



CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, April 13, 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 April 13, 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; Crystal Williams, Assistant to the City Manager; Laura Lea Harris, Deputy Clerk of Council; Dr. Curtis Hicks, Superintendent of Salem City Schools; Mandy Hall, Chief Financial Officer for Salem City Schools; and Andy Raines, Chairman of Salem City School Board; and the following business was transacted;

Mayor Turk reported that this date, place, and time had been set in order for the Council to hold a work session; and

2. New Business

A. Discussion Items

Overview of the Salem City School Board's Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

Dr. Hicks and Ms. Hall presented budget highlights for revenues and expenses for the proposed budget for the Salem City Schools for Fiscal Year 2027. Ms. Hall also shared a salary comparison by category. Mr. Raines provided insight on behalf of the Salem City School Board during the presentation. Council questions were responded to. It was noted that the state budget, which has not been adopted at this point, will potentially add additional funding for employee compensation.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Turk adjourned the meeting at 6:14 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; Mike Stevens, Director of Communications; and Jim Guynn, City Attorney

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Awards & Recognitions

Mayor Turk recognized and welcomed Cody Sexton, Assistant Town Manager in Vinton, and his State and Local Government class from Roanoke College in attendance 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 concerns from an informal poll of citizens related to public participation and transparency, including limitations on citizen engagement during meetings compared to developers, and a lack of opportunities for questions, feedback, and broader input, such as town hall meetings or surveys. Additional concerns focused on the number and structure of City fees, communication about City projects and priorities, and limited citizen involvement in the budget process. Mr. Breen also raised issues related to zoning and administrative practices, code enforcement, and consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, as well as interest in programs to support property maintenance and rehabilitation. Overall, he conveyed frustration with perceived delays in addressing concerns and requested greater responsiveness and engagement from Council.

Stella Reinhard, 213 N. Broad Street, expressed concern about limited opportunities for citizen dialogue during Council meetings and a perceived imbalance favoring developers over residents. She also raised concerns about recent demolitions and the need for stronger historic preservation measures, including the potential establishment of an Architectural Review Board. Additional comments addressed the Comprehensive Plan and pending

zoning matters, urging careful review and greater consideration of citizen input in development and land use decisions.

B. Minutes

Consider acceptance of the March 23, 2026, Work Session and Regular Meeting minutes.

The minutes were approved as written.

Mayor Turk noted that City Manager Dorsey did not have a report this evening. She mentioned that a Job Fair would be held at Salem High School on Wednesday with a number of manufacturers and businesses across the valley participating. Also noted were the Budget Work Sessions that would be held this Wednesday and Thursday at which Council would be meeting with the department heads. Mayor Turk encouraged citizens to check the City website for information on meetings and events.

C. Financial Reports

Consider acceptance of the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the seven months ending January 31, 2026.

The Financial Reports were received.

5. Old Business

There was no Old Business this evening.

6. New Business

A. Special Exception Permit

Hold a public hearing and consider the request of WILLIAMHART LLC, property owner, for a special exception permit to allow a two-family dwelling on the property located at 740 North Mill Road (Tax Map #48-2-7) (Advertised in the March 26, 2026, and April 2, 2026, issues of the *Salem Times-Register*.) (Planning Commission recommended approval.)

Mayor Turk requested that Mr. Van Allman share any information that he would like to share to add clarity on this item this evening.

Mr. Van Allman reported that the Fire/ EMS department has reviewed the site in response to questions raised, and City staff is actively working to resolve these identified questions, with the expectation that they will be addressed to the Fire Chief's satisfaction. No additional correspondence has been received since the Planning Commission meeting. The department is also coordinating with engineers to evaluate potential modifications to site access, including the possibility of consolidating entrances, while ensuring compliance with state sight distance and access requirements.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

Barney Horrell, Brushy Mountain Engineering, on behalf of the owner, addressed concerns

raised regarding site access and development constraints. He explained that the proposed flag lot configuration limits flexibility in driveway placement. In response to Fire/EMS concerns about the turning radius and visibility along North Mill Road, the applicant is open to widening the driveway radius to improve emergency access and consolidating the two proposed entrances at an optimal location to enhance sight distance. Mr. Horrell noted that the lot's size and configuration significantly limit development potential, with the proposal consisting of a two-family dwelling and associated parking as the maximum feasible use. He also stated that, although floodplain concerns were raised, the structure is planned to be located outside the 100-year floodplain, with placement influenced by existing site features, including an elevated old railroad bed.

