



January 13, 2026
Martinsville City Council
Meeting Minutes

Call Open Session to Order – 5PM Council Chambers

- A. Discuss and Consider Motion to go into Closed Session.
 - a. 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 Mei with the following 3-0-2 recorded vote, with 2 members absent at the time of the vote: Council Member Mei, aye; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye. Council convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters:
 - i. 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 regard to the City Boards and Commissions.

Closed Session City Council Meeting

Room 226, Municipal Building

A Closed meeting of the City of Martinsville, Virginia's Council, was held on January 13, 2026 at 5:00 PM in Conference Room 226, Martinsville Municipal Building, Martinsville, VA. Council Members participating included Mayor, LC Jones; Vice Mayor, Kathy Lawson; Julian Mei, Rayshaun Gravely, and Aaron Rawls. Staff present included Interim City Manager, Rob Fincher, and Deputy City Clerk, Peyton Nibblett. Council Member Rawls was virtual for business matters, and duly provided notification per the Rules of Council.



In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act and upon a motion by Council Member Gravely and seconded by Vice Mayor Lawson with the following 4-0 recorded vote: Council Member Mei, aye; Council Member Rawls, no; Vice Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Gravely, aye.

Council convened in Closed Session 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 regard to the City Boards and Commissions.

Return to Open Session and Certification of Closed Session - 6pm, Council Chambers

With a Motion by Lawson and Second by Rawls, 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

Work Session - 6pm, Council Chambers; Municipal Building

Briefings and Presentations

a. Discuss Options for Animal Shelter

- Chief Rhoads and Officer Nicki Mabe briefed City Council and the public in attendance on potential options for a City Animal Shelter after the original animal shelter was destroyed on December 23, 2025 due to a failing heating unit. Short term and medium-term solutions were discussed and thought through. Citizens have sent in copious amounts of donations, both material and financial.



- Long-term solution of building an Animal Shelter. The second option of building a second shelter was approximately \$2 Million for a new shelter. The third option that was proposed was to build a regional animal shelter spanning several Southwest Virginia regions, but the logistics were not feasible.
- 500 boxes of Animal Shelter resources have been donated to the department. Exceeded \$20,000 in monetary donations have been received thus far.
- Early Summer of 2025, Henry County approached the City to begin the process toward a joint shelter between the City of Martinsville and Henry County. The project was briefly suspended in July before resuming. City Departments have been working closely with the Design Consultants for the joint shelter. The joint shelter will have several amenities and facilities for animals taken in and would be an upgrade for both the City and the County Animal Shelters.
- The total budgetary cost is about \$5.9M. The City's share would be approximately \$2M. However, there has been significant progress in this regard with Senator Stanley working toward funding a significant amount of the cost for both the County and the City. This will also contribute toward staffing for Shelter Manager and Adoption Manager. Plans for the new shelter to be on Dupont Rd. The County intends to begin work within the next fiscal year, so the work will begin later this year.
- This new shelter will allow for the City to take in far more cats, which has been an issue in the past. Includes significant spaces for dog roaming, fenced in spaces, cat patio, and several runs.

2. Discuss Consent Agenda Items

- A. December 16, 2025 Minutes were reviewed.



Regular Session - 7pm, Council Chambers

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order beginning at 7pm. Council members present: Mayor Jones, Vice Mayor Lawson, Julian Mei, Rayshaun Gravely, Aaron Rawls.

- Call to Order
 - Mayor Jones called the meeting to order beginning at 7PM.
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Invocation
 - Led by Pastor Clint Connor of Hope Church
- Action Taken Out of Closed Session
 - Motion to Appoint the following Citizens to Boards and Commissions made by Councilman Mei with a second from Kathy Lawson
 - Karen Garrent to Anchor Group Home Commission for a term ending 12/31/29
 - Andrew Quirk to Architectural Review Board for a term ending 12/31/29
 - Andrew Quirk to Board of Zoning Appeals for a term ending 12/31/30
 - Jennifer Beeler Gravely to Arts and Cultural Committee for a term ending 12/31/28
 - Lara Blair Denner to Arts and Cultural Committee for a term ending 12/31/28
 - Tara Williams to Piedmont Regional Community Services Board for a term ending 12/31/28
 - Michael Law to Transportation Safety Commission for a term ending 12/31/28
 - Ryan Bowman to Tree Board for a term ending 12/31/28
 - Julie Nguyen, Jaden Porter, Zaina Talley, Sherman Chase Dillard, Abbi Campbell, Veronica Smith and Aniyah Miller to the Youth Advisory Committee for a term ending 12/31/26



