



CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
ANNUAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
March 20, 2025 at 6:00 PM
CitySpace: 100 5th St NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902

The Charlottesville City Council convened in a special meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, to conduct the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Annual Budget Public Hearing in the form of a Community Budget Forum. Mayor Juandiego Wade called the meeting to order and called the roll, noting all councilors present: Mayor Juandiego Wade, Vice Mayor Brian Pinkston and Councilors Natalie Oschrein, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook.

City Manager Samuel Sanders, Jr., stated that staff would provide a presentation following the public hearing.

Mayor Wade opened the public hearing and the following individuals spoke:

- Suzanne Bailey, Fry's Spring resident, spoke on behalf of IMPACT (Interfaith Movement Promoting Action by Congregations Together) in support of improvements to city transit service, particularly increasing the number of bus drivers.
- Taylor Frome, Albemarle County resident and Executive Director for The Mediation Center of Charlottesville, spoke in support of funding to train community mediators.
- Daniela Pretzer, Executive Director of The Bridgeline, asked Council to reconsider providing funds for two programs that were cut during the Vibrant Community Fund recommendation process.
- Cliff Seltzer, city resident, spoke in support of additional funding for The Bridgeline.
- Alex Joyner, Albemarle County resident and local pastor, spoke about making transit a priority and building a more reliable system.
- Hailey Peterson, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Charlottesville-Albemarle, spoke in support of additional funding to support the work of the agency as demand increases.
- Xzavia Corvington, city resident and PHAR (Public Housing Association of Residents) Intern, expressed concerns about the lack of programs and opportunities for teenagers in the city.
- Heidi and Shannon Flanagan, city residents, spoke about the bus riding experience in Charlottesville and the need to allocate funds for additional bus drivers.
- Sandra Aviles, city resident and Charlottesville United for Public Education, thanked Council for additional funding for city schools and she encouraged planning for long-term success.
- Brian Nagel, Board Director at The Mediation Center of Charlottesville, underscored the need for funding to train more mediators in the city.
- Gloria Beard and Earl Hicks, city residents, expressed concerns about jail expansion. Ms. Beard proposed that funding previously requested for jail renovations be diverted to housing development, affordable housing, and support for teachers. Mr. Hicks stated that jails should not be a place for mental health care.
- Mike Jackson, city resident and PHAR Intern expressed a need for youth programming. He also relayed a concern about towing companies targeting elderly and disabled people at Crescent Halls who may have trouble getting inspection stickers on their cars.
- Dr. Mary Preston stated that the bus driver shortage and lack of bus infrastructure negatively impacts her patients.

- John Frazee, city resident, spoke about challenges with the transit system, and he requested funding to support better bus infrastructure and more drivers.
- Mer McClurnan, city resident, spoke about challenges with the transit system, and the need for more frequent and later bus availability.

City Manager Sanders and Budget Director Kristina Hammill provided an overview of the Proposed FY2026 Charlottesville City Budget with updates based on feedback during recent budget work sessions. Mr. Sanders presented a Council-discretionary funding opportunity totaling \$1,002,001, and asked Council to consider eight off-budget-cycle requests for funding that he received, as well as miscellaneous recommendations. Mr. Sanders also cited that a scoring correction for the Vibrant Community Fund matrix resulted in an increase in the funding recommendation for The Bridgeline.

Councilors provided feedback about their funding preferences for incorporating into the final budget.

Ms. Hammill explained how the City's debt service and debt projections impact budget planning. Council further discussed transit challenges including hiring enough bus drivers, increased infrastructure costs, collective bargaining, electrification of the bus fleet and more.

On motion by Snook, seconded by Oschrein, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council