



August 26, 2025
Martinsville City Council
Meeting Minutes

5:00pm, Call Open Session to Order -

Martinsville Municipal Building; Council Chambers

A Closed-Session Meeting was held at Martinsville Municipal Building, on August 12, 2025 at 5:00 PM.

Council Members participating included Vice Mayor, Kathy Lawson; Julian Mei, Aaron Rawls; Rayshuan Gravely, and Mayor, LC Jones.

Call Open Session to Order: Mayor Jones called the meeting to order in Council Chambers and advised Council would go into Closed Session beginning at 5:00 PM. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act and upon a motion by Council Member Lawson and seconded by Council Member Mei with the following 5-0 recorded vote:

Council Member Rawls, aye;
Council Member Gravely, aye;
Council Member Mei, aye;
Mayor Jones, aye;
Vice Mayor Lawson, aye;

Council convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters:

- a. 2.2-3711. (A7) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. In regards to the PSA Litigation, Retirees Litigation, Show-Cause Litigation, Workplace Investigation, and in regards to discussion of MOU with Martinsville EDA and employment transition issues for EDA Executive Director position.



- b. 2.2-3711. A(8) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter. In regards to legal advice regarding Workplace Investigation and in regards to discussion of MOU with Martinsville EDA and employment transition issues for EDA Executive Director position.
- c. 2.2-3711. (A1) 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 Interim City Manager Contract and Salary.

5:00 PM, Closed Session -

Martinsville Municipal Building; Room 208

Council convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters:

- d. 2.2-3711. (A7) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. In regards to the PSA Litigation, Retirees Litigation, Show-Cause Litigation, Workplace Investigation, and in regards to discussion of MOU with Martinsville EDA and employment transition issues for EDA Executive Director position.
- e. 2.2-3711. A(8) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter. In regards to legal advice regarding Workplace Investigation and in regards to discussion of MOU with Martinsville EDA and employment transition issues for EDA Executive Director position.



- f. 2.2-3711. (A1) 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 Interim City Manager Contract and Salary.

6 PM, Return to Open Session and Certification of Closed Session -
Martinsville Municipal Building; Council Chambers

With a Motion by Lawson and Second by Mei, City Council certifies that only those matters permitted by the Code of Virginia Sec. 2.2-3711 and specifically referenced in the motion to enter closed session were discussed during the closed session. Approved with the following 5-0 vote:

Councilman Rawls, aye;
Councilman Gravely, aye;
Councilman Mei, aye;
Vice Mayor Lawson, aye;
Mayor Jones, aye.

Martinsville City Council certifies that only business matters under the following were discussed:

- g. 2.2-3711. (A7) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body. In regards to the PSA Litigation, Retirees Litigation, Show-Cause Litigation, Workplace Investigation, and in regards to discussion of MOU with Martinsville EDA and employment transition issues for EDA Executive Director position.



- h. 2.2-3711. A(8) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter. In regards to legal advice regarding Workplace Investigation and in regards to discussion of MOU with Martinsville EDA and employment transition issues for EDA Executive Director position.
- i. 2.2-3711. (A1) 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 Interim City Manager Contract and Salary.

6 PM Work Session

- 1. CDBG Planning Grant Presentation by the United Way
 - a. United Way Presentation by Craig McCroskey
 - i. Focus will be on Substance abuse disorders, homelessness, and a potential day center as a potential solution. Will coordinate amongst certain care providers.
 - ii. Plan to develop a sustainable implementation plan. Maximum Grant award amount is \$75k.
 - iii. Anticipated start date will be January 2026 due to procurement and award cycle.
 - iv. Would like to come back on September 16, 2025 for Community Input. City to advertise.
 - v. Motion to have Public Hearing and Discuss and Consider Approval on September 16, 2025 for United Way's CDPG Planning Grant Application.



7 PM Regular Session

Martinsville Municipal Building; Council Chambers

Council Members Present: Rawls, Gravely, Mei, Lawson, Jones.

1. Call to Order
 - a. Mayor Jones called the meeting to order beginning at 7PM.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation
 - a. Led by Minister, Dr. Hatfield
4. Action Taken Out of Closed Session
 - a. Motion from Councilman Rawls for City Council to release printed versions of investigatory report to Commonwealth Attorney's Office, Seconded by Councilman Mei.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 vote:
 - Councilman Rawls, aye;
 - Councilman Gravely, aye;
 - Councilman Mei, aye;
 - Vice Mayor Lawson, aye;
 - Mayor Jones, aye.
 - b. Motion from Councilman Rawls to authorize Sands Anderson to brief Interim City Manager on any employee related issues, Seconded by Councilman Mei.
 - i. Approved with the following 4-0-1 vote:
 - Councilman Rawls, aye;
 - Councilman Gravely, aye;
 - Councilman Mei, aye;
 - Vice Mayor Lawson, aye;
 - Mayor Jones, abstain.



- c. Motion from Councilman Rawls to release the full report of City Manager Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides to the public, Seconded by Councilman Mei.
 - i. Failed with the following 2-2-1 vote:
 - Councilman Rawls, aye;
 - Councilman Gravely, no;
 - Councilman Mei, aye;
 - Vice Mayor Lawson, no;
 - Mayor Jones, abstain.
 - d. Motion to increase Interim City Manager's Salary to \$150,000 to compensate for additional Duties and Authorize Sands Anderson to prepare a Contract with Interim City Manager, Robert Fincher, made by Vice Mayor Lawson and Second by Councilman Rawls.
 - i. Approved with the following 4-0-1 vote:
 - Councilman Rawls, aye;
 - Councilman Gravely, aye;
 - Councilman Mei, aye;
 - Vice Mayor Lawson, aye;
 - Mayor Jones, abstain.
5. Presentations and Proclamations
- a. Community Forest Revitalization Program Update – Green Infrastructure Center
 - i. Due to time, this item was moved to Regular Session. The Green Infrastructure Center, which has been working closely with the City of Martinsville's Tree Board gave an update regarding the current project. An overview of the program, strategic tree canopy plan, the City's existing Tree Canopy, the importance of Trees and their quality to the City, the work they have done thus far and the success of previous events.



