible, solutions-oriented approach to code enforcement while maintaining legal and safety requirements.

Homeless Services Update

City Manager Sam Sanders provided an update on homeless services and emphasized the importance of coordination. The Community Foundation is working with the Continuum of Care to develop an operations plan for Holiday Drive and coordinate with City staff. The City remains focused on encampment protocols, staffing, internal coordination, and leadership alignment while working to provide services to individuals experiencing homelessness. City Manager Sanders reiterated that individuals located closest to the river cannot remain there and that the City is working toward a managed process because the current situation is not sustainable long term. He also planned to meet with Holiday Drive business owners and People and Congregations Engaged in Ministry (PACEM) regarding the potential opening of an overnight shelter at Holiday Drive and PACEM's budget needs.

Councilor Snook asked about providing portable toilets at the Rivanna River encampment. City Manager Sanders explained that the City has been unable to place and service a portable toilet because adjacent property owners have not permitted access to the site. The Rivanna River Company has expressed willingness to support portable toilets, and the City is exploring that option. Mr. Sanders noted, however, that other requests for resources must be considered in light of the City's position that the river encampment cannot remain in place and that providing resources that facilitate continued occupancy would not align with the City's current approach.

ACTION ITEMS

10. Public Hearing and Ordinance to Amend and Reordain City Code Chapter 31 (Utilities) to Establish New Utility Rates and Service Fees for City Gas, Water, and Sanitary Sewer (layover)

Jason McIlwhee, Deputy Director of Utilities, and Chris Cullinan, Director of Finance, presented the FY27 Utility Rate Report, highlighting utility infrastructure, reliability, water quality, energy-efficiency programs, and proposed rate changes. Staff noted that the proposed rates would increase the average customer's monthly utility costs by approximately \$9.54, including a \$5 combined monthly service-charge increase for typical water and wastewater customers, while natural gas rates are expected to decrease slightly due to lower gas prices and approximately \$600,000 in rate-case credits. Staff also discussed utility assistance programs and ongoing infrastructure improvements. Council discussed the approximately \$300,000 allocated for carbon offsets, with staff recommending continuation of the BP program for one year while local alternatives are studied.

Mayor Wade opened the public hearing.

1. Sadhbh O'Flynn of the Community Climate Collaborative urged Council to reconsider the City's use of carbon offsets. She raised concerns about the quality and impact of some previously purchased offsets and encouraged Council to allocate for offsets toward local initiatives such as residential weatherization and local energy efficiency partners.

Mayor Wade closed the public hearing.

Council discussed pausing the City's participation in the BP carbon-offset program and potentially redirecting the funds to local organizations supporting carbon reduction. City Attorney Maddux will consult with Utilities Department and advise Council whether the proposed utility rate can be lowered and

adopted at the next Council meeting or requires additional approval.

11. Public Hearing and Ordinance to Amend and Reordain Chapter 31 (Utilities) of the Code of the City of Charlottesville, 1990, as Amended, to Establish a Connection Fee for New Gas Service (layover)

Jason McIlwhee, Deputy Director of Utilities, proposed increasing the residential natural gas connection fee from \$340 to \$1,950, effective January 1, 2027, for installations up to 150 feet. The change reflects the actual cost of providing the service, including labor and other costs identified through a consultant's review. Customers would continue to pay the full installation cost for connections exceeding 150 feet. Council expressed support for adjusting the fee to better reflect the City's actual costs.

Mayor Wade opened the public hearing.

1. Sadhbh O'Flynn of the Community Climate Collaborative welcomed the proposed increase in the gas connection fee, noting the change as a way to better communicate the actual costs of connecting to fossil fuel infrastructure.

Mayor Wade closed the public hearing.

Council agreed to carry the ordinance to the June 15 meeting for a second reading and vote.

12. Resolution to Appropriate \$2,076,696.00 in additional funding from the Virginia Office of Children's Services to support at-risk children and families (layover)

Leon Henry, Director of Social Services, requested an additional \$2,076,696 in Children's Services Act (CSA) funding to address increased costs associated with foster care, prevention services, and special education programs. The request includes \$423,546 from the City and \$133,147 from the school system, with the remainder from federal/state funds. Mr. Henry noted that the number of children in foster care has increased from 48 to approximately 105 over the past three years, while substantiated referrals also rose significantly. Increased needs related to mental health, substance use, domestic violence, housing instability, and poverty have increased demand for services, including kinship support, counseling, transportation, housing assistance, and other resources intended to prevent children from entering foster care. He also highlighted anticipated impacts from changes to SNAP and Medicaid eligibility and emphasized that CSA funding decisions are made collaboratively with schools, community partners, and Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) teams to stabilize families and meet children's needs.

Council agreed to carry the resolution to the June 15 meeting for a second reading and vote.

13. Resolution to Return \$1,848,424 to the General Fund and Appropriate an Additional Transfer of \$423,546 to the Children Services Act Fund (layover)

Chris Cullinan, Director of Finance, explained that the resolution would true up the financial relationship between the General Fund and the Children's Services Act (CSA) Fund. Funds transferred to the CSA Fund in FY25 exceeded actual costs, leaving a balance that would be returned to the General Fund. The resolution would also appropriate \$423,546 to the CSA Fund to cover current-year needs, with the remaining \$1,848,424 returned to the General Fund.

Council agreed to carry the resolution to the June 15 meeting for a second reading and vote.

14. Resolution Appropriating funding from the Federal Transit Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation supporting multiple Charlottesville Area Transit capital projects - \$16,846,224 (layover)

Garland Williams, Director of Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT), presented a \$16.85 million appropriation in federal and state transit funding for FY25 and FY26, which will support battery-electric buses, diesel buses, charging infrastructure, and upgrades to CAT's automatic vehicle locator system. Due to the loss of federal funding for zero-emission buses and significant cost increases, CAT has pivoted toward purchasing diesel buses while continuing to expand its battery-electric fleet and evaluate future alternatives. Council discussed the potential role of hybrid buses, with staff noting that newer hybrids have received positive feedback but cost only about \$100,000 less than battery-electric buses. The first battery-electric buses are expected to arrive soon, with additional buses and diesel buses anticipated in 2027–2028.

Council agreed to carry the resolution to the June 15 meeting for a second reading and vote.

COMMUNITY MATTERS (2)

Mayor Wade opened the floor for comments from the public. With no speakers coming forward, Mayor Wade closed Community Matters (2).

Vice Mayor Oschrein acknowledged that June is Pride Month.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Snook, seconded by Oschrein, Council by unanimous consent adjourned the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Maxicelia Robinson, Deputy Clerk of Council