

## January 10, 2023 Council Meeting

The regular meeting of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia was held on January 10, 2023 in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 7:00 PM with Mayor LC Jones presiding. Other Council Members present included Kathy Lawson, Chad Martin, Aaron Rawls and Tammy Pearson. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Clerk of Council Karen Roberts, Utilities Director Durwin Joyce and Police Chief Rob Fincher.

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order and advised Council would go into Closed Session beginning at 6:30 PM. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act and upon a motion by Council Member Pearson and seconded by Council Member Lawson with the following 3-0 recorded vote: Council Member Pearson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; and Council Member Lawson, aye. Council Member Rawls and Martin were not in attendance during the vote but joined Council Members during the Closed Session. Council convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters: (A) The protection of the privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business, as authorized by Subsection 4. 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 Pearson; seconded by Lawson with the following 5-0 recorded vote in favor to return to Open Session: Council Member Martin, aye; Council Member Pearson, aye; Vice Mayor Rawls, aye; Council Member Lawson, aye; and Mayor Jones, aye.

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order and lead the pledge to the American Flag. Invocation was offered by Pastor Kelvin Perry of Grace Presbyterian Church. Jones 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.

Approve minutes from the December 13, 2022 Council meeting, and the January 3, 2023 Organizational meeting – Council Member Lawson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Council Member Martin seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Consider adoption of a resolution terminating reversion – Council Member Pearson stated that since she was elected 2 years ago, she has fought hard against the process of reversion. Pearson has felt like the lone wolf on Council but she has come to the realization that she was not because so many citizens called her, encouraged her and supported her. Pearson thanked those supporters, stating that it meant the world to her. Pearson read the resolution and made a motion to terminate the reversion process. Vice Mayor Rawls seconded the motion. Council Member Lawson said she has consistently heard Pearson and others preach about transparency and public input but to terminate reversion on this agenda without giving the public the opportunity to express their opinions goes against everything they've asked for. Lawson read a

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letter from a concerned citizen asking Council to take the same due diligence to stop reversion as Council did to begin the process.

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| <p>To my City Council Members,</p> <p>I write this as a concerned citizen as for the first time citizens will not have the opportunity to speak in this process, thank you Council Woman Lawson for agreeing to read this letter.</p> <p>Think back to November 19<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> in 2019. After reviewing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party financial study, Council called for public information session on the 19<sup>th</sup> for residents to see a presentation on reversion. Then in December, another presentation on reversion was given for the public to understand its impact on Martinsville. After listening to both presentations and citizens during a public hearing, all members of council voted to proceed. Obviously, some people didn't like it, however, there was a plan presented and made public.</p> <p>I wrote this not to sell you on reversion or ask you to change your minds. All I'm asking of you, Council Member Pearson, Vice Mayor Rawls, and Mayor Jones, is at the very least take the same due diligence that council took to start this process before deciding to end it.</p> <p>Here's what I mean, we have a 2019 study from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party accounting firm from that reported financial stress would lead the city to either raise taxes, cut services, both, or revert. That study was the previous council's source of information when voting on reversion. Where are your sources? Where is the information that counters that study? Is this information backed by 3<sup>rd</sup> party financial professionals? How is this being any more transparent or better than previous council when at least they presented information on their plans for the city or held multiple public hearings?</p> <p>I'm not for or against reversion, I'm for whatever solution allows our city and its services to improve and to be blunt whatever solution keeps more money in my pockets, your pockets, and everyone's pockets. An agenda item from our electric department is going to outline the need for a rate increase over the next 2 years just to make ends meet. Do you know how much that price tag will cost our residents? If not, is it too much to ask that you all hear from our electric department before ending a process that could save Martinsville millions?</p> <p>Lastly, ending reversion takes every piece of leverage we have for negotiating with Henry county for any type of help or consolidation. Without reversion for the next five years, any talks on school consolidation, any talks on consolidation of services, any solution to this financial situation that involves the county, will be at their mercy. Even if get them to the table, they can walk away like they've done before.</p> | <p>Reversion isn't happening next month or the month after. I'm no lawyer but I'm sure there are ways to keep this process in a standstill until citizens have a chance to see new information. Again, I'm not trying to change you mind on reversion, I'm just asking you delay this vote so that you all can present citizens with information on the next five years without reversion. Killing reversion without a public plan does not feel transparent. In fact, how can council members Lawson and Martin make an informed vote, when they don't know what they would be committing the city and citizens to.</p> <p>I'll end with this, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen. I have no doubt you all hope for the best for Martinsville, but I have seen no evidence of what to expect. Mayor Jones, Vice Mayor Rawls, and Council Member Pearson, is ask this with the upmost respect for your opinions and plans. Please don't just ask me to have blind faith in where you are taking this city. Instead, do this the right way and show citizens information that would make us believe we are headed in the right direction.</p> |
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Martin asked that before Council pulls the plug on reversion, that there be 2-3 public comment sessions and a public information session and asked that Council at least wait until Council Members have the opportunity to go through a budget session to see what they are dealing with as a City being financially strapped. If Council stops reversion now, they will have to wait 5 years and throw away the \$1million already invested in reversion. The City has been talking reversion since the 1970s; Martinsville is landlocked so they can not build out, only up. Lawson pointed out that it was the recommendation of the City Manager to also go through the next budget before deciding on reversion. Termination of reversion does not have to be done tonight, you can press pause and give everyone the opportunity to understand why reversion was encouraged. The \$3 million in ARPA money, once spent is gone and that money affects the appearance of the next budget but will not be there to apply in the future. Rawls said that he has been transparent on what he feels that the City has done wrong and what they can do right going forward. Part of the problem is how the Virginia code outlines the process. That does not excuse how this was handled with the public. When Council was talking about reversion, they are referring to pushing costs off on Henry County residents. Friendships with the County are still possible. Reversion discussion frustrates him. Rawls stated that the current Council is not killing reversion, it was killed by the previous Council that tried to mislead the residents. Developers are coming into the area who are interested in almost every available property. Rawls stated that he is getting upset watching Danville and other locations growing and Martinsville not. Rawls asked about the ARPA funds, and if we wanted to use that \$2-3million to fix

