



City Manager's Report

City Departments

11-2-2026

City Manager – Sam Sanders (he/him)

- Attended the International City/County Management Association Annual Conference. This is our professional organization to support the council-manager form of government as it exists around the world. I served as a panelist for two sessions:
 - No Press, No Problem: How Local Governments are Going Viral for Good. I joined Afton Schneider, Director of Communications and Public Engagement, in a review of ways local governments of all sizes can be creative in how they engage with the public using social media and all it requires is a phone and a few minutes. The session featured our weekly On the Spot segment, which has become a great opportunity for me to prioritize bringing information, team members, and opportunities to the public's attention. While I initially did not want to do them, I have enjoyed the reactions, the requests to participate, and the encouragement to keep doing these weekly segments as a way to connect with the public.
 - Inherited Cultures: Leadership When the Problem Isn't You...It's the History. I joined Ben Estell, Executive Director, Centre Region Council of Governments, State College, Pennsylvania, and Ryan Jeroski, Township Manager, Hampton Township, Pennsylvania. We shared our experiences as local government leaders who walked into our roles with deep division, confusion, and chaos and how we each tackled the work and not the people; it was a standing-room-only presentation that could have gone on for hours – well received.
- October 22:
 - Attended the team retreat for our Human Resources Department. Their day-long engagement focused on a host of City priorities including collective bargaining, professional development, technology integration, and budget planning. The lunch session provided me an opportunity to connect with the team and roll out our quality and consistency framework which is built on organizational excellence being the focus of how we do our work.
 - Participated in neighborhood meetings focused on working through challenges resulting in development activities
- I want to extend a hearty congratulations to Jody Kielbasa and the team at UVA behind the Virginia Film Festival. I attended the showing of The Cashier and 14th and appreciated the enriching opportunity to hear from the filmmakers and stars of the features. What a great opportunity this festival is for the greater Charlottesville area, and we get to claim it right here on the Downtown Mall.

Utilities – Director Jason McIlwee (he/him)

- Stormwater – Only Rain Down the Drain:
 - With the arrival of autumn comes an increase in leaves falling from trees, and the Department of Utilities wants to remind residents of the importance of keeping storm drains clear of debris. Proactive maintenance of keeping storm drains clear of leaves, twigs, branches, and other debris is key to the efficient flow of stormwater and helps prevent sediment from entering our community's waterways. Utilities encourages residents to remain aware of the condition of their neighborhood storm drains, and to remember only rain down the drain! For more information on stormwater in Charlottesville, please visit www.charlottesville.gov/stormwater.
- 2026 Storm Drain Art Contest:
 - The Department of Utilities is excited to announce the return of the Charlottesville Utilities Storm Drain Art Contest! Last year's inaugural contest was a great success, with 27 entries and over 1,300 Fan Favorite votes. The three winning designs creatively communicated the importance of stormwater pollution prevention and can be seen painted on storm drain inlets in McIntire Park. This year's contest will kick off on November 16 to coincide with National Stormwater Day and will once again select three winning designs (youth, open, and fan favorite) to be painted on storm drain inlets. Each winner will also receive a \$500 Visa gift card prize. More information about this year's contest will be available in the coming weeks, so stay tuned! For last year's contest winners, please visit www.charlottesville.gov/stormwater.
- FOGbuster Program:
 - The holiday season is right around the corner, bringing more food preparation and an increased risk of plumbing problems in the form of clogs from fats, oils, and grease (FOG). The Department of Utilities' FOGbuster program is a fun spin on preventing the buildup of FOG, also known as the FOG Monster, which can cause clogs and backups in household plumbing and wastewater infrastructure. These backups can lead to messy, costly, and potentially hazardous overflows. To help with the proper disposal of FOG, Utilities provides free FOG kits to the community, which are available in the lobby at City Hall. For more information on FOG and the FOGbuster program, please visit www.charlottesville.gov/fog.

Parks & Recreation – Director Riaan Anthony (he/him)

