



CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, May 12, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Regular Session, 6:30 PM, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia 24153

WORK SESSION

WORK SESSION IS CANCELLED FOR MAY 12, 2025

REGULAR SESSION

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Salem, Virginia, was called to order at 6:30 p.m., there being present the following members to wit: Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor; Anne Marie Green, Vice-Mayor; Councilmembers: Byron Randolph Foley, H. Hunter Holliday, and John Saunders; with Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor, presiding together with Chris Dorsey, City Manager; Rob Light, Assistant City Manager and Clerk of Council; Rosemarie B. Jordan, Director of Finance; Chuck Van Allman, Director of Community Development; Mike Stevens, Director of Communications; and John Fitzgerald, on behalf of City Attorney, Jim Guynn.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Bid Opening, Awards, Recognitions

A. Salem High School State Championship - Diving

Consider the adoption of Resolution 1495 honoring Salem High School Diver Avery Mangus for her VHSL Class 4 State Diving Championship.

Mayor Turk shared that Council would like to recognize Salem High School student Avery Mangus with Resolution 1495 for her State Championship in diving. She asked that Avery come forward.

Mayor Turk read Resolution 1495 for those present. City Council expressed congratulations and pictures were taken with Avery and Coach Christen King.

Avery was presented with a copy of the resolution and a Salem City Championship pin.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt Resolution 1495 honoring Salem High School Diver Avery Mangus for her VHSL Class 4 State Diving Championship. Anne Marie Green seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

B. Salem High School Speech Team

Consider the adoption of Resolution 1496 honoring the Salem High School Speech Team for winning the VHSL Class 4 State Championship.

Mayor Turk shared that Council would like to recognize the Salem High School Speech team for winning the Virginia High School League Class 4 State Championship.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt Resolution 1496 honoring the Salem High School Speech Team for winning the VHSL Class 4 State Championship. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

Mayor Turk asked that the Speech Team and Coach Mark Ingerson come forward. She noted that this used to be known as the Forensics Team. Mayor Turk read Resolution 1496 for those present. City Council expressed congratulations and pictures were taken of the team by Mike Stevens.

The team members were each presented a copy of the resolution and a Salem Championship pin.

C. Salem High Debate Team

Consider the adoption of Resolution 1497 honoring the Salem High School Debate Team for winning the Virginia High School League Class 4 State Championship.

Mayor Turk shared that Council would like to recognize the Salem High School Debate team for winning the Virginia High School League Class 4 State Championship.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt Resolution 1497 honoring the Salem High School Debate Team for winning the Virginia High School League Class 4 State

Championship. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

Mayor Turk asked that the Debate Team, Coach Mark Ingerson, and Assistant Coach Rachel Wurster come forward. Mayor Turk read Resolution 1497 for those present.

City Council expressed congratulations and pictures were taken of the team by Mike Stevens.

4. Consent Agenda

A. Citizen Comments

Comments from the public, limited to five minutes, on matters not already having a public hearing at the same meeting.

Karita Knisely, 115 Union Street, addressed Council advocating for City ownership and preservation of Preston Place, Salem's oldest home. Drawing on past experience with successful volunteer projects, Ms. Knisely urged Council to support continued efforts to preserve and utilize the property for public benefit.

Ronald Thompson, 1000 West Riverside Drive, expressed frustration with ongoing erosion issues on his property. He updated Council on further property damage since the last time that he had spoken and expressed continued concern. He requested that the City address the conditions, particularly the removal of dangerous trees.

Stella Reinhard, 213 N. Broad Street, requested more community dialogue regarding the Comprehensive Plan review. Second, she advocated for the adoption of a Tree Code that specifically addressed clear-cutting practices in new developments. Third, Ms. Reinhard raised concerns about potential traffic and safety issues related to multiple road entrances on Riverside Drive and Mill Lane.

Cynthia Munley, 425 Roanoke Boulevard, spoke in support of increased tree planting and funding for landscape management or a "tree guardian" program to address Salem's declining tree canopy and bolster climate resilience. She also raised concerns about the environmental and safety risks of the nearby Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP), urging the City to take a stronger stance on its potential impact, despite it not running directly through Salem.

B. Minutes

Consider acceptance of the April 22, 2025; April 23, 2025; and April 25, 2025 Special Meeting Budget Work Sessions and the April 28, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.

The minutes were approved as written.

5. Old Business

A. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Consider adoption of ordinance on second reading for the request of Clipp Family Trust, or assigns, contract purchaser, to rezone the property located at 2381-2383 Roanoke Blvd. (T/M# 225-2-6.1) from HBD Highway Business District with conditions to HBD Highway Business District. (Approved on first reading at the April 28, 2025, Council meeting.)

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Van Allman if there were any further details on this item.

