

August 9, 2022 Council Meeting

The regular meeting of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia was held on August 9, 2022 in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 7:00 PM with Mayor Kathy Lawson presiding. Other Council Members present included Danny Turner, Chad Martin, Jennifer Bowles and Tammy Pearson. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Assistant City Manager/City Attorney Eric Monday, Clerk of Council Karen Roberts, Public Information Officer Kendall Davis, Community Development Manager Mark McCaskill, Deputy Police Chief Rob Fincher, and Police Chief Eddie Cassady.

Mayor Lawson called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Council Member Pearson lead the pledge to the flag and invocation.

Hear an update from Chris Metz on his recent trip to Ukraine – Local resident Chris Metz recently traveled to Ukraine to assist with the rescue of 120 refugees. Metz received financial donations at a previous Council meeting and wanted to update residents on his trips to Ukraine. Metz shared details about Ukraine as a country and the events that have happened over the past few months. Metz shared a PowerPoint & photos detailing his experience during the rescue project. Metz thanked everyone in the community, local churches and his family for their support during this project. Council Members thanked Metz for his heroic actions.

Conduct a public hearing on the Martinsville Historic District 2022 Update – Community Development Director Mark McCaskill introduced Michael Pulice, Western Region Preservation Office Architectural Historian and Kayla Halberg of the Conservation Preservation Group. Pulice explained that the public hearing is necessary so the Martinsville Historic District boundary increase can be presented to a quarterly state review board meeting in Stanton on September 15 to approve the nomination. The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register properties have significance to the history of the community, state, and the nation. The National Register does not bring restrictions to property owners; that can only happen on a local level. Halberg shared a presentation including the requirements, the impact of National Register listings, a map of Martinsville historic districts and changes made with this project, the application process, and her contact information for anyone with questions. Pulice said the boundaries are drawn by the guidelines set by the National Park Service. The purpose is to provide for financial grants and tax credits. Council Member Pearson asked City Manager Towarnicki if he would provide local zoning ordinances as overlays for Council's better understanding. Pulice explained that what he refers to is on a state and federal level and has no control over local restrictions. Monday shared that local overlays do not have to match state or federal overlays and has no authority over the City Architectural Review Board. Pulice explained the process and the timeframe of actions after the public hearing is completed. Mayor Lawson opened the floor for public hearing. Clarence Holland, 711 Mulberry Road shared his desire to help Martinsville residence especially those on Westside. Vice Mayor Bowles recommended Holland contact the City Manager's office since his topic was

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unrelated to the public hearing. Giles Smith, 10 East Market Street stated that his company owns property listed in the historic district. He received a letter previously about this historic expansion, he fully understands that there are no restrictions on the property. His concern is at some point that this will be adopted at a local level overlay. Monday confirmed that there has not been any discussion on expanding the local overlay and that Council has always had the authority to override the Architectural Review Board. Lawson closed the public hearing on the historic district presentation and stated that there is no action needed at the meeting tonight. Bowles said there was an organization that had applied for a grant in partnership with the City, this will be an added addition to help with those properties.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Historic Resources (DHR), 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Key Points about the National and State Register Process for Property Owners

- Listing in the national and state registers is honorary. It recognizes a historic property's importance to its community, the State, and/or the Nation as well as encouraging good stewardship of the historic property.
- National and state register listings do not place restrictions on private property owners. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them, or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.
- Under Federal and State laws, private property owners can do anything they wish with their National Register-listed property, provided that no Federal or State license, permit, or funding is involved.
- If a listed property is destroyed or its integrity is greatly altered, it is removed from the registers.
- To ensure public participation in the nomination process, property owners and local officials are notified of proposed nominations to the National Register and provided the opportunity to comment. Further details provided below. In addition, once a nomination is submitted to the National Park Service another public comment period is published in the *Federal Register*.
- Federal agencies whose projects affect a listed property must give the DHR (Virginia's State Historic Preservation Officer) an opportunity to comment on the project and its effects on the property. Further details provided below.
- Federal and State Investment Tax Credits for rehabilitation and other provisions are available, should a property owner choose to use them. Further details provided below.
- Owners may also qualify for Federal grants for historic preservation when funding is available. Refer to the National Park Service web site for Federal grant information. Currently, Virginia has no grants available for privately owned properties.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

Established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, the national historic preservation program is a partnership between the Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments; private organizations; and the public. The Act and its provisions establish the framework within which citizens plan, identify, evaluate, register, and protect significant historic and archeological properties throughout the country. Central to this framework is the NRHP—the Nation's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation, administered by the National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior. Properties listed in the NRHP include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

Historic places are nominated to the NRHP by nominating authorities: the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), appointed by the Governor of the State in which the property is located; the Federal Preservation Officer (FPO) for properties under Federal ownership or control; or by the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) if the property is on tribal lands. Anyone can prepare a nomination to the NRHP, at which time the SHPO, FPO or THPO reviews the proposed nomination, and notifies property owners and local officials of the intent to nominate. Nominations submitted through the State must first be approved by a State Review Board (SRB) before being reviewed by the NPS. The members of the SRB, who are appointed by the SHPO, use the same criteria as the National Register to evaluate properties and then recommend them to the NPS for listing in the NRHP.

The NRHP continues to reflect the desire of Americans, as expressed in the NHPA, that "the historical and cultural foundation of the nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people."

Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR)

Also in 1966, the Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, now the Department of Historic Resources (DHR). DHR is the State Historic Preservation Office responsible for managing the VLR, the state's official list of properties important to Virginia's history. The Historic Resources Board (HRB), appointed by the Governor of Virginia, is responsible for listing properties to the VLR. Just as the same evaluation criteria are used for the National and State registers, the same register form is also used for both the VLR and the NRHP. Nearly 2300 historic properties are listed in the VLR. This number does not include the tens of thousands of properties within each listed historic district.

Web sites with further information

www.cr.nps.gov/	(National Park Service main web page)
www.cr.nps.gov/NR/	(National Register of Historic Places main web page)
www.cr.nps.gov/laa/inhpa1966.htm	(National Historic Preservation Act of 1966)
www.dhr.virginia.gov	(Department of Historic Resources main web page)
www.cr.nps.gov/hps/	(Heritage Preservation Services)

Federal and State Tax Provisions

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 revises the historic preservation tax incentives authorized by Congress in the Tax Reform Act of 1976, the Revenue Act of 1978, the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980, the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, and the Tax Reform Act of 1984, and, as of January 1, 1987, provides for a 20% Investment Tax Credit (ITC) with a full adjustment to basis for rehabilitating historic commercial, industrial and rental residential buildings. The former 15% and 20% ITCs for rehabilitations of older commercial buildings are combined into a single 10% ITC for commercial or industrial buildings built before 1936. The Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980 provides Federal tax deductions for charitable contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures. Whether these provisions are advantageous to a property owner is dependent upon the particular circumstances of the property and the owner.

