



## CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES

**Monday, March 9, 2026, at 6:30 PM**

Work Session, 5:45 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

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### WORK SESSION

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#### 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 March 9, 2026, at 5:45 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 (absent), 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; Kevin Divers, Interim Director of the Electric Department; Crystal Williams, Assistant to the City Manager; Laura Lea Harris, Deputy Clerk of Council; and Garrett Cole, Vice-President of GDS Associates (participated remotely); and the following business was transacted;

#### 2. New Business

##### A. Discussion Items

Update on the City's Electric Power Purchasing Process and Next Steps  
from Garrett Cole, Vice-President of GDS Associates

Garrett Cole, Vice-President of GDS Associates, presented an update to Council regarding the City of Salem's electric power purchasing process and outlined the next steps in the process. Mr. Light provided additional information and reviewed a tentative project timeline. Council members discussed the update and posed questions to Mr. Cole, Ms. Jordan, and Mr. Divers.

#### 3. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Turk adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

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## REGULAR SESSION

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### 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 (absent), 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; Mike Stevens, Director of Communications; and Jim Guynn, City Attorney.

### 2. Pledge of Allegiance

### 3. Awards & Recognitions

There were none this evening.

### 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.

John Breen, 142 Bogey Lane, expressed concern that City leadership may be avoiding difficult decisions and new ideas. He also criticized the City's current budgeting approach and raised concerns about the property tax rate. Mr. Breen urged Council to ask what expenses could be reduced or eliminated, implement zero-based budgeting in certain departments, and reduce the property tax rate from \$1.18 to \$1.12. He provided an analysis of tax rates and revenue for Council's review.

#### B. **Minutes**

Consider acceptance of the February 23, 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 several updates to Council. He reminded the public that early voting is currently underway at the Registrar's Office. It was confirmed that the hours are from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. He encouraged citizen participation. He reported that the Moyer Softball Complex recently hosted the Hokie Classic collegiate softball tournament, which featured several top-ranked teams and drew strong attendance,

and noted that the City received positive feedback regarding the facility and hospitality. Mr. Dorsey noted that the City has begun publicizing the process for the new FEMA flood map updates, with public meetings scheduled for March 17 and March 19 at City Hall. He shared that additional information on this would be presented by Mr. Van Allman later in the meeting. The City Manager also reported that the ODAC Basketball Tournament had been successfully hosted at the Salem Civic Center since the last Council meeting. He announced that the City's annual Easter Egg Hunt would be held on March 26 at Salem Memorial Ballpark and that the lineup for the Salem After Five summer concert series at the Downtown Farmers Market would be announced the following week. Finally, he invited Council and the public to attend a ceremony for the City's new fire engine at Fire Station No. 1 on March 18 at 1:30 p.m.

### **C. Financial Reports**

Consider acceptance of the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the five months ending November 30, 2025.

The Financial Reports were received.

### **5. Old Business**

There was no Old Business this evening.

### **6. New Business**

#### **A. Roanoke Regional Partnership Annual Presentation**

Council will receive the annual presentation from the Roanoke Regional Partnership by John Hull, Executive Director of the Roanoke Regional Partnership.

John Hull, Executive Director of the Roanoke Regional Partnership, presented an overview of the Roanoke Regional Partnership's projects and accomplishments during 2025. He noted that Pete Eshelman, Senior Director of Creative Strategies, and Julia Boas, Director of Business Investment, were in attendance with him this evening.

#### **B. Presentation - FEMA Flood Map Revisions**

Presentation on the United States Federal Emergency Agency (FEMA) preliminary flood map revisions.

Chuck Van Allman, Director of Community Development, provided an update on the United States Federal Emergency Agency (FEMA) preliminary flood map revision process. He noted the City's early public outreach efforts to provide information through public forums and the City website as well as to assist citizens with questions and concerns. Mr. Van Allman also explained that there would be an appeal process, which has not yet begun but is expected to be later this spring and will last 90 days. Residents will be able to review the maps and submit technical appeals during that period. Prior to FEMA's final adoption, the City will need to update its floodplain

ordinance to reference the new maps and maintain compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program. The City will work closely with the City Attorney on this. After the appeal process and FEMA's responses, FEMA will issue a Letter of Final Determination, after which the updated maps will become effective approximately six months later, anticipated in winter 2026-2027.

Mayor Turk explained that the purpose of presenting the flood map update at an open City Council meeting was to inform the public regarding the proposed changes. Additional public information sessions will be scheduled to explain the maps and answer questions from residents. She also noted that property owners who believe their property has been incorrectly included in or excluded from a flood hazard area would be able to file appeals once the formal appeal process begins.

