

September 13, 2022 Council Meeting

The regular meeting of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia was held on September 13, 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 and City Attorney Eric Monday, Safety Coordinator John Turner, and Police Lieutenant Sandy Hines.

Mayor Lawson called the meeting to order and advised Council would go into Closed Session beginning at 6:00 PM. In accordance with section 2.1-344 (A) Code of Virginia (1950, and as amended) and upon a motion by Vice Mayor Bowles and seconded by Council Member Turner with the following 5-0 recorded vote: Mayor Lawson, aye; Council Member Turner, aye; Vice Mayor Bowles, aye; and Council Member Martin, aye. Council Member Pearson joined Council in Closed Session. Council convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters: (A) Appointments to boards and commissions and personnel discussions, as authorized by Subsection 1, (B) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members, attorneys or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, or other specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, as authorized by Subsection 7, and (C) Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected, as authorized by Subsection 6. At the conclusion of Closed Session, each returning member of Council certified that (1) only public business matters exempt from open meeting requirements were discussed in said Closed Session; and (2) only those business matters identified in the motion convening the Closed Session were heard, discussed, or considered during the meeting. A motion was made by Bowles; seconded by Martin, with the following 5-0 recorded vote in favor to return to Open Session: Council Member Turner, aye; Council Member Pearson, aye; Vice Mayor Bowles, aye; Mayor Lawson, aye; and Council Member Martin, aye. City Attorney Monday pointed out that the Consultation with Legal Council was related to reversion and opioid litigation.

Vice Mayor Bowles made a motion to appoint Mandy Gordon to the Arts & Cultural Committee (Business Owner) for a 3-year unexpired term ending March 31, 2023. Council Member Pearson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Council Member Turner made a motion to appoint Steve Draper to the Patrick & Henry Community College Board for a 4-year term ending June 30, 2026. Council Member Martin second the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Vice Mayor Bowles made a motion to appoint Conrade Young to the Planning Commission; a 4-year unexpired term ending June 30, 2024. Council Member Turner seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Council Member Martin made a motion to appoint Michael Sanguedolce to the Transportation Safety Commission for a 4-year unexpired term ending December 31,

September 13, 2022 Council Meeting

2025. Vice Mayor Bowles seconded the motion and stated that she's excited that Sanguedolce came to Council with his concerns, was active in the community and is stepping up to serve on the commission. All Council Members voted in favor.

Mayor Lawson called the meeting to order, lead the pledge to the American Flag and offered invocation. Lawson welcomed everyone to the meeting, stating printed agendas could be found in the back of the room and on the City website for those watching from home.

Read a proclamation acknowledging the week of September 17th through the 23rd as Constitution Week – Council Member Martin read the proclamation which was presented to Beverly Woody, Martinsville Middle School Teacher. Woody was accompanied by students Olivia Campbell 6th grade, Abbigail Campbell 7th grade, and Caleb Valentine 8th grade. Each student was a SCA representatives and read a statement. Council Member Martin asked the students to stand again and requested a round of applause.

Hear an update from Lisa Watkins of the M-HC Chamber of Commerce regarding activities related to the City/C-PEG Small Business Development contract – Lisa Watkins thanked Council for their support of small businesses. The Start-Up program continues to grow and expand. They've had 283 graduates, creating 240 new jobs. The program still maintains an 86% success rate. This past Spring, CPEG awarded 13 Start-Ups with \$27,500 in cash in addition to in-kind support through Patrick & Henry Community College with a 1-year subscription to the FabLab. The Grow session awarded 10 businesses with almost \$20,000 made possible by a 3-year grant from the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. The Tobacco Commission grant is also allowing them to expand by offering training; they just released an application process for GROW for sessions beginning in October for businesses looking to expand and who are still "coachable". CPEG has cause to celebrate with 48 businesses that have opened, expanded or purchased a business that may have closed since February 2020 when COVID hit.

