

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
COUNCIL RETREAT
January 26, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.
CitySpace, 100 5th St NE

The Charlottesville City Council met on Friday, January 26, 2024, in a retreat special meeting. Mayor Juandiego Wade called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas stated that all members present: Mayor Juandiego Wade, Vice Mayor Brian Pinkston, and Councilors Natalie Oschrin, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook.

On motion by Snook, seconded by Pinkston, Council voted unanimously to adopt the following meeting agenda:

- Welcome and Order of the Day
- Introduction of Facilitator (Charles Hartgrove, managing director of the Virginia Institute of Government (VIG) at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service)
- Strategic Highlights of Local Governance
- Review of Council Procedures
- AM Break - 10 Minutes
- FOIA Training
- Lunch (Communications Conversation Over Lunch)
- City Budgeting
- Facilitator's Reflections on Financial Review & Highlights
- PM Break - 10 Minutes
- Strategic Planning
- Adjournment

City Manager Sam Sanders introduced facilitator Charles Hartgrove, managing director of the Virginia Institute of Government (VIG) at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

Mr. Hartgrove reviewed strategic highlights of local governance, specifically the Council-Manager form of government.

City Attorney Jacob Stroman reviewed Council Rules and Procedures and received feedback from Council, the City Clerk and City Manager.

The meeting recessed from 10:45-10:55a.m.

City Manager Sanders requested feedback from City Council on procedures for appointing members to various city boards and commissions. He has decided that the Deputy City Manager for Administration will maintain a connection to appointees to boards and commissions, and bring back any concerns to the City Manager, who will then inform City Council. Mr. Snook suggested that every board & commission keep records available on the city website. Some boards have financial or policy implications. Councilor Oschrin suggested having a section on the website for regional meetings where councilors have seats.

Regarding work session scheduling, Mr. Sanders asked Council to suggest topics of interest. He announced an Alternative Fuels work session to be held in February and a Decarbonization work session in March. Suggested work session topics were implementation of Affordable Housing strategy; economic development and community wealth building; CAT route optimization; regional transit vision plan; transit in general; buy-in on Affordable Housing Plan; land banks and land trusts practicalities; neighborhoods reports, including Small Area Plans reviews; long-term plans for the Housing Authority; and department updates. Mr. Sanders stated the intention to touch all ten City strategic outcome areas during the year.

City Attorney Stroman introduced the topic of public hearings regarding land use matters, which Council for several years participated jointly with the Planning Commission. Holding separate public hearings would allow the Planning Commission to form its own recommendation to present to City Council without the influence of perceived Council desires or direct input from Council before Planning Commission deliberations. Mr. Stroman asked if Council would like to hold its own public hearings. With some reservations, Council by majority agreed to hold separate public hearings from the Planning Commission on land use issues, with the decision to be reevaluated as needed.

Mr. Stroman reviewed rules for public comment during Council meetings.

The meeting broadcast was experiencing technical difficulties, so Mayor Wade recessed the meeting briefly for lunch at 11:50 a.m. and reconvened at 12:03 p.m., while technical issues were being addressed.

City Attorney Stroman and Assistant City Attorney April Wimberley conducted training on the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This training also served as official training for elected officials and the FOIA Officer who are required to train every other year.

Communications Director Afton Schneider explained the services that her office provides.

Budget Director Krisy Hammill reviewed city budgeting and the public meetings for the Fiscal Year 2025 budget development process. Kevin Rotty with the city's financial management firm

Public Financial Management (PFM) presented additional information about the city's financial policy, practices, impact of collective bargaining negotiations, and bond rating agency questions.

Mr. Sanders provided additional perspective on the collective bargaining process, the Classifications and Compensation Study, and the Schools operating increase, the Charlottesville Area Transit alternative fuels fleet transformation, commitment to affordable housing, and management of the Capital Improvement Program, among other commitments.

Ms. Hammill introduced Sarah Frye, PFM, who will help the city to review federal funding opportunities to help address climate action.

The meeting recessed from 1:29 p.m. to 1:37 p.m.

Mr. Hartgrove reflected on the financial review from the subject matter experts and other highlights from Council and staff discussion. He then led a discussion about the City's Strategic Plan Framework and prioritization of the ten outcome areas: Climate Action; Economic Prosperity; Education; Housing; Organizational Excellence; Partnerships; Public Safety; Recreation, Arts, Culture; Transportation; and the overarching Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI). Council discussed funding considerations, including current budget capacity and future funding sources, as well as future capital improvement projects.

Clerk Thomas called for a point of order to address technical difficulties related to broadcast of the meeting. City Attorney Stroman stated that the meeting could continue since the meeting was advertised as an open meeting and the public may access the meeting room. Staff from the Information Technology Department advised that the Zoom platform was malfunctioning.

Discussion continued and Council agreed for the City Manager to investigate the feasibility and options for a fireworks display within city limits, revisiting the idea of a community arts council, bolstering parks and recreation activities, the application of JEDI across all other strategic areas, including in the appointments to boards and commissions, and exploration of community wealth building opportunities.

Mr. Stroman reviewed Council meeting procedures regarding items requiring one and two readings. Council made no changes to City Code *Section 2-97. Procedure in enacting general ordinances*. Regarding *Section 2-98(b). Procedure for appropriating money, imposing taxes, etc.*, Council was in general agreement to change the threshold for two required readings to \$5000.

Mr. Sanders stated that the incoming Deputy City Manager for Administration, Eden Ratliffe, will work with consultant Raftelis to develop the five-year strategic plan, Lionel Lyons will join as Deputy City Manager for Operations on February 5.

Councilor Snook questioned the City Code requirement for a Finance Committee, and Mr. Stroman stated that he will research.

Council agreed to hear quarterly city financial reports as an oral presentation during Council meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council