Mr. Van Allman emphasized that this was a transparent process and that his department was willing to present the information to other bodies, such as the Planning Commission, or at additional public meetings, if requested. He also noted that the City will coordinate closely with FEMA throughout the process, and that FEMA representatives may attend public meetings to assist in explaining the maps and responding to questions.

Mr. Light clarified that the appeal process would be handled directly with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), rather than through Community Development. He explained that the Community Development Department is conducting early outreach to help residents understand the process due to the complexity of the mapping information. He reiterated that two public open meetings were announced to provide both general explanations and individualized assistance regarding the preliminary flood maps. The sessions will be held in Council Chambers on March 17 at 2:00 p.m. and March 19 at 5:00 p.m. Residents will have the opportunity to review the maps and ask questions at those meetings. Mr. Light noted that the letters that were sent out to anyone that was potentially affected include how to obtain more detailed information.

Mr. Van Allman added that they would have staff available to sit down with laptops to assist. He repeated that this was a complicated process, but that they were there to help answer questions and that they had resources, such as Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and FEMA, to reach out to as well.

Mayor Turk asked if there would be a description of the process that citizens need to follow in order to appeal, and where this information would be posted.

Mr. Van Allman responded affirmatively and that this would be posted in the locations that they currently are posting information about this. He added that it was likely that further meetings would be held to assist with the appeal process.

Vice-Mayor Green asked if there were any City or school facilities that were being impacted by the changes.

Mr. Van Allman responded that he would need to research this and that he would get back to her with an answer.

Vice-Mayor Green noted that these maps were very difficult to read online.

Mr. Van Allman agreed that there was a lot of information included, and that is why they wanted to provide support. He noted that, in his opinion, this study was well done for the magnitude and scope that was included.

Mr. Holliday asked if letters were sent out to citizens who were going to be impacted by this change in the maps.

Mr. Van Allman noted that approximately 1200 letters were sent out and that they attempted to blanket those in the hazard area or close. They made a special effort to include on the list properties that had been added.

Mayor Turk thanked Mr. Van Allman for the presentation.

Mr. Van Allman encouraged Council to let them know any information that they needed, and that they would do their best to get answers.

**C. Appropriation of Funds - Grants Contingency**

Consider request to appropriate additional funds for grants contingency. **Audit-Finance Committee**

The budget for Fiscal Year 2026 includes \$100,000 in grant contingency revenue and offsetting grant contingency expenditure accounts for smaller grants received by the City. When such grants are received, the City Manager can transfer the revenue and expenditure for the amount awarded. Any grant received by the City in excess of \$75,000 is required to be individually accepted and appropriated by Council after review by the Audit Finance Committee. At this point in the fiscal year, the City has applied for and been awarded more than twice the budgeted amount in smaller grants and needs to appropriate additional revenue and matching expenditure funds. These funds will only be transferred out of the contingency accounts for eligible grants awarded.

John Saunders motioned to appropriate \$175,000 to Contingency for Grants Revenue and \$175,000 to Contingency for Grants Expenditure. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

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

Absent: Randy Foley

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

**D. Appropriation of Funds - School Operating Fund, School Grants Fund, and School Reserve Fund**

Consider request to amend the School Operating Fund, School Grants Fund, and School Reserve Fund budgets as approved by the School Board on February 10, 2026. **Audit- Finance Committee**

At their February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, the School Board amended the Fiscal Year 2026 School Operating Fund budget, School Grants Fund budget, and the School Reserve Fund budget to increase revenues and expenditures by \$19,250, \$1,060,760, and \$20,000, respectively. The Audit Finance Committee reviewed these changes detailed in the report that was included in the agenda packet with School Division staff.

John Saunders motioned to approve these School Board appropriation changes. Anne Marie Green seconded the motion.

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

**E. Boards and Commissions**

Consider appointments to various boards and commissions.

Anne Marie Green motioned to appoint Chris Yeakel as primary parent representative to CPMT. This appointment has been approved as necessary by CPMT. John Saunders seconded the motion.

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

**7. Adjournment**

Mayor Turk reminded those present to look at the website for information on upcoming events. She noted that the Civic Center has booked a large number of shows this year.

Mr. Van Allman requested to address Vice-Mayor Green's earlier question. He reported that, based on a review of the preliminary flood map updates, few City-owned properties are affected by the proposed changes. The only school facility newly included is the Salem High School, which was noted to have already been partially located within the flood area. Additional City-owned properties identified include three parcels along Salem Industrial Drive, primarily easements, including one ingress/egress access area, and one property on Dixie Drive, which he noted has historically been a location of concern. No other City-owned properties were identified

as affected at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Submitted by:



H. Robert Light  
Clerk of Council

Approved by:



Renée Ferris Turk  
Mayor