Mr. Van Allman responded that there was no new information for this evening.

John Saunders motioned to adopt ordinance on second reading for the request of Clipp Family Trust, or assigns, contract purchaser, to rezone the property located at 2381-2383 Roanoke Blvd. (T/M# 225-2-6.1) from HBD Highway Business District with conditions to HBD Highway Business District. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

B. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Consider ordinance on second reading for the request of ABoone Real Estate, Inc., contract purchaser, to rezone the properties located at 1906 Mill Ln. & 1400 blk Penley Blvd. (T/M#s 205-2-5 & 204-13-1) from RSF/AG Residential Single Family/Agriculture Districts & AG Agriculture Districts to RSF Residential Single Family District. (Approved on first reading at the April 28, 2025, Council meeting.)

Randy Foley motioned to adopt the ordinance on second reading for the request of ABoone Real Estate, Inc., contract purchaser, to rezone the properties located at 1906 Mill Ln. & 1400 blk Penley Blvd. (T/M#s 205-2-5 & 204-13-1) from RSF/AG Residential Single Family/Agriculture Districts & AG Agriculture Districts to RSF Residential Single Family District with the provided proffers as adopted on first reading at the April 28, 2025, meeting. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

6. New Business

A. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Hold public hearing and consider ordinance on first reading for the request of Gwynn Properties, LLC, contract purchaser, to rezone the property located at

220 Brand Avenue (T/M# 74-2-8) from HBD Highway Business District with conditions to HBD Highway Business District. (Advertised in the April 24 and May 1, 2025, issues of the *Salem Times-Register*.) (Planning Commission recommended approval by a unanimous vote.)

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Van Allman if he had any information to share on this item.

Mr. Van Allman gave a brief synopsis of this request to rezone the former Union Hall property on Brand Street, which backs onto Carey Avenue. The current zoning restricts use to union-related activities. The petitioner seeks to rezone the property to allow substance abuse counseling services that involve no types of prescriptions or drug interactions. Planned changes are limited to minor interior renovations and installation of a chain link fence. No new parking is proposed. City staff is aware of water ponding issues in the area and is exploring potential solutions.

Councilman Holliday asked about an existing chain link fence on the property.

Mr. Van Allman responded that this could be a privacy fence, but that this would be replaced with a newer, taller chain link or privacy fence.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

Keith Dalton, realtor with Keller Williams Realty, spoke on behalf of the buyers. He indicated that he lived at 817 Craig Avenue, approximately a block from this property. He confirmed a chain link fence currently exists along Carey Avenue and stated they have proffered to install a six-foot privacy fence. He reiterated that the proposed outpatient mental health facility will not dispense or store any drugs or prescriptions. Services will include outpatient counseling for conditions such as substance abuse, bipolar disorder, and depression.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt the ordinance on first reading to remove the conditions from the property as specified in the agenda packet. Anne Marie Green seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

B. Public Hearing on effective real estate tax rate for Fiscal Year 2026

Hold a Public hearing on the effective real estate tax rate for Fiscal Year 2026.

Mayor Turk requested that Ms. Jordan share information on this item.

Ms. Jordan noted that, per the Code of Virginia, any time reassessment increases by more than 1%, it is required that a public hearing be held on the effective tax rate

increase. The calculated increase was 8.28%. The effective tax rate increase of 6.47% was advertised in the *Salem Times-Register* on May 1, 2025, as required by Code. Part of that requirement is that a public hearing must be held on that tax rate increase as part of the budget process.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing and noted that no vote was required.

C. Tax Rates Resolution

Request to levy the following tax rates for Fiscal Year 2026:

1. Real Estate tax rate of \$1.18 per \$100 assessed valuation
2. Personal property tax rate of \$3.40 per \$100 assessed valuation
3. Machinery and tools tax rate of \$3.20 per \$100 assessed valuation

Mayor Turk asked Ms. Jordan to share some information on this item.

Ms. Jordan noted that all of these items are a part of the budget process. This is a request to levy tax rates for FY2026 as required annually by the City Charter and Code. The proposed rates are as follows:

- Real Estate Tax: \$1.18 per \$100 of assessed value
- Personal Property Tax: \$3.40 per \$100 of assessed value
- Machinery and Tools Tax: \$3.20 per \$100 of assessed value

A public hearing on the proposed rates was held this evening. Council was asked to approve the tax rates as outlined in the resolution included in their meeting packets.

