



March 10, 2026
Martinsville City Council
Meeting Minutes

Vice Mayor Lawson called the meeting to order beginning at 5:30pm. Councilmembers present: Vice Mayor Lawson, Julian Mei, Aaron Rawls, and Acting Councilmember Gene Teague. Councilman Gravely was absent for this portion of the meeting.

Call Open Session to Order - 5:30pm, Council Chambers; Municipal Building

- a. Discuss and Consider Motion to go into Closed Session. Motion made by Councilman Mei and Second by Councilman Rawls.
- Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; aye
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; absent

Closed Session 5:30pm, Rm 226; Municipal Building

- 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. With Regard to Facility Show Cause Order.
- b. 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; and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education where such evaluation will necessarily involve discussion of the performance of specific individuals. With regard to the City Manager position.



All Councilmembers were in attendance. Staff in attendance: Robert Fincher, Lee Byrd (Sands Anderson), Tracy Gallehr (Sands Anderson), Aaron Chuup (Moseley Architect) , Greg Maggard, and Peyton Nibblett. Peyton Nibblett and Greg Maggard exited for Item B; conversation about City Manager Position.

Return to Open Session and Certification of Closed Session - 6:30 pm, Council Chambers

With a Motion by Councilman Rawls and Second by Councilman Mei 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 4-0 vote

- Councilman Mei; aye
- Councilman Teague; aye
- Councilman Rawls; aye
- Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
- Councilman Gravely; absent

Work Session - 6:30pm, Council Chambers; Municipal Building

1. Briefings and Presentations

A. Work Session with the Planning Commission was Cancelled.

B. Police Department Annual Review

- 2.6% increase in crime in 2025. Property crimes increased from 184 instances to 190 instances driven by shoplifting. Violent crimes increased from 200 instances to 204 instances driven by aggravated assaults.
- Chief Rob Fincher left the Police Department mid-year to assume the duties of Interim City Manager. Otherwise staffing did not falter in 2025. In the first few months of 2026; however, a few officers have resigned in order to pursue careers outside of law enforcement.
- Traffic: Officers issued 2,701 traffic summons last year. Traffic accidents increased, from 279 to 283.
- Community involvement” The police department participated in numerous community outreach activities, including the autism awareness fundraiser, Santa Cops (shopped with 150 children and bought gift cards for 135) and Kids and a Fishing Rodeo with the Elks Lodge.
- Finance and Grants: The Police Department applied for and was rewarded numerous grants from DMV, HEAT, DCJS, and the Office of the Attorney General.
- Challenges: Reduction in Training Budget, Leadership uncertainty, animal shelter fire. Need for a City Attorney.



- Accomplishments: Peer Support Team, more than \$100,000 in grants. Increase in overall education for Officers (several Officers are pursuing College Degrees in their personal lives), and 31, 731 Calls For Service with only 15 uses of force (Use of Force once every 2,115 Calls)
 - Use of Force: Anytime an officer takes an offending party to the ground.

Vice Mayor Kathy Lawson made the motion to recess at 6:52 PM.

Regular Session - 7pm, Council Chambers

Attendance: All City Council Members present. Councilman Gravely participated virtually, with approval from the Presiding Officer, due to a sick family member.

- Call to Order
 - Vice Mayor Lawson called the meeting to order beginning at 7PM.
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Invocation
 - Led by Elder Earnest Long
- Take Any Action Necessary as A Result of the Executive Session
 - Motion to Appoint Robert Fincher as City Manager of the City of Martinsville authorize Vice Mayor to execute the employment agreement made by Councilman Mei and second by Councilman Rawls.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; aye
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye



- Presentations and Proclamations
 - Proclamation Honoring Women's History Month
 - Presented to City of Martinsville Senior/Executive Leadership
- Consent Agenda
 - Discuss and Consider February 17, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes
 - Motion to Approve February 17, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes by Councilman Mei and Second by Councilman Rawls.
 - Approved with the following 4-0-1 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; abstain
 - Reason for abstention; Mr. Teague was not on Council during this meeting.
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - Discuss and Consider February 24, 2026 City Council Meeting Minutes
 - Motion to Approve February 24, 2026 Meeting Minutes by Councilman Rawls and Second by Councilman Teague.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; aye
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
- Regular Agenda or New Business
 - Discuss and Consider Approval of Ordinance No. 2026-2 on Second Reading for Right of Way Abandonment
 - Motion to Approve on Second Reading by Councilman Rawls and Second by Councilman Teague
 - Approved with the following 4-1 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; abstain. Conflict of Interest cited.
 - Councilman Teague; aye



- Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
- Discuss and Consider Appropriations Ordinance 2026-3 on Second Reading
 - Motion to Approve on Second Reading by Councilman Mei and Second by Councilman Rawls.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; aye
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawsosn; aye
 - Discuss and Consider Ordinance 2026-4 Codifying Previously Approved Amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance on Second Reading
 - Motion to Approve on Second Reading by Councilman Mei and Second by Councilman Rawls.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; aye
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - Hold a Public Hearing and Subsequently Discuss and Consider Appropriations Ordinance 2026-5 (Opioid Abatement Funds) on First Reading.

Public Hearing was Duly Opened.

Speakers were Kimberly Parker and Mary Rives Brown. Both spoke on the need for more information on the funds and how they are used. Katharyn Alexander, spoke on the overseeing of funds and



how can the City monitor the overall spending. Jennifer Bowels spoke on the possibility of voting on the issue on first reading, in in order to keep the process flowing, and at the next meeting vote no on second reading.

Councilman Teague made the suggestion to have a public presentation on the Opioid Abatement Authority Funds the next time these funds come to Council. Councilman Rawls asked for more information on the organizations receiving the funds.

Public Hearing was Duly Opened and Closed.

- Motion to Table until next Meeting made by Councilman Rawls, motion died due to lack of a second.
- Motion to Approve on First Reading with the understanding that the City of Martinsville wrote the grant, the City Council approved for the City to apply for the Grant, and the information supporting the aforementioned comments is supplied to Council before the next Council meeting, before a final decision is rendered at said meeting, by Councilman Teague and Second by Vice Mayor.
- Approved with the following 4-1 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; aye
 - Councilman Rawls; no
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye



- Discuss and Consider conveying Housing Authority property located at 104 and 106 Sycamore Street to West Piedmont Planning District Commission
 - Motion to Recess as Council and Convene as Martinsville Redevelopment and Housing Authority made by Councilman Mei and Second by Councilman Rawls.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote.
 - Councilman Mei; aye
 - Councilman Teague; aye
 - Councilman Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye
 - Motion to Approve Conveyance made by Commissioner Rawls and Second by Commissioner Teague.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote.
 - Commissioner Mei; aye
 - Commissioner Teague; aye
 - Commissioner Rawls; aye
 - Commissioner Gravely; aye
 - Commissioner Lawson; aye
 - Motion to Recess as Martinsville Redevelopment and Housing Authority and Reconvene as Council made by Commissioner Mei and Second by Commissioner Teague.
 - Approved with the following 5-0 vote.
 - Commissioner Mei; aye
 - Commissioner Teague; aye
 - Commissioner Rawls; aye
 - Councilman Gravely; aye
 - Vice Mayor Lawson; aye



Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn made by Councilman Rawls and Seconded by Councilman Teague at 8:15pm.


Kathy Lawson, Vice Mayor

Attest:

Deputy Clerk of Council, City of Martinsville