



CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, February 23, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Work Session, 5:30 PM

Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem,
Virginia 24153

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

WORK SESSION

1. Call to Order

A work session of the Council of the City of Salem, Virginia, was held in the Council Chambers Conference Room, City Hall, 114 N. Broad Street, Salem, Virginia, on February 23, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., there being present the following members of said Council to wit: Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor; Anne Marie Green, Vice-Mayor; Council members; 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; Rosie Jordan, Director of Finance; Will Simpson, Assistant Director of Community Development/ City Engineer (participated remotely); Crystal Williams, Assistant to the City Manager; and Laura Lea Harris, Deputy Clerk of Council; and the following business was transacted;

2. New Business

A. Discussion Items

Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Priorities Discussion

City staff presented an update highlighting a summary of General Fund revenues and expenditures, as well as certain funding priorities/obligations identified in the early stages of the City Manager's draft Fiscal Year 2027 budget. Discussion was held, and questions were asked as items were shared.

Staff also reviewed a list of upcoming infrastructure projects related to stormwater. Discussion was held on the future of the stormwater program in the City of Salem.

Mayor Turk expressed the desire to see consideration given to funding for landscape enhancement to the entrance corridors.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Turk adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

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; Council members: 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; Rosie Jordan, Director of Finance; Chuck Van Allman, Director of Community Development; Clark Ruhland, Communications Specialist; and Jim Guynn, City Attorney.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Awards and Recognitions

Mayor Turk recognized Officer Zachary Martin from the Salem Police Department and asked the following new officers in attendance this evening, currently in the Field Training phase, to come forward: Edward Hackett, Kevin Hernandez-Rodriguez, Jace Fallon, Steven Roberson, and Jack Person. She expressed appreciation to them on behalf of the City of Salem. She noted how difficult it is to be a police officer in this day and time and expressed appreciation to them for their dedication in working to serve and protect the citizens of the City of Salem. Mayor Turk excused the officers to return to work.

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.

Ronald Thompson, 1000 W. Riverside Drive, addressed Council regarding concerns about tree removal on neighboring property. He stated that vegetation, including small trees, has been removed, worsening erosion conditions and creating safety hazards. Mr. Thompson asserted that existing City ordinances prohibit certain activities he believes his neighbor is undertaking, including tree removal. He expressed frustration and alleged that the City has failed to enforce these laws. Mr. Thompson stated that if the City does not take prompt action to enforce applicable laws, he intends to pursue legal remedies despite being advised of the potential complexity and cost of litigation. Mayor Turk encouraged him to consult with an attorney regarding his concerns.

B. Minutes

Consider acceptance of the February 9, 2026, Work Session and Regular Meeting minutes.

The minutes were approved as written.

Mayor Turk requested that the City Manager provide an update on current items in the City of Salem.

Mr. Dorsey provided an update on recent and upcoming activities across several departments. At the Civic Center, the City recently hosted the state high school wrestling championships for Classes 1, 2, and 3. Upcoming events include the ODAC men's and women's basketball tournament scheduled for the coming weekend. In preparation, the basketball floor has been fully reconditioned and repainted, with new decals installed. Mr. Dorsey shared that Communications Specialist, Clark Ruhland helped with the design of the court. The work was completed off-site at the former GE plant and is being installed at the Civic Center in advance of the tournament. He noted the upcoming sold-out performance by country artist Ella Langley as well as a recent sell-out concert by Parker McCallum.

Mr. Dorsey also noted that the Street Department had demolished a dilapidated house on Chapman Street previously discussed by Council. An old structure at the Street Department compound was also removed to prepare for the construction of a new truck shed, which is included in the current budget. The City recently received a shipment of 500 tons of road salt to replenish winter supplies.

For the Water Department, the City has hired a new Assistant Director, Nathan Carroll, who began work last week.

Regarding the Police Department, the 2025 Officer of the Year was announced as Senior Police Officer Brendan Carroll of the Detective Division, a Salem native and Salem High School graduate.

Mayor Turk thanked Mr. Dorsey for this information and encouraged citizens to utilize the website for information on what is going on in the City.

5. Old Business

A. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Consider adoption of an ordinance on second reading for the request of McDonald's Corporation, property owner, to rezone the property located at 101 Electric Road (Tax Map # 80 – 4 – 1) from HBD Highway Business District with condition to HBD Highway Business District. (Approved on first reading at the February 9, 2026, meeting.)

Mayor Turk explained for those that were not present at the previous Council meeting that this was a simple rezoning to remove the condition to accommodate the current building site plan requirements.

Councilman Foley added that the McDonald's at the corner of East Main and 419 is being razed and rebuilt.

Anne Marie Green motioned to adopt the ordinance on second reading for the request of McDonald's Corporation, property owner, to rezone the property located at 101 Electric Road (Tax Map # 80 – 4 – 1) from HBD Highway Business District with condition to HBD Highway Business District. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

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

6. New Business

A. Conveyance of Property

Hold a public hearing and consider the sale of an approximate +/- 0.134-acre tract located in Salem, Virginia, being Tax Map #122-8-6. (Advertised in the February 12, 2026, issue of the *Salem Times-Register*.)

