



# City of Harrisonburg

409 S. Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

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Tuesday, September 8, 2026

7:00 PM

Council Chambers

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### 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:** 4 - City Manager Ande Banks, City Attorney Chris Brown, City Clerk Pam Ulmer 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 25, 2026 City Council Meeting

These minutes were approved

### 6. Public Hearings

#### 6.a. Public Hearing for PY2025 CDBG CAPER

Kristin McCombe, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program manager, presented an update of the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), reflecting the current status of all CDBG projects funded as of 08/31/26. She stated this begins the 15 day public comment period and provided contact

information.

At 7:05 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 Monday, August 24, 2026

There being no one desiring to be heard, Mayor Reed closed the public hearing at 7:05 p.m., and the regular session reconvened.

No action required

**This Public Hearing - No Action was received and filed.**

- 6.b.** Consider a request from Caitlin Denbigh for a special use permit at 387 Monticello Avenue

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a special use permit request for property located at 387 Monticello Avenue for a short term rental. He reviewed the surrounding zoning districts, long term plans for the area, the property, the accessory building, the definition of by right homestays versus Short-term rental, and the recommended conditions from staff and Planning Commission.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval of the request.

At 7:10 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 Wednesday, August 26, 2026 and Wednesday, September 2, 2026.

There being no one desiring to be heard, Mayor Reed closed the public hearing at 7:11 p.m., and the regular session reconvened.

Vice Mayor Fleming requested clarification of the upcoming changes in state code regarding accessory dwellings and short term rentals. Discussion took place regarding the difference and the upcoming changes that will be needed in city code.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that this request be approved with conditions 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.c.** Consider a request from VG Harrisonburg Storage LLC for a special use permit at

291 West Wolfe Street and 336 West Market Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a special use permit request for property located at 291 W. Wolfe St., and 336 W. Market Street. He reviewed the surrounding zoning districts, long term plans for the area, and conditions suggested by staff.

He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval of the request with staff conditions as amended.

Discussion took place regarding the anticipated activities at this location, traffic impacts, the great vision for this property and how this could benefit the community.

At 7:34 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the third public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 and Wednesday, September 2, 2026.

Mary Boitnott, 55 N. Brook Ave, shared her concerns regarding parking for residents and the traffic on the street this development may bring. She also mentioned that the street signage needs to be changed as they are for the manufacturing space previously there.

Benjamin Ho, applicant representative, stated they anticipated there only being one tenant with one specific activity;

Amanda Presgraves, 260 W Wolfe St., in favor of the request, and spoke on some concerns regarding traffic, speed, safety.

Neil Detwiler and Kristin Grimshaw, climbing gym operators, potential tenant to the building, stated that if they become a tenant their plans are for a climbing wall and Futsol courts.

At 7:44 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

**A motion was made by Council Member Alsaadun, seconded by Vice-Mayor Fleming, that this request be approved as presented by staff with all suggested conditions. 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.d.** Consider a request to amend the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the Northeast Neighborhood Small Area Plan

Nyrma Soffel, planner of Community Development, presented an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan related to the Northeast Neighborhood Small Area Plan. She

provided the history and purpose of the study done with grant funding for areas affected by urban renewal, the Community Connectors Program, and the amendments.

She stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval of the amendment.

At 7:52 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the fourth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 and Wednesday, September 2, 2026.

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, spoke on his attendance to many of the community engagements for the northeast neighborhood, and his observations. He shared his concerns on Strategy 8.5.

At 7:57 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the public hearing and the regular session reconvened.

Discussion took place regarding the need for this amendment, there has been a lot of effort to creating this Small Area Plan with the community, the history of the community, and the community engagement that was done for this project.

**A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Dent, that this PH-Action Item be approved. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:**

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

**No:** 0

**6.e.** Consider a request to amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a new term and definition for "poultry hatchery"

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented an ordinance amendment related to Poultry Hatcheries. He reviewed the amendments requested,

He stated staff and Planning Commission (6-0) recommended approval of the request.

At 8:08 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the fifth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 and Wednesday, September 2, 2026.

There being no one desiring to be heard, Mayor Reed closed the public hearing at 8:08 p.m., and the regular session reconvened.

**A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Vice-Mayor Fleming, that this ordinance amendment be approved 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.f.** Consider a supplemental appropriation for the carryover and reappropriation of prior year encumbrances and unexpended grants, and for the appropriation of new grant awards in the amount of \$22.1 million

Larry Propst, director of Finance, presented a request a supplemental appropriation to reappropriate funds from past budgets in the amount of \$23.1 M related to unexpended purchase orders, unexpended grant funds, and new grant funding from the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) for housing workforce investment program.

At 8:13 p.m., Mayor Reed closed the regular session and called the sixth public hearing to order. A notice appeared in the Daily News-Record on August 28, 2026 and August 31, 2026.

There being no one desiring to be heard, Mayor Reed closed the public hearing at 8:13 p.m., and the regular session reconvened.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, that this PH-Action Item 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 a request from Jose Antonio Lopez Montiel for a variance from the Subdivision Ordinance at 704 North Liberty Street

Adam Fletcher, director of Community Development, presented a request for a subdivision ordinance variance of property located at 704 North Liberty St. He reviewed the variance requested related to sidewalk construction, the zoning designation for the area, the long term plan of the area and the history of the property. He stated the applicant is requesting to not have to construct the sidewalk along Liberty St.