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crumbling pipes, why was so much spent on baseball fields. Our scale of priority is absurd. Council Member Lawson called the question. Council voted to terminate reversion with a 3-2 vote: Council Member Pearson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; Council Member Lawson, nay; Vice Mayor Rawls, aye; and Council Member Martin, nay.

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| <p><i>Council Members</i><br/>L.C. Jones, Mayor<br/>Aaron Rawls, Vice-Mayor<br/>Kathy Lawson<br/>Chad Martin<br/>Tammy Pearson</p> <p><b>Martinsville</b><br/>A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS</p> <p><i>City Manager</i><br/>Leon E. Towarnicki<br/><i>Clerk of Council</i><br/>Karen Roberts</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>associated with any such action, including but not limited to the termination of third-party agreements, and shall not execute such action until Council explicitly approves such costs.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>_____<br/>L.C. Jones, Mayor</p> <p>_____<br/>L.C. Jones<br/>Kathy Lawson<br/>Chad Martin<br/>Tammy Pearson<br/>Aaron Rawls</p> <p>_____<br/>ATTEST: Clerk of Council</p> <p>_____<br/>VOTE</p> |
| <p><b>RESOLUTION</b></p> <p><b>EXPRESSING COUNCIL'S DESIRE TO TERMINATE ANY AND ALL PROCEEDINGS RELATED TO THE CURRENT PETITION FOR REVERSION OF MARTINSVILLE FROM CITY TO TOWN STATUS</b></p> <p><b>WHEREAS</b>, following comprehensive studies and presentations of information related to the fiscal and operational impact of the City of Martinsville potentially transitioning to town status, <u>Martinsville</u> City Council voted unanimously on December 10, 2019 to authorize counsel to proceed with filing appropriate documents to initiate that process; and</p> <p><b>WHEREAS</b> the City of Martinsville has recognized the vital nature of including its citizens and institutions in matters of significant and irrevocable consequence regarding a change in municipal status; and</p> <p><b>WHEREAS</b> the City of Martinsville has expended a considerable sum of capital, effort, time, and goodwill in pursuit of municipal reversion; and</p> <p><b>WHEREAS</b> the City of Martinsville has not duly considered the impact of or desire for municipal reversion on affected parties, including the citizens and institutions of Henry County with whom the city wishes to engage in good faith endeavors for shared mutual benefit.</p> <p><b>WHEREAS</b>, since that time and subsequent Council elections, a majority of Council now believes the reversion process should be stopped;</p> <p><b>NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED</b> by the Council of the City of Martinsville assembled this 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2023, that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The City of Martinsville shall terminate all proceedings regarding the reversion of Martinsville to town status within Henry County;</li><li>2. The City Attorney and City Manager are authorized, with the approval of Council, to take all other such actions as may be necessary to accomplish the objective set forth herein. Where applicable, the City Manager shall first convey to Council any costs directly</li></ol> <p>55 West Church Street, P. O. Box 1112, Martinsville, VA 24114-1112 276-403-5180 Fax: 276-403-5280<br/>www.martinsville-va.gov</p> | <p>2</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Hear comments from Uptown residents and businesses as to the current state of Uptown –

Vice Mayor Rawls explained that they have tried to consolidate like-concerns because there are so many wanting to speak. There are some interesting situations where they are trying to help people find housing, substance abuse treatment, etc. Rawls met Mr. Barry, a local homeless man who gave them a better understanding of what was going on. Mr. Barry previously worked at Taco Bell as a supervisor; he had traveled from Roanoke to Danville seeking help. Mr. Barry said that coming to Martinsville was a good decision and that he and his partner have received assistance. Any programs promising help and not delivering should be closed down. Barry was dropped off at the Martinsville library with expectations, it was even suggested that he visit the hospital in Danville and tell them that he was suicidal so they would provide him a place to stay. When that didn't work out, he was shipped to Martinsville where he was given words of encouragement but not much else. Someone gave them a tent and they were told to camp on the Dick and Willie trail in the rain. Rawls said Council should consider why this was acceptable to do when they could get the same attention in Danville. Barry said the community should come together to help the homeless. Barry is currently staying at the warming shelter, however if the temperature is above freezing the shelter will not be open. Other services were promised by a private company and not delivered. Within a couple of days of being in Martinsville, he and

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his partner had been offered several job opportunities.

