



CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, July 28, 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 JULY 28, 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, 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; Mike Stevens, Director of Communications; and Jim Guynn, City Attorney.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Bid Opening, Awards, Recognitions

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.

Lauren Strong, 613 Doyle Street, spoke, focusing on three main areas of concern relating to the proposed rezoning and development on Newman Drive: hydrology and environmental impacts, quality of construction, and public transparency. While acknowledging the developer's strong reputation, the speaker raised concerns over the use of Ryan Homes as the builder. In addition, she requested a legally binding

conservation easement on any undeveloped portion of the property. Ms. Strong ended by requesting that all hydrology and environmental studies be completed at the developer's expense, and that any commitments regarding conservation and construction quality be made legally enforceable prior to project approval.

Karen Monroe-Walker, 462 Parkdale Drive, expressed concerns regarding the proposed rezoning and development on the radio station property at the end of Newman Drive. She emphasized the negative impact this could have on the character, traffic, and safety of the neighborhood. She proposed alternative development ideas. Ms. Monroe-Walker ended by requesting that the developer, Alexander Boone, withdraw the current rezoning application and take 60 days to engage with residents on a revised plan. If no changes are made and public input is not integrated, she asked Council to vote against the proposal at the August 11th public hearing.

B. Minutes

Consider acceptance of the July 14, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.

The minutes were approved as written.

C. Financial Reports

Consider acceptance of the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the twelve months ending June 2025.

The Financial Reports were received.

5. Old Business

There was no Old Business this evening.

6. New Business

A. 216 Chapman Avenue - Purchase

Authorize the City Manager to Finalize and Execute Necessary Documents for the Purchase of Property Located at 216 Chapman Avenue Utilizing Existing Contingency Funds.

Mr. Light clarified that there was a typographical error on the agenda and that the motion on this item would need to be for 216 Chapman Street, not Chapman Avenue.

Mr. Dorsey explained that this property was off Broad and Chapman over in the square behind the Rescue Squad. He indicated that this was a very small property with a dilapidated house sitting on it currently. The City plans to buy the property, eliminate the house that is currently located here, and possibly utilize the property for a Habitat house or find another suitable use.

Randy Foley motioned to authorize the City Manager to finalize and execute necessary documents for the purchase of the property located at 216 Chapman

Street, utilizing existing Contingency Funds. Anne Marie Green seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

B. Boards and Commissions

Consider appointments to various boards and commissions.

Randy Foley motioned to reappoint Russ Craighead for a three-year term ending June 30, 2028, to the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

7. Closed Session

Hold a closed session in accordance with the following sections of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended:

1. Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) for discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. Specifically, the acquisition and disposition of real property.
2. Section 2.2-3711 (A)(5) for discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community. Specifically, the expansion of an existing business.
3. Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Specifically, counsel advice related to certain agreements or contracts involving the City.

Anne Marie Green motioned that, in accordance with Section 2.2-3711 A of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, Council hereby convenes to closed session at 6:44 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the following specific matters:

1. Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) for discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the

bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. Specifically, the acquisition and disposition of real property.

2. Section 2.2-3711 (A)(5) for discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community. Specifically, the expansion of an existing business.
3. Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Specifically, counsel advice related to certain agreements or contracts involving the City. Randy Foley seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

Anne Marie Green motioned to reconvene at 7:52 p.m. in accordance with Section 2.2-3712 D. of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended to date, Council certifies that in closed session only items lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and only such items identified in the motion by which the closed session was convened were heard, discussed, or considered by the Council. Randy Foley seconded the motion.

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

8. Supplemental Action Item

Authorize the City Manager to exercise provisions related to the Roanoke County/Salem Jail agreement.

City Manager Dorsey noted for the benefit of the public that the City of Salem has an agreement with the Roanoke County-Salem Jail for housing prisoners. He shared that this agreement had been in place since 1977. Mr. Dorsey explained the significant cost difference between housing prisoners at the Roanoke County-Salem Jail at \$110 per day versus \$53 per day at the regional jail. Concerns were raised about the financial sustainability of the current arrangement. Approximately six months ago, City representatives initiated discussions with Roanoke County officials regarding this issue. After reviewing the agreement and associated financial impacts, the City has determined that providing a two-year notice to withdraw from the existing jail agreement is in Salem's best interest, with the intent to transition inmates to the regional facility. Staff, including the City Attorney, Ms. Jordan, and representatives from the Police and Sheriff's Departments, have been actively involved in the review process and were available to answer questions.