Owners of properties listed in the VLR may be eligible for a 25% ITC for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing and non-income producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental or non-rental residential buildings. Owners who rehabilitate an income-producing building listed in both the National and State registers may use both Federal and State ITCs.

Tax Credits are only available if a property owner chooses to use them and individuals should consult the appropriate local IRS office for assistance in determining the tax consequences of the above provisions. Refer also to 36 CFR 67 at the Heritage Preservation Services web site or to the Tax Credit Program on the DHR web site.

Results of Federal and State Listing

Historic District sponsoring organizations or local governments and owners of individually listed properties may purchase an attractive official plaque noting designation. Owners of recognized historic properties are also eligible for the Virginia Preservation Easement Program, as well as technical assistance from the staff of DHR. Professional architects, architectural historians, and archaeologists are available to provide technical guidance in the care and maintenance of buildings and sites.

Listing in the NRHP requires consideration in planning for Federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects. Section 106 of the NHPA, requires that Federal agencies allow the SHPO an opportunity to comment on all projects affecting historic properties either listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation oversees and ensures the consideration of historic properties in the Federal planning process. (Refer to 36 CFR 800 at the Heritage Preservation Services web site.) Buildings listed on the VLR may also be considered as part of a state-funded project, such as highway planning.

Listing also requires consideration in issuing a surface coal mining permit. In accordance with the Surface Mining and Control Act of 1977, there must be consideration of historic values in the decision to issue a surface coal mining permit where coal is located. (Refer to 30 CFR 700 at the Heritage Preservation Services web site.)

Localities may have laws to encourage the preservation of their historic places. Some local governments have enacted their own identification procedures; some use listing in the National and State registers as an indicator of historic significance. State and local historic preservation programs often provide some protection against the possible harmful effects of State-funded, -licensed, or -assisted projects. Some provide limited financial assistance to owners in the form of grants, loans, or tax benefits. They may establish other protections or reviews for preservation purposes. The SHPO or local planning departments can provide more information.

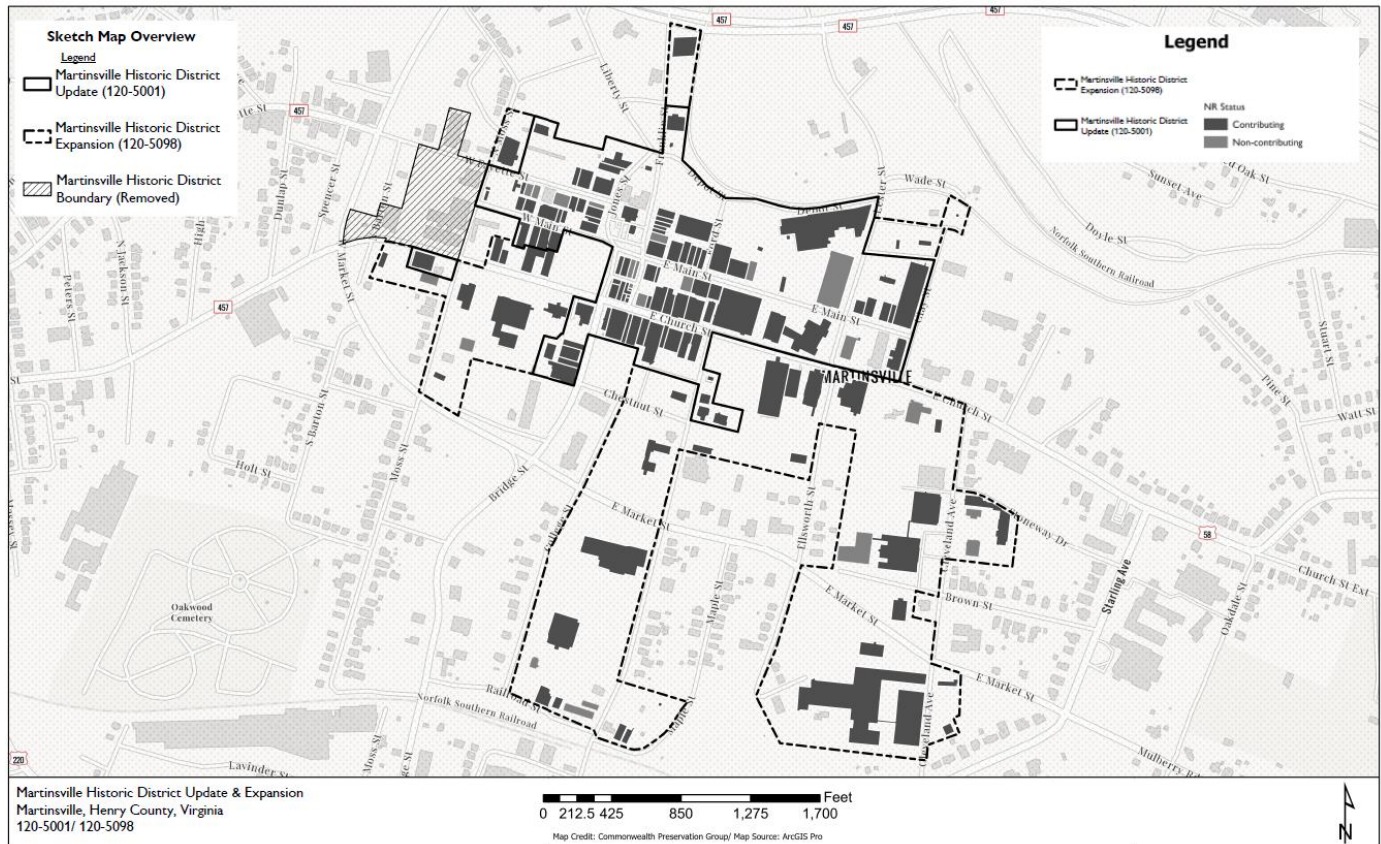
Rights of Owners to Comment and/or Object to Listing

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, owners of private properties nominated to the National Register have an opportunity to concur with or object to listing. The same rule applies to the Virginia Landmarks Register listing as supported by the Code of Virginia.