Hunter Holliday motioned to adopt Resolution 1498 approving the tax rates for Fiscal Year 2026, the real estate tax rate of \$1.18 per \$100 assessed valuation, personal property tax rate of \$3 .40 per \$100 assessed valuation, and machinery and tools tax rate of \$3 .20 per \$100 assessed valuation. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

D. Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

Hold a public hearing on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

Mayor Turk noted that holding a public hearing on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026 was part of the yearly process.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

John Breen, 142 Bogey Lane, addressed Council regarding the City's budget process, noting observed improvements over the past five years. The speaker commended the current budget for increased transparency and clarity, and acknowledged the Council's detailed review of the budget during work sessions. Appreciation was expressed for staff guidance. The speaker encouraged Council to maintain this approach in future years, highlighting support for the more disciplined budgeting process and the associated reduction in the tax rate.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

E. Approval of Electric Rates

Consider approval of Resolution 1500 amending the Electric Rate Tariffs

Mayor Turk asked Ms. Jordan for information on this item.

Ms. Jordan noted that Council was being asked to adopt a resolution to approve the annual electric rate tariffs, which include residential, commercial, and industrial rates. Staff, in coordination with the Electric Department, conducted a detailed analysis of current purchase power and transmission costs. Following the 2024 rate study, which consolidated costs into the base rate without a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA), staff determined that a small PCA is now warranted. The proposed PCA of \$0.001736 per kilowatt-hour will apply to all electric bills issued on or after July 1, 2025. Council was asked to approve the resolution as presented.

Mayor Turk commented on the ongoing increases in electric transmission rates observed over the past four years, noting the frequency of rate change notifications and describing the situation as a challenging balancing act for the City.

Ms. Jordan provided context regarding recent and proposed electric rate changes. It was noted that last year was unusual, with two rate increases implemented due to unforeseen cost escalations—an uncommon occurrence in local government experience. These increases were primarily driven by unexpected rises in transmission costs, which could not have been projected in advance. The current Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is modest by comparison and is intended to address ongoing transmission cost increases. She emphasized the importance of maintaining electric department operations without running a deficit. Efforts to manage peak demand through strategic generator use were also highlighted, with the goal of minimizing future transmission cost impacts.

Mayor Turk noted that the City's Electric Department Director and Finance Director had been working very hard as the City looks to the future for resigning and making decisions about what direction to go to keep rates as reasonable as possible.

Anne Marie Green motioned to adopt Resolution 1500, amending the Electric Rate

Tariffs. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

F. Salem City Schools Budget

Consider adoption of Resolution 1499 approving the Salem City Schools budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

Mayor Turk asked Ms. Jordan if there was any information that she would like to share.

Ms. Jordan noted that Council was presented with a resolution to approve the Salem City Schools budget for fiscal planning purposes, as required by law. It was noted that this action is a formal step to adopt the Schools' budget but does not commit or appropriate any funds at this stage. Budget appropriations will occur later in the process. Council was asked to approve the resolution as presented.

Hunter Holliday motioned to adopt Resolution 1499 approving the Salem City Schools budget for Fiscal Year 2026. Randy Foley seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

G. Review of budget adoption for Fiscal Year 2026.

Review of budget adoption for Fiscal Year 2026

Mayor Turk requested that Ms. Jordan share an overview on this item.

Ms. Jordan shared that formal adoption and appropriation of the budget will take place at the May 27th meeting, as required by both the City Code and Charter.

She reviewed specific changes made to the proposed budget since the Budget Work Sessions, as detailed in the agenda packet for this evening. The result of these updates is a net increase of \$85,022 to both revenues and expenditures in the General Fund. No changes were made to other funds.

Council was informed that these revisions will be reflected in the final budget for adoption on May 27.

H. Budget Appropriation Ordinances

Consider on first reading the ordinances appropriating funds for:

(a) Fiscal year 2026 operating budget and approval of the Schematic List of

Positions and Pay Scale for Fiscal Year 2026;

(b) Fiscal year 2026 capital budget and;

(c) Fiscal year 2026 budget for Salem City Schools

Mayor Turk noted that tonight Council would be considering on first reading three ordinances for appropriation of funds and that each ordinance would be voted on separately.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt the ordinance on first reading appropriating funds for the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget and approval of the Schematic List of Positions and Pay Scale for Fiscal Year 2026. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

Randy Foley motioned to adopt the ordinance on first reading, appropriating funds for the Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Budget. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Anne Marie Green motioned to adopt the ordinance on first reading appropriating funds for the Fiscal Year 2026 budget for Salem City School. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

I. Appropriation of Funds

Request to appropriate additional Smart Scale funding for Mason Creek Greenway Phase 3. **Audit - Finance Committee**

Councilman Foley noted that this item was to appropriate funds for Smart Scale funding for the Mason Creek Greenway Phase 3. He shared that Phase 3 of the Mason Creek Greenway project will begin at the intersection of East Main Street and Kesler Mill Road. It will consist of a combination of sidewalk and bike lanes along East Main Street and Electric Road, ultimately connecting to the existing Mason Creek Greenway at Lynchburg Turnpike. The construction of Mason Creek Greenway Phase 3 will also include pedestrian signal improvements and ADA ramps.