- Winter Registration:
 - Winter program registration opens November 16 for City residents and November 17 for non-residents. This new staggered registration schedule is intended to improve access, prioritize the community we serve, and ensure Charlottesville residents have a fair opportunity to participate in Parks & Recreation programs.
- New Instructors and Programs:
 - We've hired an additional Gymnastics Instructor and a Children's Group Fitness Instructor. Together, they will offer 13 new youth programs during the upcoming session.
- Open Positions:
 - We are currently recruiting for the following positions: Gymnastics Instructor, Dance Instructor, Outdoor Programs Instructor, Children's Group Fitness Instructor, and Group Exercise Instructor. Apply at <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/charlottesville/transferjobs?department%5b0%5d=Parks%20and%20Recreation&sort=PositionTitle%7CAscending>
- City Market Ranking:
 - Charlottesville City Market ranked fourth in the nation in American Farmland Trust's Farmers Market Celebration, receiving more than 6,000 votes!
- Garden Plots:
 - Garden Plot renewal notices and applications will be distributed in November.
- Youth Pickleball:
 - Charlottesville Parks and Rec Athletics has partnered with Cville Smash, an indoor pickleball facility, to host youth clinics and leagues. The first clinic was held in October, and additional clinics are planned for winter.
- Adaptive Recreation:
 - Adaptive Recreation successfully facilitated a three-day, two-night trip to Graves Mountain. Participants picked apples, practiced cooking skills, and completed a five-mile hike.
 - The annual Adaptive Recreation Picnic at Pen Park was well attended. Participants and their families enjoyed a variety of activities, including a live musical performance by one of the participants.
- Senior Exercise Education:
 - In response to participant requests, staff developed and implemented a new exercise education program for older adults. The program included instruction on the proper use of exercise equipment and emphasized safety, injury prevention, and the importance of regular physical activity.
- Senior Day Trip:

- Senior program participants took a day trip to Shenandoah National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway, where they enjoyed the fall foliage while engaging in community exploration and socialization.
- Aquatics Registration:
 - The second session of fall aquatics registration went off without a hitch. We registered 89 participants for Red Cross classes and 96 participants for the Prep/Swim Team program. Limited spaces remain. Sign up at <https://vacharlottesvilleweb.myvscloud.com/webtrac/web/splash.html>
- Monster Mash:
 - Monster Mash, held October 24, featured an afternoon of free activities, including pumpkin painting, inflatables, games, performances, and a costume contest.
- Grand Illumination Volunteers:
 - Volunteer recruitment is underway for Grand Illumination, which will take place December 5. Those interested in helping with this festive, all-day event may contact Ellen Joy at joye@charlottesville.gov.

Human Services – Director Misty Graves (she/her)

- Applications for the Vibrant Community Fund are now open and will close on November 13. Information for non-profits who are interested in applying is provided on the website: <https://www.charlottesville.gov/2043/Vibrant-Community-Fund>.
- The We LIT(erature) reading program was featured in a story by Virginia Public Media (VPM): <https://www.vpm.org/news/2026-10-16/we-lit-book-club-cville-summit-elementary-school-howard-davis/>.
- The Department of Human Services is actively recruiting members to fill 10 vacancies on the Youth Council. We're looking for eighth-grade students, homeschooled students, students attending private schools within the City, and City residents who attend schools in other localities. Students from Lugo MaGuiness Academy are also encouraged to apply. Youth who want to make their voices heard by policymakers in local government are welcome! For more information and to apply: <https://boards.charlottesville.gov/board/6728>
- Applications are now open for the Community Attention Youth Internship Program (CAYIP) Winter I session, which runs from November 23 to January 17. We are also actively looking for partner sites to host interns and provide a meaningful internship experience. Interested youth and interested businesses and organizations should visit the CAYIP website: <https://www.charlottesville.gov/256/Community-Attention-Youth-Internship>
- Community Attention Foster Families (CAFF) will partner with Cville Shine to host a virtual evening training on November 17. This session will provide information about the LGBTQ+ community and connect participants with local resources for

youth, parents, and caregivers. Stay tuned on <https://www.shinecville.com/events> for details.

- The ANCHOR Team has responded to 231 unique individuals this calendar year so far. These included 496 encounters with individuals experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis with de-escalation, resource navigation, and connection to longer-term supports.

Information Technology – Director Steve Hawkes (he/him)

- Helpdesk & Support Services:
 - The IT team closed 290 Helpdesk support tickets so far in October, with 95% of customer survey responses rating service as “very good” or “outstanding.” The Helpdesk team also deployed 12 new PCs to employees in October as part of our ongoing device refresh program.
- Teams/WebEx Telephony Project:
 - The final phase of the IT Department’s project to migrate from Cisco desk phones to Microsoft Teams/WebEx for telephony is underway. So far, 23 of 44 departments and divisions have been migrated to the new platform. Benefits of the project include a more modern communications infrastructure, cost savings, and better user experience.
- Applications & Systems Enhancements:
 - The Applications Team completed a number of projects in October, including:
 - Expanded the City Policy Chatbot to all City Departments.
 - Implemented DSS Umbrella updates to fully replace Kinship program.
- Professional Development:
 - The City’s IT Director was a speaker at the October SAP Public Sector Summit in Washington, D.C. He was on a panel discussing modernization and mission impact.