Any owner or partial owner of private property who chooses to object to listing may submit to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) a notarized statement certifying that the party is the sole or partial owner of the private property and objects to the listing. Each owner of private property in a district is counted as one individual regardless of how many properties that party owns, and regardless of whether the properties contribute to the significance of the district. If a majority of private property owners within a proposed historic district object, then the historic district will not go forward for official listing. However, the SHPO shall submit the nomination to the NPS Keeper for a determination of eligibility of the property for listing in the NRHP. If the property is then determined eligible for listing, although not formally listed, Federal agencies will be required to allow for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to have an opportunity to comment before the agency may fund, license, or assist a project which will affect the property.

Any comments or objections should be sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer at the Department of Historic Resources, 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221 prior to the scheduled Board meeting listed in the notification letter. Notices of objection must be notarized prior to submission to the SHPO.

Letters of support or objection will be copied to the HRB and SRB members for review along with the nomination to which they refer. These letters will also be forwarded to the NPS upon their review of the nomination.



Hear an update from Sovah Health regarding operations at the Martinsville hospital facility

– Cancelled for the night and moved to a later meeting.

Hear an update from Martinsville-Henry County 911 Center Director Tierra Dillard on the 988 system - MHC 911 Center Director Tierra Dillard updated Council on the 988 emergency/crisis call system that will connect callers with the district suicide prevention center. 988 is currently not active in our area but will have three response levels depending on the severity of the call. The 911 center can currently transfer calls to 988 but it's not an efficient action. Both the City and County have links on their websites where requests for mental health situations can be noted in the 911 system. Piedmont Community Service is the local head of the 988 alert and will be working closely with the 911 center. The official implementation of 988 should take effect within 12 months. Vice Mayor Bowles expressed concern if Martinsville will have the local resources available to support this program and the callers.

Hear information from United Way of Henry County and Martinsville about a proposed housing eviction prevention program and a request for City funding – Local United Way Executive Director Phil Wenkstern presented information on the Needs Assessment for Eviction Prevention in Martinsville and Henry County. Wenkstern shared details of the program addressing the eviction concerns and statistics. This program will only be successful if they can work with both the tenant and the landlord. United Way will not disburse funds to a tenant if the landlord is not cooperative. There has been some apprehension from landlords and tenants. United Way wants this to be a long-term solution for both. This program is for residents with extenuating circumstances and not for tenants who just refuse to pay rent. Council Member

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Pearson is impressed with the program plan and she did some research of her own in comparison to United Way recommendations, with the most successful programs that do this in a more holistic manner. Vice Mayor Bowles asked if the County does not contribute, would the funds be applied only to Martinsville residents. Wenkstern is asking for \$60,000/year for 2 years and Council can set their own requirements for the use of those funds. Funding would stay with the housing stability coordinator and not for additional staffing. The information has been submitted to Henry County but they have not gotten word back from them. The eviction rate in the City is 70% vs 40% in Henry County. Bowles prefers to focus on City residents, tenants, and landlord or city tenants with outside landlords if the county does not contribute. Bowles feels the City needs this program 100%. Council Member Martin says there is a misconception that people just don't want to pay but so many are underemployed and do not make enough money to pay the bills. City Manager Towarnicki confirmed that Council had earmarked \$500,000 in ARPA funds already for housing needs, stating Council can apply any conditions. Wenkstern pointed out the more restrictions that are applied to the funds, the more staffing will be needed for the program. Mayor Lawson and Vice Mayor Bowles want to focus on city residents in need more than the location of the landlord. Lawson would like Council to make the approval for \$60,000 over 2 years with priority of City tenants in need. Council Member Martin made the motion to approve the request for \$60,000 funding; Council Member Pearson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

VERP 2.0 Program Design Template

Program Purpose and Objectives

[Provide a general description outlining the broad objectives of the VERP program as funded.]

At the core of our program is hiring a Housing Stability Coordinator to lead the program and interface with the Advisory Committee, Virginia Legal Aid Society (VLAS), and other community service organizations. The Housing Stability Coordinator (HSC) will employ case management to ensure the root causes of housing instability are understood and addressed through services offered under this program and with other community organizations. Our approach and related objectives are:

- Obtain proactive referrals to individuals/families in need of services in order to prevent eviction notices and legal action
- Work directly with landlords and landlord associations to make them aware of available resources and to identify potential families to assist proactively
- Intertwine the Housing Stability Coordinator with VLAS staff to ensure optimum coordination of efforts to yield best outcomes and prevent legal action where possible
- Partner with local organizations with expertise to improve housing stability
- Provide services tailored to the person's need and root cause for facing eviction
- Focus on longer-term financial stability by providing financial education as an outcome of receiving assistance
- Use shared database to connect resources and people (MHC Assistance Network)
- Utilize Advisory Committee experience and expertise to address root causes of homelessness and eviction events and build a more responsive system

Local VERP Advisory Committee

[Provide description, purpose, and function of VERP Advisory Committee.]

The VERP Advisory Committee will incorporate representatives from a broad range of supporting partners. The purpose of this group is to ensure we utilize a comprehensive strategy for eviction reduction is implemented through this grant and built in a sustainable manner. The Advisory Committee will launch immediately, developing required policies and procedures and an actionable outreach plan. It will meet monthly during the grant period and aim to continue to function productively after the grant funding ends.

Communication and Outreach Activities and Timeline

Please describe the communication and outreach activities that the VERP Advisory Committee will take part in or provide advice and support. The VERP grantee should proactively seek out households at risk of eviction.

1. Convene monthly to support VERP activities in the community
2. Assist in the evaluation and adjustment of outreach plan and activities based on experience, results and expertise
3. Work to integrate VERP services within existing programs that target similar populations

4. Emphasize efforts to engage historically marginalized segments of the community

Coordination Activities and Timeline

Please describe the coordination activities and timeline that the VERP Advisory Committee will take part in or provide advice and support. Coordination efforts with service providers and stakeholders should ensure tenants and landlords have accessible and timely entry points for assistance.