- Appointments were Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - i. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - ii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - iii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - iv. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - v. Mayor Jones; aye
- Presentations and Proclamations
 - Proclamation Honoring Jonathan Cox as Officer of the Year 2025
 - Proclamation Honoring the Life of Martinsville High School Coach, Charlie Holland
 - Presentation of Animal Shelter Community Honor Statement
 - Tree Board Presentation
 - Given by the City of Martinsville Tree Board Chairman, Dean Cook. A review of the tree board's 2025 progress and accomplishments. Tree Giveaways, Tree Planting and Community Engagement Events. Worked with the Green Infrastructure Center for the Tree Canopy Plan and the creation of Tree Ordinances and Regulations.
 - Goals of the Board are to increase the citywide tree canopy by 1%. The Board's Strategic Goals include expanding the Urban Tree Canopy, Educating and Empowering Residents, Promoting Environmental Awareness, and Encourage the use of native species. Supports the City creating the position of a City Arborist.
- Consent Agenda
 - Discuss and Consider December 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes
 - Motion made by Vice Mayor Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei.
Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - Mayor Jones; aye



- Regular Agenda or New Business
 - Discuss and Consider Tree Board's Request for Social Media
 - Motion made by Vice Mayor Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - i. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - ii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - iii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - iv. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - v. Mayor Jones; aye
 - Discuss and Consider an Ordinance Repealing Section 2.4 of the City Code on Second Reading
 - Motion to Approve on Second Reading made by Councilman Mei and Second by Vice Mayor Lawson.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - vi. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - vii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - viii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - ix. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - x. Mayor Jones; aye
 - Discuss and Consider E-911 Appropriation Ordinance on Second Reading
 - Motion to Approve on Second Reading made by Councilman Mei and Second by Vice Mayor Lawson.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - xi. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - xii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - xiii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - xiv. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - xv. Mayor Jones; aye



- Discuss and Consider First Piedmont Refuse Fees on Second Reading
 - Motion to Approve on Second Reading made by Vice Mayor Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - xvi. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - xvii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - xviii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - xix. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - xx. Mayor Jones; aye
- Hold a Public Hearing for and Discuss and Consider Appropriations on First Reading
 - Motion to Open Public Hearing made by Councilman Mei and Second by Vice Mayor Lawson.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - xxi. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - xxii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - xxiii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - xxiv. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - xxv. Mayor Jones; aye
 - Motion to Close Public Hearing made by Vice Mayor Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - xxvi. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - xxvii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - xxviii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - xxix. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - xxx. Mayor Jones; aye



- Motion to Approve on First Reading made by Vice Mayor Lawson and Second by Councilman Mei..
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - xxxi. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - xxxii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - xxxiii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - xxxiv. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - xxxv. Mayor Jones; aye
- Hold a Public Hearing for Request for Right of Way Abandonment and Approve Ordinance on First Reading
 - Tabled with a Motion by Councilman Mei and Second Vice Mayor Lawson to the next Council Meeting.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - xxxvi. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - xxxvii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - xxxviii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - xxxix. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - xl. Mayor Jones; aye
- Discuss and Consider Authorizing the Interim City Manager to Issue and Execute Request for Proposals (RFP) for a Certified Public Accounting Firm to Review and Provide Guidance on the City's Financial and Procurement Policies, Practices, and Internal Safeguards.
 - Motion by Councilman Mei and Second by Vice Mayor Lawson. Approved with the following 5-0 vote
 - i. Councilman Rawls; aye
 - ii. Councilman Gravely; aye
 - iii. Councilman Mei; aye
 - iv. Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - v. Mayor Jones; aye



Adjournment

A. Motion to adjourn made by Vice Mayor Lawson at 8pm.

LC Jones, Mayor

Attest:

Deputy Clerk of Council, City of Martinsville