



March 13th, 2025
Martinsville City Council Meeting Minutes

4:00 pm - Joint Closed, Executive Session with Economic Development

Authority

Gardner Board Room, New College Institute

A Closed meeting of the City of Martinsville, Virginia's Council, was held on March 13th, 2025, at 4:00 PM in Gardner Board Room, New College Institute, Martinsville, VA. Council Members participating included Vice Mayor, Kathy Lawson; Councilman, Julian Mei; Councilman, Rayshaun Gravely, and Mayor Jones. Councilman Rawls was absent from the meeting. Staff present included City Manager, Aretha Ferrell-Benavides; Assistant to the City Manager, Peyton Nibblett, City Attorney Designee and Interim Managing Director of Development, Eric Payne; Mayor Jones called the meeting to order and advised Council would go into Joint Closed Session with the Economic Development Authority beginning at 4:00 PM. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act and upon a motion by Lee Prillaman and seconded by with the following 7-0 recorded vote: Lee Prillaman, aye; Ronnie Fultz, aye; Marcus Stone, aye; Olivia Garrett, aye; Michael Scales, aye; James Frith, aye; and Eric Phillips was tardy. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act and upon a motion by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Councilman Gravely with the following 3-0 recorded vote: Councilor Mei, Aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye. Councilman Gravely entered the meeting at 4:10 PM. Councilman Rawls was absent.



Council and the Economic Development Authority convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters:

- a. 2.2-3711 A(5) Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.
- b. b. 2.2-3711 A(3) and 2.2-3711 A(6) Discussion concerning items related to the discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, as allowed.

At 5PM, Chairman Phillips moved to adjourn the joint closed session and was seconded by Vice-Chairman Lee Prillaman. The motion passed unanimously and the Economic Development Authority exited the closed session while City Council remained to discuss the following matters

- a. 2.2-3711 A (1) Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; In regards to the City Manager and City Attorney position.

Vice Mayor Lawson motioned to adjourn the closed session at 6:30 PM and seconded by Councilor Mei. The motion passed unanimously, Council then moved into Open Session.



6:30 pm - Work Session

City Council Chambers, Municipal Building

All members were in attendance.

1. Briefings and Presentations

- a. Foothills of the Blue Ridge Outdoor Recreation Plan
 - i. Presentation by Friends of the Outdoor Recreation Process with designs concerning Baldwin Park with key elements included parking, basketball court, play space, and exercise station. Asked for opinions on designs presented – City Council connected the presenters and City Public Works Director in order to reach a more comprehensive understanding.
- b. Presentation of Parks Improvement Plan
 - i. Tabled due to time
- c. Human Resources Update
 - i. Tabled due to time

2. Discuss Consent Agenda Items

- a. Discuss and Consider Rescheduling April 8th City Council Meeting to April 1st
- b. Discuss and Consider February 25, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes
- c. Discuss and Consider February 28 2025 City Council Retreat Meeting Minutes



7:00 pm - Regular Session

City Council Chambers, Municipal Building

All Council members were present.

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge to the American Flag
3. Invocation
 - a. Led by Shasta Carmichael
4. Proclamations and Presentations
 - a. Presentation of a Proclamation of March 2025 as Women's History Month
 - b. Police Annual Report 2024
 - i. State of Crime in the City Report given by Chief Fincher. Martinsville experienced an overall 11.41% decrease in overall crime since 2023. Top calls for service, in order of volume, were: Call by phone, Suspicious Circumstances, Dog/Animal Calls, Wellbeing Check, 911 Open Line/Hang Up, Business Alarms, Motor Vehicle Accidents, Disturbances, Report in person, Mental subject. Spoke on Community Initiatives and Community Partners. In addition, warned of the threat of card skimmers.
5. Consent Agenda
 - a. Discuss and Consider Rescheduling April 8th City Council Meeting to April 1st
 - b. Discuss and Consider February 25, 2025 City Council Meeting Minutes
 - c. Discuss and Consider February 28 2025 City Council Retreat Meeting Minutes
 - i. Consent Agenda Approved with a motion made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Councilman Mei. The motion passed unanimously. Councilor Mei, aye; Councilor Gravely, aye; Councilor Rawls, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye.
6. Public Hearing
 - a. None



7. Regular Agenda or New Business

a. Discussion of 2025 Tax Rate

- i. Discussion of recent 2025 Tax Rate and Assessment values. Went over the key roles in property assessment. The Commissioner of Revenue assesses the value, not the tax rate. City Council has the sole ability to set the tax rate, which has not yet been set.
- ii. In response to the needs of the community and to offset the burden on taxpayers, City Management requested permission to develop and create an ordinance to cap the maximum revenue rate allowable, which was approved with a motion made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Councilor Mei.

8. Actions necessary as a result of the Executive Session

A. None

9. City Hall Reporting and Announcements

A. Public Information Officer

10. Communications from Visitors / Business from the Floor

- A. Melody Cartwright
- B. Jennifer Hairston
- C. Jamie Turner
- D. Rachel Hunsicker
- E. Eric Phillips
- F. Michael Greene

11. Comments by Members of City Council

12. Communications by City Manager

13. Adjournment