1. Register the program in MHC Assistance Network and advertise the availability of services by March 15, 2022
2. Attend (Advisory representative) the annual STEP, Inc. HUD Continuum of Care Conference and publicize the VERP program on March 15, 2022
3. Setup clear procedures for referral points to and from the VA Legal Aid Society by March 30, 2022
4. Develop procedures for integrating local transportation services into the program by April 30, 2022
5. Develop procedures for enrolling clients into appropriate training and development activities with Workforce Development Board by May 30, 2022.
6. Develop a process allowing Advisory Committee to evaluate participants' ability to access services and implementing changes to improve access by June 30, 2022.

Initiatives and Partnerships Promoting Systems Change

Please describe initiatives and/or partnerships that the VERP Advisory Committee will take part in or provide advice and support. This work should be aimed at the root causes of eviction prevalence and working towards building an environment where rent-burdened tenants can easily maintain housing.

1. Define action plan for where Bridges Out of Poverty Housing Subgroup can focus education and community impact activities by April 30, 2022
2. Integrate United Way Financial Stability programs into Housing Stability Coordinator case management practices for those applying for or receiving assistance by April 30, 2022
3. Advise the Integrated Resource Management Team on workforce readiness gaps that can be addressed through monthly meetings during the grant period.
4. Develop integration with HUD Continuum of Care coordination agencies to ensure single stream process is included in VERP and RRP applicant processes by June 30, 2022
5. Ensure the VERP program is addressing needs of groups historically at risk of eviction and housing instability including black Americans and people with disabilities and ensure partner service providers are addressing the needs as well by June 30, 2022

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Representatives of Key Stakeholders	Names and Organizations
Local <u>CoC</u>	Felecia Watkins, STEP Inc. Shawan Barr, West Piedmont Better Housing Coalition
Workforce Development	Tyler Freeland, West Piedmont Workforce Development Board
Local DSS	Amy Rice, Martinsville-Henry DSS
Legal Aid	Rebecca Brown, Attorney, VLAS along with Paralegal and Housing Navigator (to be hired)
District Court	Hon. James McGarry
Public Housing Authority	Amy Bart, Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority (under contract to HC-M)
Landlords (can include realtors and apartment management association)	Landlords Association: Doug Little Rives S. Brown: Gina Ashbrook
Housing Counseling Agency or Program	VLAS, Housing Navigator
Conflict Resolution (Alternate Dispute Resolution)	VLAS
People with Lived Experience of Eviction or Housing Insecurity	Christina Collier, Individual
Organizations Representing People of Color	Matthew Brown, Ministerial Alliance
Tenant advocacy group (if present in community)	
Centers for Independent Living	

VERP Grantee Staff

Name	Title	Role in VERP (Please note if primary contact)	Contact Information (email and phone number)
Charisse Hairston	Housing Stability Coordinator	Primary contact, case manager, group convener	tonya@unitedwayofhcm.org
Philip Wenkstern	Exec. Director, UW of HCM	Program Supervision	philip@unitedwayofhcm.org
Rebecca Brown	Housing Attorney, VLAS	Lead legal work, mediation and supervise staff	rebeccab@vlas.org
Not Hired Yet	Paralegal		
	Housing Navigator		

Financial Assistance and Stabilization Support Services

Intake Form – we will use the DHCD intake form.

Eligibility Form – we will use the DHCD eligibility form.

We will develop the program with the understanding that the Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP) should be the first resource considered for rent assistance and arrears or any other cost included in lease agreement before using VERP funding as long as funding is available. Applicants can receive both RRP and VERP funding simultaneously.

Income Documentation Required from Applicant

Please select the income documentation requirement(s) that is allowable in your program.

- Proof of income (pay stubs, bank statements, letter from employer, social security documents, pension)
- Categorical eligibility - applicants that receive assistance from income eligible programs (including but not limited to WIC, TANF, SNAP, LIHEAP, free/reduced school lunch, Medicare/Medicaid, housing voucher). Documentation that shows that they're enrolled in these programs (i.e., benefit letter or picture of SNAP card)

- Zero income self attestation
- Cash income certification
- Other

Will be flexible on the above depending on client circumstances.
Preference would be for Clients to provide proof of income or benefits to verify eligibility.

Process to Determine Type(s) and Level of Assistance

Please detail the protocol used to determine the type(s) and level of assistance once an applicant is determined eligible for assistance.

1. Eviction Prevention Specialist will first confirm eligibility for services utilizing approved documentations
2. Eviction Prevention Specialist will document needs impacting stability of client and contributing to possible eviction
3. Direct support for clients will be capped at a maximum of \$2,500
4. Direct support of client will not exceed 5 months, unless extraordinary circumstances arise
5. Individuals eligible for RRP will be required to apply in order to receive assistance
6. Assistance can be used to support rent payments, utility bills, supportive services, moving expenses, security deposits

Initiatives and Partnerships Promoting Systems Change

Please describe initiatives and/or partnerships that your program will work on. This work should be aimed at the root causes of eviction prevalence and working towards building an environment where rent-burdened tenants can easily maintain housing. Please attach letters of commitment or memorandums of understanding for this VERP activity.

Goal 1: Define action plan for where Bridges Out of Poverty (BOP) Housing Subgroup can focus education and community impact activities by April 30, 2022

- Objective 1.1: Ensure VERP program has a voice in BOP community leadership meetings
 - Action 1.1.1: Present program to the Housing Subgroup meeting by mid-March 2022
 - Action 1.1.2: HSC participate in experts panel meeting as scheduled in March 2022
- Objective 1.2: Actively participate in BOP Subgroup meetings, providing guidance to further both the BOP goals and VERP program goals as scheduled
 - Action 1.2.1: HSC Participate in BOP orientation program to understand the philosophy in March 2022
 - Action 1.2.2: Establish credibility and expertise with teams through effective reporting and presentation of issues, plans and resolutions at scheduled meetings and as needed, ad hoc
- Objective 1.3: Ensure partner organizations understand the BOP philosophy and approach and are applying the principles in their practices and policies

- Action 1.3.1: Work with BOP team to know what to look for in partner programs to determine effectiveness and adherence to BOP philosophy by March 31
- Action 1.3.2: Refer possible organization education opportunities to the BOP team on an on-going basis

Goal 2: Integrate United Way Financial Stability programs into Housing Stability Coordinator case management practices for those applying for or receiving assistance by April 30, 2022

- Objective 2.1: HSC understand Financial Stability program offerings and applicability to VERP program applicants/ recipients
 - Action 2.1.1: Meeting with Financial Stability program leads by March 30, 2022
- Objective 2.2: HSC incorporate decision criteria into applicant evaluation process by April 30, 2022
- Objective 2.3: Ensure case management includes follow-through to determine participation in and effectiveness of Financial Stability programs in alleviating and preventing housing issues.
 - Action 2.3.1: Conduct monthly reviews of referrals throughout the program, beginning May 2022

Goal 3: Advise the Integrated Resource Management Team on workforce readiness gaps that can be addressed through monthly meetings during the grant period.