Brenda Stovall of Brenda's Catering, 45 East Church Street stated that business owners need to stand by each other. Stovall shared a recent incident with people loitering and drinking liquor at the backdoor of her business and refusing to leave. She called the police and was questioned by another business about why she would call the police. You don't want people acting like that and loitering around a business, especially Uptown with youth traveling back and forth at Uptown Pinball. Stovall said people are walking up and down the street with open containers, that's not normal or respectful and it negatively affects Uptown businesses.

Tim Martin, another Uptown business owner said he appreciates the Public Works Department and said they do a great job. There should be a service provided in Martinsville to take care of the homeless but the amount of litter, cans and bottles left around the area is getting worse. He hates that people are being mislead and told Martinsville has a homeless shelter when they don't.

Barbara of Prillaman's Meat Market said that it is a terrible situation with parking on Fayette Street with cars staying parked for a month at a time. She would like to see more police patrol Uptown to enforce parking. The dental clinic should be telling their patients to park in the parking lot so that they don't take up all of her customer parking. She would agree to pay-to-park again in Uptown. Vice Mayor Rawls offered to keep her updated.

Mary Rives Brown, an Uptown property owner read a letter from Alice Blevins of Fido's Finds. We want to help but Martinsville has limited resources. She doesn't agree with how the ARPA money has been allocated or the amount of money that has been invested on reversion. She is hopeful that everyone will coordinate all resources available.

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| <p>January 5, 2023</p> <p>Fido's Finds and Kittie's Collectibles is a thrift store/ SPCA fund raiser located at 119 East Church St.<br/>We moved into this space from 133 E. Main in June, 2020.<br/>Our store has been very successful, allowing us to support our SPCA. We also feel our lovely store has influenced the other businesses which have moved in to our block. Together, we have created an inviting shopping stop, which is a major goal for uptown Martinsville.</p> <p>Things changed when Peer Recovery moved in to our old space. We became concerned when there were groups loitering outside the store and most were men. Fido's is staffed by all women coming in to volunteer and customers are mostly women coming in to shop.</p> <p>Comments started coming in with customers on how uncomfortable ladies were with those groups on the street. Stories of being asked for money came through the door with customers. One lady came in with her child due to feeling threatened. Comments came from others who wanted to know why people were always "hanging around" the old store. On occasion, a Peer Recovery client would come in to our shop asking for money. When refused, they did not leave immediately which made the volunteers very uncomfortable.</p> <p>Whether the complaints/concerns were valid does not matter. If people felt uncomfortable, they most likely would not return to our store. We have had several calls expressing they would not come back until this is resolved.</p> <p>Parking is always a problem on Main St. but with the large lot between Rania's and 133, customers had easy access to stores in our block. That stopped because it required walking through the Peer group. Some of our volunteers used to park in the Rania's lot.</p> <p>In today's world, women are obviously more careful, even in Martinsville. We are a compassionate community and understand these people need help. The clients of Peer Recovery should also feel comfortable where this help is given. The city of Martinsville should see this as a responsibility of our government, or appropriate agency, to locate a new space for them.</p> | <p>I recall a comment made by Dr. Angeline Godwin, retired President of P&amp; HCC. She said she judged a new community she was considering by the way they treated their homeless and their animals.</p> <p>We have a wonderful SPCA to help the animals and a wonderful store to benefit the shelter.<br/>Fido's volunteers are very concerned that all our hard work and success is being compromised by the activities at 133 Main St.</p> <p><br/>Alice Ann Blevins<br/>Store Chairman/Fido's Finds</p> |
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Rawls read a statement from Dean Johnston, branch manager of Stifel Financial and president of Move to Martinsville.

My name is Dean Johnston. I am the Branch manager of Stifel Financial Services at 201 East Main St. I'm also the current President of the local non-profit organization, Move to Martinsville.

Our Uptown location is important to our business model. We seek to have a presence in the Uptown area, and financial district. We have clients that visit our office on a daily basis. Any questions for their safety, or that of our employees would be problematic, and we would need to consider a move.

As the president of Move to Martinsville, it is vitally important to our area, that we offer a clean, safe and vibrant Uptown. The Growth of the area is in large measure will be determined by the perceived and actual Quality of Life we offer residents, and those looking to move here.

Over recent months, we have experienced a noticeable change in activity in the Uptown area, and at our office. Unfortunately, it has not been a positive change. There is a population of folks present in Uptown that is not conducive to a good business model. And certainly doesn't present an attractive face to the community for folks looking to relocate.