Mr. Light reported on the property located at 216 Chapman Street, which Council authorized the City Manager to purchase in July of last year. The intent of the acquisition was to facilitate development of a Habitat for Humanity home or a similar project. He stated that the City has been in discussions with Habitat for Humanity, which has expressed long-standing interest in undertaking a project within the City. Redevelopment of the property would replace a blighted and derelict structure with new housing, thereby enhancing the surrounding neighborhood. Pursuant to City Code requirements regarding the disposition of public property, a public hearing is required. Following the public hearing, Council will be asked to authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents to convey the property to Habitat for Humanity for \$1 to support the proposed project.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

Stella Reinhard, 213 N. Broad Street, spoke in support of the proposed use of the property, stating it appeared to be a worthwhile purpose. She suggested that, for this and future property-related public hearings, the City display a map of the subject property on the meeting room screens. Ms. Reinhard indicated that this would assist members of the public in understanding the property's location, size, and surrounding context.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

Randy Foley motioned to sell this approximately 0.134 acres to Habitat for Humanity,

being Tax Map #122-8-6. John Saunders seconded the motion.

Mr. Guynn advised that Council only needed to approve the sale of the property rather than limiting themselves in the event that this specific plan did not go through.

Randy Foley amended his motion to authorize the City Manager to prepare documentation to sell this property at Tax Map #122-8-6. John Saunders seconded the amended motion.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

B. Salem Historical Society (Salem Museum)

Consider a request from the Salem Historical Society Board of Directors and authorize the City Manager to make a contribution in the amount of \$275,000 for roof repairs to the Salem Museum building, with any remaining funds utilized for HVAC repairs.

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Dorsey for information on this item.

Mr. Dorsey reported that the Salem Historical Society currently owns Preston Place on West Main Street. The City has been exploring options to ensure long-term preservation of the property while also supporting the Historical Society and its museum operations. He stated that a separate 501(c)(3) organization has been established by a group of citizens to facilitate the acquisition of Preston Place from the museum. The City's proposal is to provide \$275,000 in appropriated funds to the Salem Historical Society, following conveyance of the property to the new nonprofit entity, to address needed roof repairs and, if funds remain, HVAC improvements at the Salem Museum.

Mr. Dorsey noted that the City has previously invested in the museum property and indicated that, should the nonprofit cease to operate in the future, the land would revert to the City. He stated that providing funding for capital improvements is a practical step to protect the City's prior investment and to assist the Historical Society, which currently lacks the resources to complete the needed repairs.

Mr. Light noted that staff had reviewed this item with Audit-Finance at their meeting prior to the last Council meeting. Because this is a mid-year appropriation, it has gone through Audit-Finance.

Mayor Turk expressed appreciation to the Brown family for their trust in the City and the 501(c)(3) to care for the house.

Anne Marie Green motioned to appropriate \$275,000 from Unrestricted Fund Balance and to authorize the City Manager to remit these funds to the Salem Historical

Society for the specified purpose of roof repairs to the Salem Museum with any remaining funds utilized for HVAC repairs. She further moved that the payment to the Historical Society is predicated on the finalized purchase of the Preston Place property from the Salem Historical Society to the Preston Place Preservation Foundation, Incorporated. Randy Foley seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Turk expressed appreciation to all of those involved in this for their hard work in making this happen.

C. Resolution 1520 - Sewer Easement Condemnation

Consider adoption of Resolution 1520 authorizing the City Attorney to execute all necessary actions to obtain an easement across the property by the process of condemnation.

Mayor Turk requested the City Attorney to provide background information on this item.

Mr. Guynn reported that the City is currently undertaking repairs and replacements of a number of sewer lines. In connection with this work, the City has been securing easements across affected private properties. He indicated that agreements have been successfully reached with nearly all impacted property owners, with some donating easements and others receiving compensation at fair market value. However, the City has been unable to reach an agreement with the owners of Ramey's Trailer Park regarding compensation for the required easement. Mr. Guynn stated that negotiations have been ongoing for an extended period, but no agreement has been reached. Given the importance of the sewer infrastructure as a public utility, he indicated that the City has limited alternatives and must proceed to ensure completion of the project. Mr. Guynn emphasized that this action has not been taken lightly and follows substantial efforts to resolve the matter through negotiation.

Mr. Light noted that the easement area for the Pomeroy sewer project is in a steep location that is not developable. It is not impacting any of the existing trailers or homes there.

Hunter Holliday motioned to adopt Resolution 1520 authorizing the City Attorney to execute all necessary actions to obtain an easement across the property by the process of condemnation. John Saunders seconded the motion.

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

D. Salem Health Department

Consider request for approval to adjustment of payment to the Salem Health Department.

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

Ms. Jordan reported that, following the close of the fiscal year, the Health Department experienced delays in finalizing its financial records due to the federal government shutdown. Once records were reconciled, adjustments were made to funds previously allocated by the City for Salem-related services.

The adjustments included one credit due to the City and one small payment owed to the Health Department. The net result is a credit of \$11,025 owed to the City.

The Health Department has requested that the City execute the annual Local Government Agreement (LGA), which includes language requiring City Council approval for the carryover of funds, whether a credit or payment is due. Based on the language in the agreement, which cannot be modified, staff has requested Council approval for the City Manager to execute the agreement to facilitate timely processing.

John Saunders motioned to approve the net adjustment for the allocation to the Salem Health Department of \$11,025. Also to approve for the City Manager to execute this agreement. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Vice-Mayor Green asked if, considering the amount of money involved, it would be worthwhile for Council to receive a presentation from the Health Director regarding what Salem receives in return from the state for that money.

Mr. Dorsey indicated that this could be arranged and that the Health Director had expressed a desire to meet with the City to discuss the services that they provide. He said that this could be facilitated at a time that would be beneficial for Council.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Submitted by:



H. Robert Light
Clerk of Council

Approved by:



Renée Ferris Turk
Mayor