- Objective 3.1: HSC understand available workforce training and readiness programs
 - Action 3.1.1: Meet with VA Career Works leadership team for reviews of various programs by April 15, 2022.
- Objective 3.2: Based on input from the Advisory Committee, local employer organizations and experience with applicants, provide feedback to Integrated Resource Management Team on gaps in offerings
 - Action 3.2.1: Build connections and credibility with the team through participation in monthly meetings by May 30, 2022
 - Action 3.2.2: Through applicant experience assess if workforce readiness gaps exists for VERP applicants by May 30, 2022 for initial assessment and on-going
 - Action 3.2.3: Provide an assessment to Integrated Resource Management Team on effectiveness of readiness initiatives in addressing employment possibilities for applicants on a quarterly basis with initial report by June 30, 2022

Goal 4: Develop integration with HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) coordination agencies to ensure single stream process is included in VERP and RRP applicant processes by June 30, 2022

- Objective 4.1: Develop knowledge of and connections to the local CoC groups and participating organizations.
 - Action 4.1.1: Participate in STEP, Inc annual CoC meeting on March 15, 2022.
 - Action 4.2.2: Connect with leaders of West Piedmont Better Housing Coalition and determine how to connect with group by March 30, 2022
- Objective 4.2: Ensure the CoC participating organizations understand the VERP and RRP programs and processes and applicability to work within this process

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- o Action 4.2.1: Present the VERP and RRP to **CoC** organizations by April 30, 2022
- Objective 4.3: Develop integration processes for referrals to the VERP program
 - o Action 4.3.1: Based on input from **CoC** and partner organizations and Advisory Committee, develop desired integration processes for referrals to the VERP program by May 30, 2022
 - o Action 4.3.2: Socialize integration and referral plans with **CoC** leadership and gain approval by June 15, 2022
 - o Action 4.3.3: Publish approved referral guidelines, application requirements, forms, etc. to **CoC** and partner organizations by June 30, 2022

Goal 5: Ensure the VERP program is addressing needs of groups historically at risk of eviction and housing instability including black Americans and people with disabilities and ensure partner service providers are addressing the needs as well

- Objective 5.1: Gather an understanding of housing problems disproportionately faced by marginalized groups by April 30, 2022
 - o Action 5.1.1: Meet with leadership from Disability Rights and Resource Center and Piedmont Community Services to understand challenges from their perspectives
 - o Action 5.1.2: Meet with Ministerial Alliance to gain understanding of challenges and other critical groups to solicit input from
 - o Action 5.1.3: Gather input from additional groups referred to in other actions.
- Objective 5.2: Compile knowledge of past solutions which have been attempted and their degree of success
 - o Action 5.2.1: Through meetings compile a report of challenges facing the targeted groups, current and past solutions to address the challenges, their successes and failures, and thoughts on success factors for "go forward" programs and solutions
- Objective 5.3: Ascertain how VERP can specifically focus on and address these groups needs and what other organizations can do to address these issues
 - o Action 5.3.1:
- Objective 5.4: Put in place a continuous monitoring process to ensure marginalized groups interests are being served by the VERP initiative by June 30, 2022 and each quarter thereafter.
 - o Action 5.4.1: Quarterly review case files and develop charts to illustrate demographic factors
 - o Action 5.4.2: Quarterly review the key actions for VERP and other organizations (developed in Objective 5.3) and assess each group's successful implementation
 - o Action 5.4.3: Implement necessary changes to the VERP process and constructively work with partner providers to influence modifications to improve their effectiveness

Goal 6: Investigate expanding an existing housing non-profit's mission to include performing required emergency repairs to assist people to have and stay in safe, functioning housing by September 30, 2022 [thinking about this and not sure applicable to rental/tenant but leaving for review. How do you entice landlords to make repairs and not raise rents?]

- Objective 6.1: To discuss

Purpose of Legal Aid in VERP program

The Court Navigator Pilot Program, described elsewhere, is part of Virginia Legal Aid Society's broad efforts to provide vital, civil legal services to low-income people in Martinsville and Henry County. VLAS's Martinsville office focuses on housing work – helping ensure people have access to safe and secure housing, resolving tenant/landlord disputes, educating and advising renters and homeowners on their rights and responsibilities under Virginia Law, and providing other services.

Legal Aid Partner(s) and their service areas: Virginia Legal Aid Society partners with several area organizations that provide funding, refer potential clients or accept referrals from VLAS. These include United Way of Henry County & Martinsville, Harvest Foundation (covering Martinsville and Henry County), Southside Survivor Response Center in Martinsville, and Victim/Witness advocate offices in Martinsville and Henry County.

Legal Aid Activities in VERP program

1. Represent low-income tenants facing potential eviction in court proceedings.
2. Negotiate with landlords on behalf of tenants facing potential eviction to resolve issues without court proceedings.
3. Educate low-income tenants and landlords on their rights and responsibilities under Virginia law and seek long-term solutions to reduce the number of evictions in the area.
4. Help clients get eviction dismissals expunged from their civil court record.

Name	Title / Organization	Role in Legal Aid
Rebecca Brown	Senior Attorney/VLAS	Staff VLAS's Martinsville office
Project paralegal to be hired	Case-handling paralegal/VLAS	Screen potential clients, assist Senior Attorney
David Weinau	Managing Attorney, Danville Office/VLAS	Supervise and support Martinsville office staff

Purpose of Landlord-Tenant Mediation

As a critical part of Virginia Legal Aid Society's role in VERP, VLAS attorneys will seek mediation with every landlord attempting to evict a tenant that VLAS represents, preferring to reach a negotiated settlement that benefits both parties.

Landlord-Tenant Mediation Partner(s) and their service areas: (same as above) Virginia Legal Aid Society partners with several area organizations that provide funding, refer potential clients or accept referrals from VLAS. These include United Way of Henry County & Martinsville, Harvest Foundation (covering Martinsville and Henry County), Southside Survivor Response Center in Martinsville, and Victim/Witness advocate offices in Martinsville and Henry County.