Kevin McConnell, 640 Fernwood Drive, was present to address a traffic concern.

Mayor Turk noted that this would be more appropriate for the public comment period of the meeting as this public hearing was being held for a specific item. It was agreed that he would sign up and return to speak at another meeting during the public comment period.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

Hunter Holliday motioned to approve the request of WILLIAMHART LLC, property owner, for a special exception permit to allow a two-family dwelling on the property located at 740 North Mill Road (Tax Map #48-2-7). John Saunders seconded the motion.

Councilman Foley expressed concern that outstanding Fire/EMS access issues may not yet be fully resolved and questioned whether the request should be continued until those matters are satisfactorily addressed. He also noted the property owner's apparent opposition to the proposed double driveway, from the Planning Commission meeting minutes. While not opposed to the request, Mr. Foley suggested deferral to allow additional time to resolve these concerns and noted that he was most concerned about public officials raising concerns about sight lines and emergency access.

Mr. Van Allman, requesting the City Attorney to correct him if he was inaccurate, clarified that the Special Exception request pertains to the suitability of the property for a duplex use, which is a separate consideration from the technical details of site access and infrastructure. He noted that Council may deny the request if it determines the use is not appropriate or may approve it with conditions requiring compliance with applicable state codes and engineering standards. He emphasized that land use suitability and access/logistical requirements are typically evaluated as distinct issues.

Mr. Guynn confirmed that this information was correct.

Councilman Foley sought clarification that approval of the Special Exception Permit would address only the land use, and that subsequent review of sight distance and Fire/EMS requirements could still restrict or modify how the development is constructed, including the possibility that it could not proceed as proposed if those standards are not met.

Mr. Van Allman responded that the City has previously modified or combined site entrances in similar situations and emphasized that the Fire Chief retains authority to determine whether access is safe and adequate for emergency response, and that such determinations are not overridden.

Mayor Turk thanked him for the clarification and reiterated that Council was solely approving the possibility of having the actual type of structure on the property.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

B. Annual Presentation of Budget by City Manager

Presentation of the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Budget for the City of Salem.

City Manager, Chris Dorsey, presented highlights of the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Annual Budget to City Council.

City Manager Dorsey shared an overview of the Fiscal Year 2027 proposed budget General Fund Revenues and Expenditures by category. He also summarized budget highlights of the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the General and Enterprise funds.

Mayor Turk and Council thanked Mr. Dorsey, Mr. Light, Ms. Jordan, and the finance team for all of their hard work on the budget.

Mr. Light acknowledged and thanked Senior Accountant Graham Millender, noting his budget development contributions and efforts in becoming familiar with City operations in his short time as a member of the staff.

C. Personal Property Tax Relief Act (PPTRA)

Request to adopt a resolution setting the allocation percentage for personal property tax relief for the 2026 tax year.

Ms. Jordan presented the annual personal property tax relief rate for vehicles, explaining that vehicles valued at \$1,000 or less receive 100% relief, values between \$1,000 and \$20,000 receive partial relief based on the established percentage, and values above \$20,000 receive no relief. She reported that the calculated relief rate for the current year is 43.5% and requested Council approval of Resolution 1524 to implement this rate in the tax billing system for personal-use vehicles.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt Resolution 1524, setting the allocation percentage for personal property tax relief for the 2026 tax year. Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

D. Appropriation of Funds - Salem Stadium Lights

Consider request to appropriate capital reserve for Salem Stadium LED lighting. **Audit-Finance Committee**

Councilman Foley advised that the field lighting at Salem Stadium needs replacement. Current lighting was installed in 1985 and modified in 1999. This project was originally intended for Council consideration in the City's upcoming Fiscal Year 2027 budget as a capital reserve funded request. However, funding consideration in the current fiscal year is requested from the same funding source as procuring now vs. July will allow the City to defer renting expensive truck-mounted lights for the 2027 Stagg Bowl. Additionally, future operation and maintenance costs associated with the field lighting will be mitigated as the LED lights utilize less electricity, and the warranty covers all maintenance needs for a ten-year period.

Randy Foley motioned to transfer \$750,000 from the Capital Reserve expenditure account to the Salem Stadium LED Lighting expenditure account, with any unused funds transferred back to the Capital Reserve expenditure account upon completion of the project. John Saunders seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Abstaining: None

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:



H. Robert Light
Clerk of Council



Renée Ferris Turk
Mayor