Unfortunately, I do not have the answer. But I want you to know we recognize a growing problem, and are supportive of the community finding solutions that are good for all. And we're willing to help where we can.

Thank-You,

Dean Johnston  
Branch manager- Stifel Financial

Julien Mei, 207 Thomas Heights congratulated newly elected Mayor Jones and Vice Mayor Rawls. Mei looks forward to seeing what they will accomplish. He is upset and disappointed in how situations are being handled in the community. His phone is buzzing nonstop asking what is going on in Uptown Martinsville related to the homeless and others that are down on their luck. The plight of those down on their luck is dire, people do care and they want better lives and to find the support where they can, however it is negatively affecting Martinsville and the increasing numbers of homeless in the area has affected Uptown. One Uptown business and local family has decided to move from the community because she is no longer comfortable here. Some of the homeless people have been intentionally relocated here. He has worked hard to market Martinsville as a decent place to live. We do not have the resources to handle this situation in the community. The voices of the people who live Uptown and work Uptown are not being heard. Mei questioned how many homeless organizations are in Martinsville and who do they answer to. He doesn't think anyone is opposed to a homeless shelter in Martinsville, but it cannot be in Uptown Martinsville. Mei can think of nothing more detrimental to the community that is finally starting to revitalize. Mei said he knows he sounds heartless but he's talking about the community and everyone in it. Efforts to find a solution should not come at the expense of the community as a whole.

Council Member Lawson requested that the representative of Epic Health Partners be allowed to speak since the name of the company has been brought up several times. Cory Williams, Chatham Virginia and CEO of Epic Health said he has spent a lot of time in Martinsville and has seen the devastation after NAFTA. Martinsville is very dear to him. Williams apologized to Mr. Barry and his partner and said that his office is investigating what happened in their situation. In regards to details, he doesn't know the facts yet, but he is committed to fixing it. Individuals usually come into their office, they're homeless and their circumstances are investigated. Staff will call around to find them housing. They were supposed to be dropped in a location with an open bed so he is unsure how Mr. Barry ended up homeless in Martinsville.



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Williams and his team want to be part of a solution. Council Member Martin asked Williams to explain the Epic Health organization. Williams explained that Epic was founded in 2015 based off of a William's family member with mental illness. He wants to increase awareness and provide community based services, crisis stabilization and assistance with substance abuse. They see the residential market as a huge need but they are not licensed and can only link individuals to housing. Jones asked what other areas Epic covers in Virginia and have they experienced the same situation there. Williams said they are located in Richmond, Danville and Martinsville and homelessness is a significant issue in those areas as well as lack of social workers nationwide. Epic wants to be solution oriented. Rawls asked how the Martinsville library became a drop-off point for the homeless. Williams explained that the Danville and Martinsville offices communicate before people are brought and dropped off in Martinsville. Bevin Lovelace, Chief Operating Office for Epic explained how clients are assessed and how they determine what needs they qualify for. Rawls questioned if Epic works with Medicaid on services provided. Lovelace explained that Epic staff tries to link clients to emergency housing and the Danville and Martinsville locations work closely together. Unfortunately, what can be offered in Danville may not be offered in Martinsville, but if Martinsville can provide something Danville cannot, then they work hand-in-hand together. Rawls asked her about their history of audit investigations. She said they are audited each time they are up for relicensing. Williams said they are audited annually and anytime there is a specific occurrence. They have had less than 10 corrective actions in the past years. The organization is for-profit and Williams confirmed that he is an entrepreneur. Williams graduated from Averett University, he worked at Goodyear Tire, transferred to the Danville plant, and he had worked in a corporate position until he identified his true passion for helping people which was sparked by his uncle's mental illness. He began research in 2012 and opened EPIC in 2015. The organization must be certified and they are monitored regularly by the state. Council Member Martin said if the state says EPIC is qualified then he is unsure why Rawls is questioning it. Lovelace said they have an international CARP accreditation. The first year they applied they received a 3-year accreditation which is unheard of and just recently went through the review a second time and received the 3-year accreditation again. Martin requested that EPIC return to a future meeting with a PowerPoint to better present what services they provide and the certifications that they have, giving them time to better prepare for Council's questions. Rawls said he appreciates the input but he would decline the request for Epic to present at a future Council meeting. Rawls said they had received numerous reports from individuals that went to Epic's office in Martinsville both Thursday and Friday but that the office was not open. Williams explained that there is only one building in operation, the second building is not licensed and needs a Certificate of Occupancy to be opened. Lovelace confirmed that the Ellsworth office staff did not leave the office until after 5:00pm on either of those days and that the workers were there and saw the reporters taking pictures, stating that no one came to the door to see if the office was open. Contrary to what Rawls was

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told, group meetings with clients were held both days. Williams reiterated that he was not trying to rebuke any of the claims; Epic wants to work with Martinsville to help fix the homeless situation in this area. Lawson said that by Williams and Lovelace attending the meeting today recognizing that some things were handled poorly, that was a sign of good faith. There are a lot of people in the community that care and want to see this program do well. Martin clarified that Williams and Epic didn't bring homelessness here, it's been here for some time. Pearson said they know they are seeing an increase of homeless residents traveling here from outside our area from other communities and states. Williams said the reported "incident" with Mr. Barry is the only one he is aware of. Epic staff are not busing homeless people to Martinsville to leave them without a plan, and it makes zero sense to move a problem from one community to another.