Smart Scale funds of \$2,610,310 from VDOT were previously awarded and appropriated for the project. Due to inflation since that time, an additional \$508,749 in Smart Scale funds has been awarded by VDOT to complete the project at a total project cost of \$3,119,059.

Randy Foley motioned to appropriate \$508,749 to the Capital Projects federal grants account and to the Mason Creek Greenway Phase 3 account. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

J. Appropriation of Funds

Request to appropriate Carbon Reduction Program and local funding for Roanoke River Greenway from Apperson Drive to Cook Drive. **Audit - Finance Committee**

Councilman Foley noted that this item was to appropriate funds from the Carbon Reduction Program for the Roanoke River Greenway. He shared that a connecting piece of the Roanoke River Greenway from Apperson Drive to Cook Drive will be constructed as a shared-use path that connects two existing Roanoke River Greenway systems so that the Roanoke River Greenway can act as one continuous transportation alternative spanning multiple localities.

VDOT has awarded the City \$1,615,259 in Carbon Reduction Program funds for this project. An additional \$505,896 in local funds is needed to fully fund the project, which is available in the Capital Projects reserve account.

Randy Foley motioned to appropriate \$1,615,259 to the Capital Projects federal grants account and to the Roanoke River Greenway – Apperson to Cook Connector account. Also to transfer \$505,896 from the Capital Projects Reserve account to the Roanoke River Greenway – Apperson to Cook Connector account. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

K. Appropriation of Funds

Request to appropriate Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program (VHSIP) funds for 4 pedestrian crossings. **Audit - Finance Committee**

Councilman Foley noted that this item is an appropriation of funds from the Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program funds for pedestrian crossings. He shared

that VDOT has awarded the City \$469,464 in Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program funds for upgrading a total of four pedestrian crossings on the Hanging Rock Battlefield Trail along Kessler Mill Road and on the Roanoke River Greenway along West Riverside Drive. The pedestrian crossings will improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists utilizing the multi-use paths. No local match is required for these funds.

Randy Foley motioned to appropriate \$469,464 to the Capital Projects state grants account and to the Pedestrian Crossings account. Anne Marie Green seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

L. Appropriation of Funds

Request to appropriate Smart Scale and local funds for downtown improvements along College Avenue. **Audit - Finance Committee**

Councilman Foley noted that this item is an appropriation for Smart Scale Funding for Downtown improvements along College Avenue. He shared that Phase 6 of the Downtown Plan will provide improvements along College Avenue from Calhoun Street to the south side of Roanoke Boulevard. These improvements, with construction estimated to begin in 2028, will replace and widen sidewalks, as well as improve crosswalks.

VDOT has awarded the City a total of \$2,708,507 in Smart Scale funds for design and construction over multiple upcoming fiscal years. An additional \$547,800 in local funds is needed to fully fund the project, which is available in the Capital Projects reserve account.

Randy Foley motioned to appropriate \$2,708,507 to the Capital Projects federal grants account and to the Downtown Improvements - College Avenue account. Also to transfer \$547,800 from the Capital Projects Reserve account to the Downtown Improvements – College Avenue account. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

M. Appropriation of Funds

Request to appropriate highway maintenance carryover for various projects. **Audit - Finance Committee**

Councilman Foley noted that this item was an appropriation for Highway Maintenance funding for various projects. He shared that the City receives highway maintenance funding each year from the State for approved uses. Any unspent funds in a fiscal year may be carried forward for eligible projects. There are multiple projects

underway that require formal appropriation of carryover funds in the amount of \$1,143,564 to complete.

These appropriation needs include:

1. \$466,904 for a project to remove sidewalk trip hazards. He noted that this work had begun.
2. \$307,660 for repairs to the Apperson Bridge at Cook Drive that will allow local funding in this amount to be transferred back to the capital projects reserve by the City Manager for future needs.
3. \$135,000 for a project to heavily trim back or remove invasive trees along the City's roads.
4. \$234,000 to update pavement markings on multiple roads throughout the City.

Randy Foley motioned to appropriate \$1,143,564 of highway maintenance carryover funds to the General Fund Designation of Beginning Fund Balance account and to the expenditure accounts specified in the agenda.

Also to appropriate \$307,660 to the Capital Projects Fund revenue account, Transfer From General Fund, and to the Capital Projects Fund expenditure account, Apperson Drive Bridge Repairs #1800. Anne Marie Green seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

7. Adjournment

Mayor Turk noted that Salem's new Fire Chief, Steve Simon, was sworn in last Thursday and that today was his first day.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Submitted by:



H. Robert Light
Clerk of Council

Approved by:



Renée Ferris Turk
Mayor