Consider a request for City funding for lobbying efforts related to the Martinsville Southern Connector Project – City Manager Towarnicki detailed the Southern Connector Project and the need for funding which the City has contributed to for several years. Towarnicki detailed the route of the Southern connector Project and said there is a renewed effort to generate funding for this project. Kemper Consultant Firm has presented a proposal to represent our area in this project valued at \$60,000. Towarnicki confirmed that this connector route has been smart-scale ranked. Towarnicki said all pertinent information was added to Council's drobox for review. Mayor Lawson that that the most important line in the information stated "the new Southern Connector permanently resolves the hourglass type traffic congestion in our region". Towarnicki explained that although this project does not go directly through the City, the project benefits the entire community especially with truck traffic and alleviating any bottlenecks getting into the City. Council Member Turner said that Martinsville is in a great situation to attract international business and the I73 project would be important to our community for that reason. Towarnicki explained how this project would make the trip for local residents traveling to

September 13, 2022 Council Meeting

Greensboro more convenient. Council Member Pearson made a motion to approve the funding for lobbyist efforts related to the project; Council Member Turner seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Consider adoption of a resolution approving the updated City of Martinsville Operations Plan

– Safety Director John Turner summarized the need for the resolution and details about the need for the Emergency Operations Plan. Vice Mayor Bowles made a motion to adopt the resolution; Council Member Turner seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Consider approval of the consent agenda – Vice Mayor Bowles approved the revised consent

agenda as presented. Council Member Martin seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

BUDGET ADDITIONS FOR 8/23/2022				
ORG	OBJECT	DESCRIPTION	DEBIT	CREDIT
FY2023 - General Fund				
01100908	482901	Misc Unclassified Revenue		105
01311085	506061	Motorcycle Equip/Maintenance	105	
		Misc Payment		
Total General Fund:			105	105

Business from the Floor – No one approached the podium

Comments by City Council –Vice Mayor Bowles made a motion to include a public input

session about Paradise Inn at the next West End Council meeting September 26 to receive community opinions, if that property should be demolished and what steps would need to be taken. Bowles requested another public discussion session for the Council Meeting September 27 with a third input session and a Council vote on what to do with Paradise Inn at the October 11 Council meeting. Council Member Turner said he’s spoken to Mark McCaskill in Community Development to come up with a plan and an application for funds to cover demolition of the property. Turner has also spoken to Congressman Griffith’s office to see if there is any federal money available to help with the demolition. Mayor Lawson said they did not need ownership of the property to declare it a nuisance and tear it down. City Attorney Monday stated that the City would not want to take ownership of the property because of the tax liens. Council Member Martin seconded the motion and stated that members of the community are divided on weather to try and save the property which they feel is a historical landmark or tear it down because it is an eye sore. All Council Members voted in favor of the public input sessions. Vice Mayor Bowles spoke about unopened Fourth and D street right of way; adjacent property owners have been taking care of property for years. Bowles asked if the City could gift or grant the property to the neighboring owners since they are taking care of it anyway. City Manager Towarnicki said that the adjacent owners would need to make a request which would go to the Planning Commission to consider. The Planning Commission would hold a public hearing and depending on how that goes, the Planning Commission would present the request to City Council for consideration and another public hearing before making a decision. If everyone approves, then