Barbara Seymour of Mulberry Road has been a resident of Martinsville for 2 years, having relocated from Florida in 2021. She had three job offers but chose Martinsville for its charm, the people and the opportunity for growth and revitalization. She is a nurse working 18 months at the local Martinsville hospital. Her views are hers alone and not the views of her previous or current employers. Evidence of homelessness can be seen everywhere from the streets of Uptown Martinsville to the hospital emergency room. Homelessness has a ripple effect for communities; where there is homelessness there is poverty, hunger, lack of education, addiction, and dilution of services. Individuals and communities with increases in these social drivers of health, are at a disproportionate risk for illness and health inequity. How do we as a community know that we are moving past the business of sick care to the business of health care. As a mother of a child who suffered from heroin addiction and homelessness, she sees each person as someone's child, someone's partner, someone's sibling. This is a call to action, Seymour is asking Council Members and other community members to hold organizations like Epic accountable to serving the community as they have been charged and to strongly encourage a planful, transparent and outcomes-oriented approach to serving the homeless citizens. Their wellness is the wellness of Martinsville.

Bobby Price, owner of American Patriot Auctions at 101 East Main Street said that he is in the thick of the homelessness situation. He considers himself extremely compassionate; he has met and worked with some incredible people since moving to Martinsville. The need is here for what he can provide and his profit margins allow him to help anyone he wants to; however, the homeless situation is hindering the growth of his business. What he is seeing now are violent people moving into the area. The homeless near his business previously were friendly and helpful. As this new population of homeless move in, he is seeing his supporters moving out and referenced previous events involving some of the new people who are hanging around the area. This is not just a homeless situation but also a mental illness situation. If this is the way it's going to be, he doesn't want to be here, he will close his business and will move away from Martinsville. Martinsville may have had homeless in the past but not to the scale that it's

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becoming now. If this situation is not rectified, it will close down Uptown Martinsville. He has people coming into his business while they are waiting on meetings at the Peer Group, wasting time and shoplifting. The magic of running his business and admiring the City has changed, now he looks around each corner and carries a gun on his hip. Vice Mayor Rawls acknowledged his frustration also and has started carrying a firearm and mace. It appears that most homeless in the area are between 20-40 years old. During his time at the Outer Banks, he noticed that they do a “room at the inn” program where churches volunteer spaces, taking turns to offer meals and lodging; it shouldn’t be too hard to create a situation like that here in Martinsville.

Mary Kay Berger, chairperson and volunteer of Peer Recovery is a nurse and a nurse practitioner. For a long time, homeless people were sent to Roanoke routinely so Martinsville has not seen this problem until recently or bus tickets were bought to shuttle them to family outside of Martinsville. She attended a meeting at New College recently and there was a gentleman there from Legal Aid; he mentioned that by the end of June, the way that landlords were doing evictions will be changing and that by September or October there would be a huge increase in homelessness. Peer Recovery Connection is a recovery program for substance abuse. Keith Owens is not about homelessness, but he has helped drive people to shelters so that he could connect with them and get them into the program. Those people were told that if they were in the program they must be there for recovery and not just to hang around. Tim Martin has been helpful to get them a place to work from but they’ll need to relocate and after the Martinsville Bulletin article, people don’t want to work with them anymore. If people are walking down the street with open containers, then they are not coming from the Peer program. When people are disruptive, they are banned from the program. Peer Recovery is a nonprofit and they do not bill for services.

Hear information related to the establishment of a new commission titled “Emergency Housing and Community Support Commission” – Council Member Pearson made a motion to establish the Emergency Housing and Community Support Commission. Vice Mayor Rawls seconded the motion. Council Member Lawson asked if there would be any guidelines for this commission. Rawls explained that he gets five or more complaints every day and he has watched cities die because officials did not act on homeless concerns. Rawls said the purpose of the commission is to engage professionals who have knowledge of the area to advise Council on suggestions how to handle the homeless issue. The goal is to build this commission with individuals that are not close with any select organization and who can be trusted. If they wait, every day is a night someone is in the cold. This group will determine what is failing in the fabric of these services. They need to shift their focus to actual outcomes and not just services provided. Lawson asked if there was a structure or a proposal like other boards and commissions. Lawson expressed concern about the speed in which the commission is appointed and that there would be people wishing to participate but not given the opportunity. Rawls said the members of the commission would be nominated by Council Members. Lawson explained



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that is not how other City boards are handled and that they encourage public nominations. Martin questioned Rawls and about his lack of public transparency. Lawson expressed her concern that they are not giving the community the opportunity to ask questions and offer services because Rawls and Pearson have already selected specific individuals for the committee without input from others. Lawson said Peer Recovery has been blamed for situations that they had no control over or any part of. She does not disagree with what they are trying to accomplish with the Commission, her concern is in how this board is being presented and not giving residents any input and there is absolutely no transparency. Martin said the owner of the women's shelter would be a good candidate but that she is not in attendance, as well as representatives from other organizations such as the Rainbow House, Keith Owens, Ariel Johnson, and local pastors would be good options. Pearson said no one is being left out but they are anxious to get this commission started and members appointed.

Latasha Palmer stepped up to the podium, she said sometimes experience trumps credentials. She has been in business for over 20 years. She has seen a great need in our area and she is also a landlord. She has interviewed over 20 homeless in the area and over half are not from Martinsville; they came here because they met someone on social media or family passed away leaving them unable to stay there. They need a community service board, someone who is compassionate who doesn't mind sitting down with the homeless. Her family has been pitching in to by food, her children's home school group has donated clothing, her best tenant was previously homeless. She has worked with almost every community service board in this community. Rawls said the purpose of this proposed commission is to inform Council on what's happening to cause the increase in homelessness.

Tony Davis said the only Council Member he has seen at Peer Recovery Center or the warming center is Council Member Martin. If Council wants to know more about the homeless problem then come talk to the homeless people one on one. Martin said from the warming center, he has only encountered three people who are from out of town and Rawls would not know that because he hasn't been there. Martin suggested Rawls volunteer at locations like the warming center and see the issues for himself. Davis said no other Council Member aside from Martin has volunteered at the center. Prayer without action does nothing. Davis doesn't want to move his business Uptown because he wants to be in a community willing to help one another. Martin said there has been attacks by citizens and a Council Member directed to homeless residents and those trying to help them. Davis said if those people who sleep beside the homeless each night, who volunteer their time to help them, and who break bread with them each day are not allowed the opportunity to serve on the commission then he doesn't know anyone else who would do a better job.

Mayor Jones explained that the purpose of this commission is to have a committee to connect the dots and put the issues expressed by all together. Council Member Martin's opinion is that Rawls does not want those providing services to the homeless day in and day out to serve on

January 10, 2023 Council Meeting

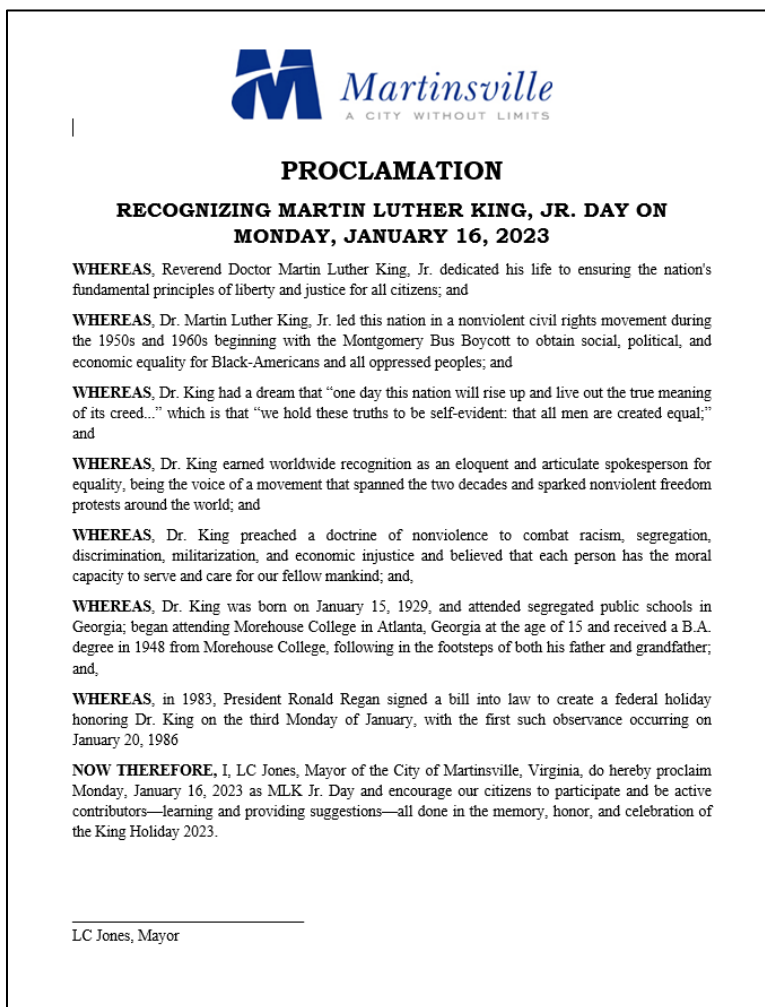
the Commission. Rawls said he does not have an issue with the warming center but he wants somewhere for those residents to go during the day and on the warmer nights when the warming center is not open. Council Member Lawson respectfully asked that the commission be created but wait to appointment members to receive public input and allow more dialog from Pearson, Rawls and Jones on what their goals, purpose and plans are for the commission. How often will the commission meet? There are others within the community who are qualified and will want to be part of the solution but they won't allow that because Pearson, Jones and Rawls want to pick their five people tonight. Rawls explained that they have five very qualified people already in mind. Jones asked that they consolidate all of the information and present that at the next Council meeting with an opportunity to receive additional names of anyone wishing to be involved. Jones said they recognize the problem, Council is rushing to get it fixed and he expects a lot of people to reach out. Lawson said to create a commission, you need a mission statement and a purpose but none of that has been shared with remaining Council Members or the community. It needs to be a 2-step process of creating the commission then appointing the members. Council Member Martin said he is unclear what he is voting for because there is no verbiage to describe the purpose of the commission. All Council Members voted in favor to create the commission.