Landlord-Tenant Mediation Activities in VERP program

1. Help landlords and tenants apply to the Virginia Rent Relief Program, as long as funds are available.
2. Help landlords and tenants negotiate payment plans that allow tenants to remain in their homes while reducing the debts they have to their landlords, using available government funds (including VERP) where possible.
3. Develop relationships with landlords to encourage them to seek mediated settlements more frequently instead of court proceedings.

Name	Title / Organization	Role in Landlord-Tenant Mediation
Rebecca Brown	Senior Attorney/VLAS	Staff VLAS's Martinsville office
Project paralegal to be hired	Case-handling paralegal/VLAS	Screen potential clients, assist Senior Attorney
David Weinau	Managing Attorney, Danville Office/VLAS	Supervise and support Martinsville office staff

Court Navigator Pilot Program (if applicable)

Please describe the court navigator pilot program. The court navigator program brings a team from Virginia Legal Aid Society into the court house on most days when eviction cases are being heard. Tenants who are facing pending evictions are given the option to speak with the VLAS team to determine if they are eligible for legal aid services (for example, having a household income that doesn't exceed the legal aid cap). VLAS then provides immediate legal advice and representation to eligible tenants who want help.

Purpose of Court Navigator Pilot Program

The purpose of the program is to make free legal services more accessible to low-income tenants facing eviction, in an effort to reduce evictions overall in Martinsville and Henry County. Most potential VLAS clients first contact us by calling our toll-free **Lawline**. This program brings our services directly to people facing the crisis of losing their home. It also improves communication between judges and eviction prevention and diversion staff, assists tenants with navigating the court system, informs tenants about other resources, informs tenants about their legal rights and encourages mediation between tenants and landlords.

Please attach Memorandum of Understanding (MOU's) between VERP grantee and partner should be attached. (Separate Attachment)

Court Navigator Partner(s) and their service areas: Virginia Legal Aid Society, which has an office in Martinsville that helps low-income people with free, housing-related legal services in Martinsville and Henry County.

Court Navigator Activities in VERP program:

1. Review dockets every week for cases in Martinsville and Henry County general district courts to pre-screen potential clients in eviction cases. Review includes, for example, potential conflicts of interest that might make a potential client ineligible to receive VLAS services.
2. Interview potential clients in the courthouse for possible immediate advice or representation.
3. Negotiate with landlords, seeking potential solutions that do not involve eviction. Some landlords, for example, are willing to give tenants additional time to move out on their own, so they can find new housing without the stain of an eviction on their record. Others might agree to payment plan that steadily reduces the money tenants might owe their landlords.
4. Advise low-income tenants facing eviction on their rights and responsibilities under Virginia law and suggest possible next steps.
5. Represent low-income tenants facing eviction in court proceedings.

Name	Title / Organization	Role in Court Navigator Pilot Program
Rebecca Brown	Senior Attorney/VLAS	Lead attorney
Project paralegal (VLAS is interviewing job candidates)	Case-handling paralegal/VLAS	Screen and interview potential clients, assist project's lead attorney
David Weinau	Managing Attorney, Danville Office/VLAS	Supervise and support project's lead attorney

Hear an update from Martinsville City Schools Director of School Safety T. J. Slaughter on safety and security measures planned for the upcoming school year – Director of School Safety T.J. Slaughter presented a brief overview of the safety and security measures planned for the

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upcoming school year at the Martinsville City schools. School safety is priority. Deputy Police Chief Rob Fincher would not give in depth response details but explained that the Police Department works closely with the schools in case of emergencies. Safety is important and they are working throughout the year, including summer months to make the schools safe. Slaughter said the School Resource Officer is vital for protection as well as the relationship they build with the students. Martinsville is one of the few locations that has an SRO in every school. Other safety measures include security entries with a second set of doors in the lobby. Several outside doors are equipped with controls to monitor access to the building. Law enforcement and public safety officials have access to the buildings in case of emergency. Panic alarms that go to the 911 Center have been installed in classrooms and school buses now include a GPS location tracker. Emergency speakers and notification systems are in place in all schools. Over 300 cameras have been installed division wide including outside cameras. Window armor is being installed using local funds; this is in some buildings but not all yet; Martinsville schools are the first to use this in Virginia. There are also gunfire detectors that will send a message and map to law enforcement. With any school shootings, Slaughter and the resources officers evaluate the situation and implement changes in our local schools. Safety audits are conducted every summer although only required every 3 years. The state has offered funding to improve school mapping systems. Most of safety initiatives were funded by grants and 90% of equipment has come from local vendors. Martinsville school divisions are ahead of the curve to keep students and teachers safe. If Council or parents have questions, Slaughter encourages them to contact him and he invites Council to take a tour of the schools to see the security measures in place. Mayor Lawson is thankful that Martinsville is being proactive instead of waiting for something to happen. Vice Mayor Bowles requested City Manager Towarnicki to send nomination documentation of those improved safety measures to be considered for the VML innovation award. Slaughter stated that Virginia is the leader in school safety. His last 4 years in law enforcement he was a SRO and those years were the most rewarding of his career.

Hear information related to the enforcement of §15.5-21 of the Martinsville City Code regarding property maintenance violations – City Attorney Monday summarized the approach of Property Maintenance in the City which is complaint driven, and a reactive process not proactive because of limited resources. Although property maintenance is near the top of complaints, the City has not historically been able to allocate a lot of resources to that. Property Maintenance staff only respond to areas of concern that are visible from the public right of way and do not include backyards which have an expectation of privacy and would require a warrant for property maintenance staff to inspect. Monday touched on discretionary clauses because there are frequent situations where an issue can annoy a neighbor but does not rise to property maintenance nuisance requirements. Monday explained that there have been instances where neighbors have had issues with neighboring property but would not testify in court. There is a state code where five or more citizens can sign a petition to panel a grand jury to declare a

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property as a nuisance and there is a pending situation in the city now. It's not a matter of if the City Property Maintenance staff or City Attorney are not doing their job, they are restricted in the action they can legally take if the property fits the nuisance requirements. Turner expressed his objection, stating that Council has a responsibility to the citizens and that the Attorney should not have a veto option on the administration side. It should be up to the Council to provide safe neighborhoods. The City has not done its job on this specific property since a "cloud" of mosquitoes are present and the issue can be seen from the right of way. Turner made a motion to remove the City Attorney's authority to block the institution of the nuisance ordinance. Monday understands Turner's political motivation however even if Council were to amend the ordinance, it won't affect his discretionary authority to pursue or not pursue a case. Monday referenced the City Charter giving the City Attorney management and control of all legal matters involving the City and he cannot ethically and will not bring action when there are no supporting witnesses. Monday prepared the petition on the property in question as Turner requested, Turner went out and obtained the signatures then filed the petition in the Clerk's office without notifying Monday making it an active court case. To suggest that staff or the attorney did not do their job is untrue. Monday said that even if Council requires him to file when there are no witnesses or legal basis to pursue action, then he can not ethically file the complaint. Council Member Martin said that it's been frustrating, none of the Council Members have attended law school so they must trust Monday's professional opinion. It would be a waste of time and money to take a complaint to court if it can't be won. If it's in the backyard, Property Maintenance does not have a legal right to go into the backyard when it is not viewable from the right of way. Monday prepared the paperwork because five people were willing to testify in court. The property concerns from the front of the home have been posted and have all mostly been addressed. The court sets the calendar so Monday can not provide a timeframe. At the previous Council meeting, Council Member Turner made the motion to remove the City Attorney from the discretionary authority; Council Member Pearson seconded the motion and the topic was tabled until tonight's meeting. Council Member Martin expressed concern that there are personal issues going on, it is an election year and people are using this situation when they should not. Council Member Turner and Council Member Pearson voted in favor of removing the City Attorney's discretionary authority regarding property maintenance violations; Vice Mayor Bowles, Mayor Lawson and Council Member Martin voted against it. Motion dies with a 2-3 vote.

ARTICLE II. - PROPERTY GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Sec. 15.5-21. - Nuisances prohibited; term defined.

It shall be unlawful for the owner or owners, occupant or occupants of any property or premises located in the city to create, cause, or permit the continuation of any nuisance. The term "nuisance" to include, without limitation, the examples set forth as follows:

- (1) Any condition which is breeding ground or harbor for mosquitoes or a breeding ground for rats or other pests.
- (2) Any place of weeds, grass or other noxious vegetation over eighteen (18) inches in height that is within fifty (50) feet of an inhabited residence or business firm.
- (3) An open place of collection of water where insects tend to breed. For the purposes of this chapter, and "open place of collection of water" shall be held to mean and be that contained in ditches, pools, ponds (natural or artificial), excavations, holes, depressions, open cesspools, privy vaults, fountains, cisterns, tanks, shallow wells, barrels, troughs, urns, cans, boxes, bottles, tubs, buckets, partially disassembled vehicles, defective house roof gutters, tanks of flush closets or similar containers.
- (4) An open place of combustible items such as mattresses, boxes, paper, automobile tires and tubes, garbage, trash, refuse, brush, debris from the clearing or grading of lots, old clothes, rags or any other combustible materials or objects of a like nature.
- (5) An open place of collection of garbage, food waste, animal waste or other rotten or putrescible matter of any kind.
- (6) Any furniture, appliance or other metal products of any kind or nature openly kept which have rough or jagged edges of metal or glass.
- (7) Any furniture or other articles not specifically intended for outdoor use or exposure to the elements and which would tend to absorb or retain moisture thereby attracting insects, pests or vermin.
- (8) Any accumulation of rubbish, trash, old building materials or junk causing or threatening to cause a fire hazard, or causing or threatening to cause the accumulation of stagnant water, or causing or threatening to cause the inhabitation of mice, snakes or vermin of any kind which may be dangerous or prejudicial to the public health.
- (9) Any condition detrimental to the public health which violates the rules and regulations of the health department.

The code official heretofore designated by council to enforce the building maintenance code in the city and alternatively the city attorney are hereby vested with discretionary authority to decline to undertake enforcement of this section with respect to nuisances which are (a) deemed to be of a private nature between neighboring property owners, or (b) deemed not to constitute a public nuisance, or (c) not visible to the unaided eye from street or ground level outside the boundaries of the property on which the subject nuisance exists.

(Ord. No. 95-11, 12-12-1995; Amend. of 5-13-2008)

Consider approval of a revised power purchase agreement for the City's participation in a solar energy project at the former Lynwood golf course – City Attorney Monday confirmed with the Virginia Conflicts of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council that although Council Member Martin is employed by the DEQ, there is no financial detriment or conflict of interest when allowing him to vote on this matter. Mayor Lawson confirmed along with Utilities Director Durwin Joyce that the City was notified by letter in a timely manner in 2021 that they would be unable to install the panels in the timeframe originally provided in the contract and there were provisions for Martinsville and the solar company if they could not perform the project in the time listed in the contract. They exercised their right as provided in the contract. Vice Mayor Bowles made a motion to approve the revised power purchase agreement; Council Member Martin seconded the motion. Council Member Turner asked about the decommissioning bond. Joyce explained that the Electric Department has nothing to do with ownership of the property or the solar site. Lawson explained that details on the decommissioning bond are spelled out in the contract. Turner asked who would be responsible for cleanup if the company goes belly up. Lawson verified that Martinsville is a customer and would not be responsible for cleanup. Joyce explained that Turner is asking legal questions that would need to be directed to the solar company and that he does not have those answers. Martin reiterated that the City does not own the property and the simple fact that the cost has already gone up since there is a material shortage, they should not wait to approve the revised agreement. They want to get the best deal

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now before prices go any higher. The revised power purchase agreement was approved 4-1 with Pearson, Bowles, Lawson and Martin voting for and Turner voting against.

Consider approval of the consent agenda – Vice Mayor Bowles made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Council Member Turner seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

BUDGET ADDITIONS FOR 8/9/2022				
ORG	OBJECT	DESCRIPTION	DEBIT	CREDIT
FY2023 - General Fund				
01100908	480412	Donations/Sheriff		5,297
01217078	506138	Motorcycle Equip/Maintenance	5,297	
		Sheriff Donations - Golf Tournament		
01103938	462101	Fund Balance		6,571
01816244	505656	Blue Ridge Regional Library	6,571	
		Additional funding request		
Total General Fund:			11,868	11,868

Business from the floor – Chasity Baliles of 988 Light Ridge Road in Meadows of Dan, Virginia stated that she has lived in and worked in the City of Martinsville most of her life. Baliles has experienced some issues with two local business owners, one of which serves on the Martinsville City Council. She was the previous general manager at ShinDig, a business owned by Council Member Pearsons and her husband. Mayor Lawson questioned Baliles if her concern was directly related to City business and if not, they could talk privately along with the Vice Mayor. Council Member Martin and Vice Mayor Bowles requested that Baliles have the right to speak, referring to meetings where Sharon Brooks Hodge was on Council and individuals were allowed to speak on non-City related topics. Martin left his seat to stand by Baliles at the podium. Baliles stated that on Sunday July 24, Council Member Pearson and her husband Will came to her place of employment knowingly and with intentions of humiliating her and talking bad about her to her coworkers. Management at Chateau Morrisette where Baliles works, will no longer allow the Pearsons back on the property because of this situation. Posts and pictures were made on social media including Wild Magnolia's business page, a second business in the City owned by the Pearsons. Baliles read some of the posts that were made and described how it had affected her children and her family, stating when you break the law or break the rules there should be consequences no matter their position within the City. Baliles requested the resignation of Council Member Pearson, stating that she and her husband abused their power and Baliles will be filing a defamation suit against them.

Aaron Rawles stated that he is running for City Council and said that he has seen social media posts from a couple of City Council Members trying to "stir things up" in the situation with Mrs. Baliles. Rawles stated that it is a horrible thing that happened but he is unsure how it relates to City government or why it was brought up during a Council meeting. Council Member Martin's reputation is earned and he should put forth the same effort as a Council Member that he has invested in stirring up controversy on social media. Rawles encouraged Council to focus on what matters so that the City will not look petty. Council Member Martin asked "if not now then when, if not us then who". City Council Members represent 13,000

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residents in the city. Vice Mayor Bowles does not feel that anyone is being petty in this situation. At that point, Mayor Lawson concluded the conversation. Rawles said he would talk to the Mayor privately.

Deborah Martin, 859 Valley Drive in Fieldale – Martin works in the City, she has worked for the Pearsons and she is the mother of Baliles. Martin stated it was the Pearson's responsibility that this issue was exposed on social media. Mr. Pearson shared to the world-wide net calling her daughter horrible names and accusing her of questionable actions. She is a great daughter, aunt, mother, and sister. They tried to destroy her reputation, her job and her family. Council Member Martin did not instigate anything, it all started with Mr. Pearson's post was made. She will always fight for her daughter.

Comments by City Council – Council Member Martin invited Council Members to a voter registration and pizza on September 20 from 430-630pm at Maplewood apartments. Martin referenced a quote from the Merchant of Venice stating "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?". Martin went on to share "If a Christian wrongs a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge". After seeing what happened to Baliles, part of him said "it's get back time". Then, Martin also referenced Proverbs 24:17-18 "Do not gloat when your enemy falls". Someone can't keep doing wrong and think they can keep getting away with it. If not us then who, and if not now then when? We should stand up for people who are mistreated, let it happen to you and it means more to you. Martin stated that you cannot have true reconciliation without restitution. Someone can not apologize in private without restoring your dignity in public as well. He will stand with Baliles all day regardless what anyone says.

Mayor Lawson reprimanded a member of the audience for spoke out of line after Martin's statement.

Turner asked Community Development Manager Mark McCaskill about the Housing Summit and the Virginia Housing staff who toured the city recently. McCaskill stated that Virginia Housing staff pointed out several avenues for future exploration. Turner stated that the City qualified as a rural community and that there is money available for housing on that line including Fayette Street and Paradise Inn. Vice Mayor Bowles reminded Council that nothing could be done at the Paradise Inn without the owner's permission. Turner recognized the passing of Buddy Arrington and offered condolences to the family. Turner stated that Lou Whitaker, local resident and baseball pro had his number retired recently in Detroit and recommended naming something after Whitaker at Hooker field since he is currently the best baseball player out of Martinsville.

Council Member Pearson wished the students and parents a wonderful school year and thanked Dr. Talley for his preparation. Her job as a City business owner and a Council Member

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can be difficult but it pales in comparison to the responsibilities of school staff. Pearson thanked everyone who spoke this evening and those who have reached out to her personally. She wants all City voices to be heard. Pearson stated that she will not resign from City Council, that she will fulfill her term and continue to listen to and represent the citizens of Martinsville. Instead of resigning, she commits to working harder and fighting for what's right and just and what's best for the citizens.

Vice Mayor Bowles wished Martinsville students good luck returning to school. Special thank you to Jessica Burnette at Eastman for the donation of the flower seeds. Bowles mentioned Hometown Hustle and thanked Natalie Hodge for showcasing the Martinsville area. The SPCA has many cats and dogs at a low adoption fee, Bowles encourages residents to adopt. All residents are invited to the unveiling of the Martinsville 7 historical marker on September 10 at 1130am.

Mayor Lawson received messages of appreciation from the Library Board for Council's approval of the 5% pay raise request as well as a card from Reed Electrical Solutions, a graduate of the Martinsville GROW program who expressed appreciation for the City's support helping small businesses through the learning process. Lawson offered condolences to the family of Frances Zehr, a former member of the Henry County Board of Supervisors and a member of the school board. Lawson stated that Aaron Rawles pointed out something important during business from the floor, when the City has negative news and the media plays it over and over and people are visiting the community it makes the City look bad. A realtor told Lawson that she had lost a sale because they watched a local program and did not want to be a part of that community. Martinsville has so much opportunity to grow and we need to focus on the positive, there is always unfortunate circumstances but repeating them over in the media doesn't serve anyone. Lawson asked to see the PART Bus report at the next Council meeting as well as getting an update from the hospital staff.

Comments by the City Manager – City Manager Towarnicki reminded citizens that there are a number of openings on several boards and commissions including two vacancies on the Patrick & Henry Community College board and the Library board. Towarnicki encouraged residents to contact the City Manager's office or apply online through the website. There are 30-35 vacancies total and there are some boards that don't have enough members to call a meeting. Towarnicki also announced that the scooter business originally planned for the City has been delayed indefinitely.

Comments by the City Attorney – City Attorney Monday shared that charity begins in our hometown. He is a lifetime supporter of the SPCA and they are currently full and cannot take any of the 4,000k beagles recently rescued from the Charlotte County facility. Monday encourages residents to adopt and to look into the Envigo Beagles story. These beagles were

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rescued and are currently being relocated throughout the country to find new homes. Monday said it is unlikely that the scooter company will be coming to Martinsville.

There being no further business, Vice Mayor Bowles made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50pm.

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

Kathy Lawson, Mayor