September 13, 2022 Council Meeting

the property would be split but it would need to be surveyed which would cost money. If a single property owner wants to take possession of the property and the second property owner does not object, then the survey may not be needed. City Attorney Monday said he would look into that if both property owners were agreeable. If both property owners want the property then it would require a survey and would be an expense to those residents. Bowles requested Monday update her with that information when he gets confirmation. Bowles followed up with the drainage issues on Third Street. Towarnicki said he's done research and the City put in the street, curb and gutter, and basins prior to the home being built; later someone added a pipe and added dirt which caused the drainage issues the property owner is experiencing. The City will look at getting an estimate on getting that pipe put underground. Bowles asked for a Parks and Recreation survey update. Towarnicki explained that there was ARPA money set aside and a grant approved through the USDA to update the park plan and a facilitation process. Council Member Pearson reminded Council that the City did promise at Neighborhood meetings that the public would be updated on information. Bowles asked Towarnicki to provide updates at neighborhood meetings on concerns voiced previously and how those issues were being handled. Council Member Pearson had no other comments. Council Member Martin thanked Ralph Lawson and the Red Cross staff for helping his cousin recently after a house fire. September 20 there will be voter registration at Maplewood Apartments from 4:30-6:30pm. Council Member Turner thanked Roosky's Bar & Grill for helping commemorate the 21st Anniversary of 9/11, welcoming local veterans and a wall of honor for those who lost their lives. Turner thanked Congressman Griffith for attending along with two local World War II veterans and Mayor Lawson. Turner thanked Eric Phillips for paying for the veterans and the Martinsville Fire Department staff's dinner that night. Turner said the event was well attended and went very well. Turner detailed the Reach Across America program, sharing that Martinsville pays for 33 wreaths to be placed at headstones of Martinsville residents buried at Arlington along with 37 wreaths placed on local cemeteries here in Martinsville. Turner encourages others to contribute to the Reach Across America program. Council Member Martin thanked Mayor Lawson, Vice Mayor Bowles and City Attorney Monday and others who attended for the unveiling of the Martinsville 7 marker. Vice Mayor Bowles said it was not to debate innocence or guilt but she feels that recognizing the unjust punishment of those seven men can help the community move forward. Mayor Lawson pointed out that Vice Mayor Bowles sponsored the application for the historical marker and City Attorney Monday funded it. Mayor Lawson wished Bowles a happy birthday tomorrow. Flags will be put out in Uptown Martinsville Saturday for Constitution Day. Relay for Life is Saturday from 3:00-7:00pm at Smith River Sports Complex. The final TGIF is this Friday, Lawson encourages residents to come out and enjoy the music. Hazardous Waste Day is October 15. Lawson asked for updates on the demolition list and property maintenance list for the next Council meeting. Lawson requested Towarnicki look into a drainage issue in the Chatham Heights area that presents a problem for residents on Cedar Street. Towarnicki

September 13, 2022 Council Meeting

said they have looked at that location and it will require that a pipe be installed across the road. The Valley Star Race is September 23-24. Bowles said the Henry County Fair will be September 21-24.

Comments by the City Manager – City Manager Towarnicki explained that paving work to repair concerns on Smith Lake Road are out for bid and due the end of the month. Council Member Turner met with people on Kings Row about widening the road, Towarnicki said a tree will be taken down to be able to widen that road. Nominations for the Martinsville-Henry County Outstanding Military Veteran Award will be accepted soon; this is a joint award offered by Martinsville and Henry County. Information will be available through the City website in the next few days and the deadline to submit that nomination will be 5:00pm October 21. A committee will review those nominations and the winners will be announced at the Veteran's Day event on November 11. Towarnicki said VDOT has approved installation of alternate truck route signs for Starling Avenue and those will be installed in the next few weeks. Towarnicki said there are a lot of projects going on in Martinsville including six level 2 electric vehicle charging stations that will be installed in the parking lot across from the Municipal Building, a grant was approved for the American Plant 10 inspection and development, Hooker Field renovations, they have received a very good proposal for the BB&T building, and work has been completed on the dugouts at Southside Park with more work planned for the near future. The Summit view water project has been bid and they expect work to begin soon. The City has received a \$3million grant for the Jones's Creek project, and the permits are issues and plans submitted for the Aaron Mills project so they expect to see that starting soon.

City Attorney Monday shared that the Coastal Plain League has been sold to the Capital Broadcasting Company which owns the Durham Bulls; this will provide enormous potential for the league and the Martinsville Mustangs.

There being no further business, Council Member Turner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35pm.

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

Kathy Lawson, Mayor