He stated staff recommended denial of the request but Planning Commission (4-2) recommended approval of the request.

Discussion took place regarding the construction of the sidewalk, the costs associated with the construction, and the broader implications of approving this variance.

**A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Vice-Mayor Fleming, that this request be denied. The motion carried with a recorded roll call vote taken as follows:**

**Yes:** 4 - Mayor Reed, Vice-Mayor Fleming, Council Member Alsaadun and Council Member Robinson

**No:** 1 - Council Member Dent

**7.b.** Consider approving a resolution setting the percentage of Personal Property Tax Relief for Tax Year 2026

Chris Brown, city attorney, presented a resolution authorizing the personal property tax relief percentage for Tax Year 2026 to 18.2%.

**A motion was made by Vice-Mayor Fleming, seconded by Council Member Robinson, that this Resolution be adopted. 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.c.** Consider approval of the proposed mosaic design by Scott Supraner for the pumphouse at the Spraygrounds at Ralph Sampson Park

Amy Snider, deputy city manager, presented the proposed design for the mosaic at the Spraygrounds funded by private donors.

Steve Carpenter, reviewed the location of the mosaic placement, on the pump house, the previous art work approved for the Sprayground, and the proposed idea of the mosaic.

Discussion took place regarding all the artwork to be placed at the Sprayground and how important the image on the mosaic is to the community.

**A motion was made by Council Member Robinson, seconded by Council Member Alsaadun, to approve the proposed artwork as presented to 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.d.** Consider approving the amended Harrisonburg Police Department Policies and Equipment Requirements for Tow Companies and amended Fee Schedule.

Chris Brown recommended this item be moved to the 09/22/26 Council meeting. Council approved by nodding.

**This Action Item was tabled.**

## Recess

At 8:53 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting into recess.

At 8:59 p.m., Mayor Reed called the meeting back into session.

**7.e.** Discussion concerning passenger rail

KC Kettler, on behalf of Blue Ridge Rail, a community organization focused on bringing passenger rail back to Harrisonburg, presented a resolution of support for a passenger rail future destination in Harrisonburg and the greater Shenandoah Valley.

Mr. Kettler reviewed the current gaps in the Virginia's rail network, reflecting that the Shenandoah Valley lacks any rail connections, the potential routes a passenger rail could use, statistics showing the readiness of the area for this type of service, other localities that already have or will soon have passenger rail service, campaign fundamentals, and the steps to be taken to appeal to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT).

Discussion took place regarding the need for this type of service in the area and the benefits this service could bring. Council directed staff to work on a letter or resolution of support and request that Harrisonburg and the greater Shenandoah Valley be added as future destinations.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to direct staff to draft a letter and/or resolution per this request. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

**7.f.** Discussion concerning City participation in State Corporation Commission proceedings regarding Dominion Energy and NextEra Energy

Council Member Dent stated Dominion Energy is in merger negotiations with NextEra, which if combined, would create the largest regulated public utility in the country. Hearings regarding that merger will take place in November, with a deadline of September 11, 2026 for localities or any organizations to file to participate in the State Corporation Commission proceedings regarding that merger. She stated filing to participate does not mean we are taking a position pro or con but want to stay informed of the hearings. She stated HEC is also filing.

More discussion took place regarding the city's climate goals and the need to follow this merger.

**A motion was made by Council Member Dent, seconded by Council Member Robinson, directing the city attorney to file a petition to participate in the SCC regarding this merger. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.**

**7.g.** Discussion concerning drafting an ALPR ordinance

Council Member Aslaadun thanked Council for ending the contract with Flock. He requested an ordinance be drafted related to Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR) requiring future Council members to do an ordinance amendment should

ALPR contracts be considered. Chris Brown, city attorney, explained that this ordinance or any future amendments to this ordinance would not require a public hearing, but would be placed on an agenda for the public to see and reach out to Council with any concerns.

A motion was made by Council Member Alsaadun, seconded by Council Member Robinson, to direct the city attorney to draft an ordinance to be considered at the September 22, 2026 City Council meeting. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

## 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)

Panayotis "Poti" Giannakouros, shared his opinion regarding code enforcement in the city.

8.b. City Council and Staff

Council Member Alsaadun spoke on the Labor Day visit of Senator Warner.

Council Member Dent spoke on the Roadless Rule and Friends of Shenandoah; the upcoming Sustainability Success Summit; upcoming NY Climate Week.

Council Member Robinson spoke on the Kids Castle ribbon cutting; recent conference for the Community Criminal Justice Board; and an upcoming Shenandoah Black Heritage Project and EMU program;

Vice Mayor Fleming spoke on upcoming Virginia Municipal Leagues legislative committee meeting;

Mayor Reed spoke on the Kids Castle ribbon cutting; recent JMU Block party; upcoming African American Festival; and upcoming Pride festival.

Ande Banks, city manager, stated Friday is the 25th anniversary of September 11th and many will be joining together to climb the stairs at the stadium to pay homage to those public servants who served on that day climbing the towers.

## 9. Adjournment

At 9:42 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted, the meeting was adjourned.

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR