



CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
August 15-16, 2025 at 9:00 AM
The Loft at The Wool Factory, 1839 Broadway St, Charlottesville, VA 22902

Mayor Juandiego Wade called the special meeting of the Charlottesville City Council to order at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 15, with all councilors present: Mayor Juandiego Wade, Vice Mayor Brian Pinkston, and Councilors Natalie Oschrein, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook. The special meeting was called as a City Council Retreat planned for 1 ½ days.

Welcome, Introductions & Workshop Purpose

City Manager Samuel Sanders, Jr., gave a welcome and introduced the meeting facilitator Joshua René from The Spill Teem ®.

Mr. René gave an overview of the Spill Teem and their approach of human-centered design (HCD), thinking about people first and process second. He laid the groundwork for the direction of the day, with the following question guiding the day's discussion: "What would it look like if City Council used HCD to better inform and direct the City Manager Office towards strategic impact?"

Strategic Priorities Refresher

Mr. Sanders reminded Council of the strategic priorities and Strategic Outcome Areas they set in 2023:

- Climate Action
- Economic Prosperity
- Organizational Excellence
- Partnerships
- Public Safety
- Recreation, Arts and Culture
- Housing
- Transportation
- Education

Focus areas for the retreat were Housing, Transportation, Education, which have risen to the top of the priority list based on community interactions and input and the amount of activity required of these areas. Mr. Sanders asked Council if they would be willing to recast their overarching commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) as a commitment to Community Prosperity. Councilor Pinkston asked for time to absorb the information and consider the intent of the original priorities.

Mr. René led Council through an activity to evaluate councilors' Understanding, Respect, and Value for the information they just heard.

Community Survey Results

Deputy City Manager Ashley Marshall introduced Grace Arneson, Project Manager with Polco, who presented the results of the National Community Survey for Charlottesville. Ms. Marshall stated that survey data will be made available on the city website. The survey was conducted from April 15 through May 27, 2025. Councilors asked questions about survey methodology, language access for survey

participants given Charlottesville's cultural mix, the angle of survey question wording, and analysis of who was likely to participate in the survey. Council shared their reflections on what they understand, respect and value about the information presented.

Financial & Budget Overview

Vieen Leung, Director with PFM (Public Financial Management), the City's financial consulting firm, presented a report on the city's economic outlook, recognizing that the city and nation are in unprecedented economic times. She reviewed historical periods of economic contraction and expansion; tax bases; contributions to schools and enrollment trends; personnel costs; pension funding pressures; and debt service spending. The recommendation from PFM was to focus over the next five years on conservation and prioritization of resources. She reviewed rating agency comments related to the city's strengths and some future considerations for risks. Councilors shared their reflections on what they understand, respect and value about the information presented.

The meeting recessed for Lunch from 12:06 p.m. to 12:54 p.m.

Understanding Top Tier Priorities

Mr. Sanders and Mr. René introduced the next session, focused on the top tier priorities of Housing, Transportation, and Education, forecasting a need for Council to consider tensions, trade-offs and opportunities related to each priority area.

Strategic Priority Update: Housing

Mr. Freas presented the Strategic Priority Update on Housing and provided a status update on various aspects of the Affordable Housing Plan.

Ms. Marshall reviewed some tensions or barriers that could be in the way of meeting housing goals, and Mr. René led Council through a reflection exercise.

Strategic Priority Update: Education

Mr. Freas presented the Strategic Priority Update on Education and provided a status update on various aspects of school infrastructure.

Ms. Marshall reviewed some tensions or barriers that could be in the way of meeting education goals, and Mr. René led Council through a reflection exercise.

Strategic Priority Update: Transportation

Mr. Freas presented the Strategic Priority Update on Transportation and provided a status update on various areas of impact such as reliable service access, climate impact reductions, and regional system creation.

Ms. Marshall reviewed some tensions or barriers that could be in the way of meeting transportation goals.

Mr. René led Council through a reflection exercise then he shared closing reflections and a preview of the retreat agenda for Day 2.

Mayor Wade entertained a motion from Councilor Oschrein to recess the meeting until 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 16. By unanimous consent, the meeting recessed at 4:03 p.m. on August 15, 2025.

Mayor Wade called Council out of recess at 9:02 a.m. on Saturday, August 16, 2025, and Day Two of the City Council Retreat began.

Mr. René introduced the agenda for Day Two, advising Council that they would work out of their seats for more of the day to get to their goal of direction setting and to strategize about issues currently facing the city, using the information that they shared and absorbed the prior day.

Councilors engaged in a future-casting exercise, being asked to evaluate the current and future states of top priorities by considering the related budget, tensions, trade-offs, and opportunities based on the next ten-year period. The priority areas discussed were Housing, Education and Transportation.

Discussion of Housing opportunities included:

- Homelessness
- Affordability of housing for the full community
- Production and Preservation of Affordable Housing

Discussion of Education opportunities included:

- Financial opportunities
- Facility development and construction
- Facilities maintenance

Discussion of Transportation opportunities included:

- Reliable service access
- Climate impact reductions
- Regional system creation

After final remarks by City Manager Sanders, Mayor Wade entertained a motion from Councilor Snook, seconded by Oschrein, to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, the meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council