Hear comments from Police Chief Rob Fincher - Police Chief Fincher thanked Council for allowing him to address citizens and share his vision for Martinsville. He feels it is necessary to touch on a couple of topics addressed. In recent months they have received a 27% increase in calls Uptown related to the homelessness issues. They are committed to combatting those issues but until they get to the root of the problem it will be a never-ending concern. Fincher has consulted with an outside law enforcement agency and they have asked Fincher to limit his remarks due to an ongoing investigation. Martin asked about a partnership with Uptown businesses. Fincher is working to bring back Business Watch where business owners get together like Neighborhood Watch meetings. Fincher said the first area of importance is his department's commitment to community policing and trust building, these are programs and a departmental philosophy and is crucial to build a partnership between the police and the community. Police must have the active support of the community and the citizens; it is their desire to build on public trust with increased transparency with policies and procedures being shared on the City's website. Officers will be receiving additional training on various topics including use of force, de-escalation, and more which will be required annually. The Police Departments participation in the state accreditation is important. The Martinsville accreditation team is meeting with a team of assessment professionals in Martinsville over the next several days to review all policies, practices and trainings to ensure that what they are doing is the best and most professional methods possible. Martinsville has some of the best officers in the country and they want to advance their abilities by offering the best training as well as ways to promote their mental wellness and adequate staffing demands. Fincher's desire is to promote a

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guardian officer culture instead of a warrior mindset. This past year, Martinsville officers have logged over 3500 manpower hours on emergency custody orders and temporary detention orders, which constitutes two fulltime positions with a cost of over \$100,000. That's 3500 hours that those officers were not out patrolling the streets. The Police Department is currently five officers short. Fincher discussed the Bold Blue Line partnership over the past few weeks where his office worked closely with state law enforcement. This is a necessity to fight the illegal drug trade. Drugs drive almost all of our crimes and are destroying lives in the community. From January to November 2022, Martinsville had the fourth highest heroin overdose totals within our jurisdiction. We must do what we can to stop the dealers and find help for those addicted. Fincher is happy to meet with anyone to discuss more complete plans and answer any questions. Martin confirmed that although Martinsville had high rates of overdoses, does not mean that we had a high death rate and that Martinsville had a higher percentage of saves for overdoses.

Read a Proclamation acknowledging Monday, January 16, 2023 as Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Mayor Jones read the proclamation which was presented to Rev. Tyler Millner.



Recognize City Employees who are eligible for Service Awards for the period October 1 – December 31, 2022 – City Manager Towarnicki read the list of service award recipients and thanked them for their service.

**SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS**  
**FOURTH QUARTER - FISCAL YEAR 21-22**  
**FOR THE PERIOD OF OCTOBER 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2022**

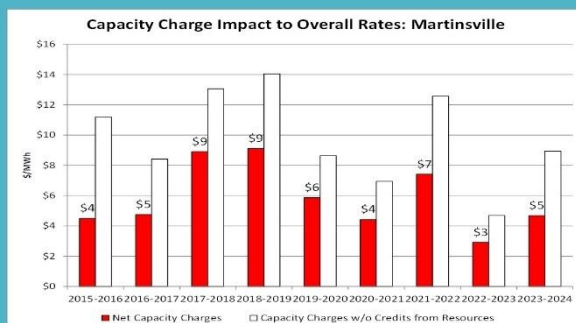
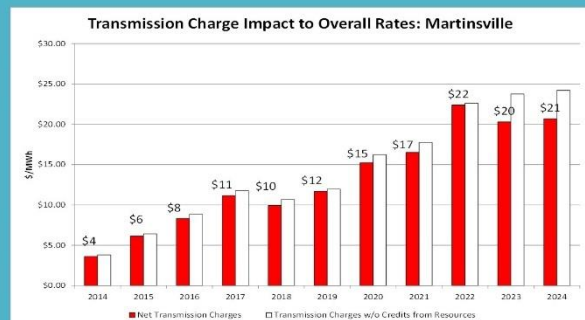
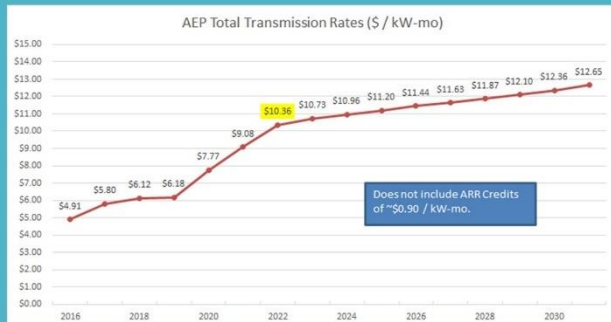
| First Name | Last Name | Location                      | YOS      |
|------------|-----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| LAURA      | LAWSON    | FIRE DEPARTMENT               | 15 Years |
| ELWOOD     | BRYANT    | CENTRAL GARAGE                | 15 Years |
| TIMOTHY    | JAMISON   | FIRE DEPARTMENT               | 20 Years |
| CURTIS     | MILLNER   | WATER IMPOUNDING & FILTRATION | 25 Years |
| JOHN       | KACZOR    | FIRE DEPARTMENT               | 25 Years |