Ms. Jordan provided a financial analysis comparing the cost of housing inmates at the Roanoke County-Salem Jail versus the Western Virginia Regional Jail. Assuming

current inmate population levels remain constant, the analysis estimates an increase in operating costs of approximately \$194,000 and an additional \$61,000 in debt service costs if the city transitions to the regional jail—totaling about \$255,000 in new expenses. However, the city currently pays approximately \$370,000 annually in operating costs and an average of \$45,000 for capital expenditures to the Roanoke County-Salem Jail, totaling around \$415,000. Based on these figures, transitioning to the regional jail could result in an estimated annual savings of approximately \$160,000. These figures are based on current per diem rates and inmate population data and may fluctuate depending on changes in inmate population across member localities.

Councilman Foley asked for information on the impact on mileage and vehicle wear-and-tear of this decision.

Captain Branson with the Sheriff's Department and Deputy Chief Crouse with the Police Department briefed Council on the operational analysis related to prisoner processing. Currently, for each arrest, officers make an average of four trips to the Roanoke County -Salem Jail due to the need to process prisoners independently, including completing reports and conducting fingerprinting at the City's own facility. The Roanoke County-Salem Jail does not provide these services. In contrast, the Western Virginia Regional Jail offers full processing services, which would eliminate the need for multiple trips and in-house processing. This change is expected to result in significant time savings—approximately 3.5 hours per officer per shift—as well as long-term cost reductions related to travel and processing resources.

Vice-Mayor Green asked for clarification of time savings related to the Magistrate.

Deputy Chief Crouse responded that a video magistrate is utilized at the regional jail. With the county jail, they are stacked in line, or if there is not a magistrate available, they have to go to Roanoke City. Council was informed that while processing at the magistrate's office can occasionally be completed in 20–25 minutes, it often depends on timing and availability. Transitioning to the Western Virginia Regional Jail would streamline this process through the use of their video magistrate system. Officers would only be required to provide testimony to the magistrate, as all other intake and processing tasks would be handled by the regional facility—resulting in greater efficiency and reduced demands on officer time.

Councilman Foley asked the Sheriff how this would impact on the Sheriff's Office.

Captain Branson noted significant benefits in transitioning to the Western Virginia Regional Jail. Currently, Sheriff's Office staff are on call 24/7 for inmate-related issues, including after-hours medical calls, which often result in overtime. The regional jail provides 24/7 on-site medical staff and manages all inmate healthcare, including outside appointments. This shift would relieve the Sheriff's Office of these responsibilities, reduce overtime demands, and improve operational efficiency.

Vice-Mayor Green asked to confirm that this was all covered by the fee per head. This was confirmed by Captain Branson.

Captain Branson informed Council that the Western Virginia Regional Jail provides comprehensive on-site medical care, reducing the need for officers to transport inmates to the emergency room for evaluation and treatment. Unlike the County jail, which has limited medical staffing, the regional jail is equipped to manage a wider range of medical issues in-house. This capability would reduce officer time spent at hospitals and improve efficiency in inmate processing and care.

Mr. Dorsey noted that discussions with the regional jail leadership confirmed that no additional cost would be incurred for these services, as staff are already in place to manage after-hours processing.

Deputy Chief Crouse reiterated that the Western Virginia Regional Jail can handle inmate intake at any time—day or night, including weekends and holidays—due to having a 24/7 docket staff. This capability would streamline prisoner intake and reduce delays.

Mr. Dorsey reported for the benefit of the public having multiple constructive meetings with Roanoke County officials regarding the potential transition to the regional jail. The discussions focused on cost-saving measures, and the City emphasized maintaining transparency and a collaborative, respectful dialogue throughout the process.

Councilman Holliday shared insights from his tour of the Western Virginia Regional Jail, noting that the facility is currently underutilized and has significant capacity for expansion. The jail serves Montgomery County, Franklin County, Salem, and Roanoke County. It offers extensive medical services— which he believed include dialysis—minimizing the need for inmate transport to external hospitals. He expressed strong support for increased use of the facility, citing operational efficiencies, reduced demands on local law enforcement, and overall cost savings.

Councilman Foley noted the difference in age of the two facilities under discussion.

Randy Foley motioned to authorize the City Manager to give notice to Roanoke County that the City of Salem is withdrawing from our agreement with the Roanoke County-Salem Jail . This will not be effective for two years. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: John Saunders, Hunter Holliday, Randy Foley, Anne Marie Green, Renee Turk
Nays: None
Abstaining: None

9. Adjournment

Mayor Turk expressed appreciation to the citizens that were present for their attendance and encouraged them to utilize the City's website for help in finding information and reporting problems.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. Robert Light".

H. Robert Light
Clerk of Council

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Renée Ferris Turk".

Renée Ferris Turk
Mayor