- ii. City's Tree Canopy is about 55% of land cover.
Neighborhoods on the South end have more wooded areas and lower temperatures, whereas Northside has higher temperatures and more sparse surroundings. Martinsville's goal is to increase the tree canopy to 56% over the next ten years. Working to increase the overall tree coverage and lower the heat index in the City.
 - iii. Plan Objective:
 - Expand city capacity to Manage Martinsville's urban forest.
 - Plant Trees to increase tree canopy and reduce urban heat.
 - Increase public awareness.
 - Reduce invasive species presence in the City.
 - iv. One more event in October: Rooted In Martinsville, Virginia Museum of Natural History with more tree giveaways, educational content, publishing the Strategic Tree Canopy Plan.
- b. Report of Northside Community Meeting
- i. Chief Howell gave an update on the Northside Community Meeting in place of Interim City Manager, Chief Fincher.
- c. Presentation by Heritage Museum, New Exhibit
- i. New Annex opening from 3-8pm on September 6, 2025. Historical Society was founded in 1996 – the 13,000 square foot annex was built behind it beginning May 2023. The glass came from Press Glass and ActivWall built the frames and structures. Benefactor has provided funding to pay for school classes to have free admission to the museum for two years. Annex has presentation capabilities for future events and conferences.
- d. Community Development Departmental Update
- i. The Comprehensive Plan with Berkley Group is underway. Joint meetings



- ii. Fayette Street Revitalization Planning Grant presentation coming soon with an eventual Public Hearing.
- iii. Complete: Pine Hall is 99% complete, Fayette St. lofts are complete
- iv. Ongoing Projects: Firestone, Chipotle, Aaron Mills (85% complete), 1 Ellsworth
- v. Future Projects: VM Draper, Hooker Site, Bus Garage
- vi. Demolitions moving slower due to slower finance processing, several in the wings to begin.
- vii. Two vacancies: Code Compliance Inspectors with interviews occurring currently.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Discuss and Consider the Following Meeting Minutes: August 7, 2025; August 12, 2025;
 - i. Motion to approve made by Kathy Lawson and second by Julian Mei.
 - ii. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
 - Council Member Rawls, aye;
 - Council Member Mei, aye;
 - Mayor Jones, aye;
 - Vice Mayor Lawson, aye;
 - Council Member Gravely, aye.

7. Regular Agenda or New Business

- A. Hold a Pubic Hearing and Subsequently Discuss and Consider 2nd Reading of Budget Appropriations for Debt Service, School Capital Projects, and Streets Funds
 - a. Motion to open public hearing to discuss second reading of Budget Appropriations made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Councilman Mei.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye



- b. Motion to close public hearing to discuss second reading of Budget Appropriations made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Councilman Gravely.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye
 - c. Motion to approve Budget Appropriations as amended on second reading made by Vice Mayor Lawson and seconded by Councilman Gravely.
 - i. Approved with the following 4-1 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, no; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye
- B. Discuss and Consider Appointment to Board of Appeals
- a. Motion to appoint Derrick Ziglar and Gene Clark for terms ending on 12/31/2030 made by Kathy Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye
- C. Discuss and Consider Appointment to Southern Area on Aging Board of Directors
- a. Motion to appoint Toni Geter-Wade for terms ending on 12/31/2028 made by Kathy Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye



- D. Discuss and Consider Approval of Request to Apply for Grant Match Funding for Lifepak 35 Cardiac Monitors that will require Match Funding
 - a. Motion to Approve Request to Apply for Grant Match Funding made by Councilman Mei and Second by Vice Mayor Lawson.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye
- E. Discuss and Consider Adopting Reimbursement Resolution for Electric Fund Financing
 - a. Motion to adopt resolution as presented made by Vice Mayor Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye.
- F. Discuss and Consider a Resolution of the Martinsville City Council approving the City's participation in the proposed settlements of opioid-related claims against Alvogen, Amneal, Apotex, Hikma, Indivior, Mylan, Sun, and Zydus and their related corporate entities, and directing the City Attorney and/or the City's outside counsel to execute the documents necessary to effectuate the City's participation in the settlements.



- a. Motion to adopt resolution as presented made by Councilman Mei Second by Councilman Gravely.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye.

G. Discuss and Consider a Resolution of the Martinsville City Council approving the City's participation in the proposed direct settlement of opioid-related claims against the Sackler family, and directing the City Attorney and/or the City's outside counsel to execute the documents necessary to effectuate the City's participation in the settlement.

- a. Motion to adopt resolution as presented made by Councilman Rawls and Second by Vice Mayor Lawson.
 - i. Approved with the following 5-0 recorded vote:
Council Member Rawls, aye; Council Member Mei, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye.

City Hall Reporting and Announcements

H. Financial Report

- a. In the middle of Audit adjustments, sales tax number is solid, about \$113,000 short. Revenues in the General Fund are showing 98%, with three items having notations. Sales taxes are down about \$113,000, meals tax is down about \$90,000. School Zone Cameras are increasing revenues. Ambulance fees are up \$240,000, money from FY24 coming in for FY25 accounting for the increase.

Business From the Floor

- a. Patti Covington
- b. Joanne Linscott
- c. Leroy "Tooly" Hariston

Adjournment

- a. Mayor Jones made the motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM.



 9-23-25
LC Jones, Mayor

Attest:

Deputy Clerk of Council, City of Martinsville