Hear information related to the need for an electric rate increase – Electric Department Director Durwin Joyce said they have been anticipating an increase for several years. Joyce presented a PowerPoint explaining the cost of service overview and proposed rate increase.

City of Martinsville Electric Department

Cost of Service Overview and  
Proposed Rate Increase

- COS indicates a 14% rate increase is needed
- Proposed 8% increase for all rates effective 2/1/2023
- Additional 6% (+/- w/exact % TBD) effective 7/1/2023
- Specific rates should be adjusted to reflect cost of service
- Adjusting rates would lead to some customers seeing less of an increase and others more
- Study based on FY 21 data, additional costs have developed in FY 22 and 23
- Latest block power purchase prices for CY 24-25 have increased which will result in an additional increase of \$1.2 million annually



Rising transmission costs have been the primary driver of cost increases  
 Beginning in January 2022 energy prices have also risen, tracking natural gas prices  
 Residential bill of 1000 KWh would increase from \$128.64 to \$139.85  
 \$1,542,380 annual increase in revenues based on 159,799 MWh sold  
 \$1.2 million loss in FY 22, most occurring after January  
 Cash reserves have decreased in the last few years to \$307,121. Cash reserve policy suggests a balance of \$4,446,737

| Line | Rate Class                         | Average Customers | Annual kWh  | Demand Rates |             |              |              | Residual Rates |              |             |      | Incentive |             |  |  |
|------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|------|-----------|-------------|--|--|
|      |                                    |                   |             | 2016         |             | 2016         |              | 2016           |              | 2016        |      | 2016      |             |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             | 2016         | 2016        | 2016         | 2016         | 2016           | 2016         | 2016        | 2016 | 2016      | 2016        |  |  |
| 1    | Residential Electric Service       | 6,006             | 78,636,039  | \$1,085.71   | \$1,226.02  | \$9,422.95   | \$0.47,212   | \$1,226.02     | \$10,490.61  | \$73.641    | 0%   | 0%        | \$73.641    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 3.9%        |  |  |
| 2    | Residential Three-Phase Service    | 70                | 2,499,422   | \$227.29     | \$38.00     | \$233.94     | \$270.47     | \$38.00        | \$39,930.22  | \$22.018    | 0%   | 0%        | \$22.018    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.2%        |  |  |
| 3    | Small Commercial Service           | 709               | 8,999,832   | \$110.906    | \$144.837   | \$1,238.00   | \$1,178.06   | \$144.837      | \$1,222.20   | \$98.998    | 0%   | 0%        | \$98.998    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.0%        |  |  |
| 4    | Medium General Service             | 204               | 26,706,109  | \$337.371    | \$533.02    | \$2,480.10   | \$2,574.74   | \$533.02       | \$2,897.47   | \$217.94    | 0%   | 0%        | \$217.94    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.1%        |  |  |
| 5    | Medium General Service Time Of Day | 6                 | 161,890     | \$1,426.20   | \$2.22      | \$338.10     | \$1,819.1    | \$2.22         | \$2,202.30   | \$1.522     | 0%   | 0%        | \$1.522     |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.0%        |  |  |
| 6    | Large General Service              | 18                | 21,171,937  | \$1,280.29   | \$303.73    | \$2,124.02   | \$1,199.71   | \$303.73       | \$2,308.07   | \$187.408   | 0%   | 0%        | \$187.408   |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.1%        |  |  |
| 7    | Large Power Service                | 1                 | 12,940,400  | \$947.331    | \$120.931   | \$1,340.87   | \$1,638.84   | \$120.931      | \$1,240.709  | \$51.468    | 0%   | 0%        | \$51.468    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.0%        |  |  |
| 8    | Public Authority (Special)         | 6                 | 4,252,546   | \$505.82     | \$76.861    | \$2,676.00   | \$251.008    | \$76.861       | \$421.735    | \$45.678    | 0%   | 0%        | \$45.678    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 3.9%        |  |  |
| 9    | Public Authority (Other)           | 112               | 8,908,399   | \$87.771     | \$152.134   | \$9,419.11   | \$9,614.22   | \$152.134      | \$107,128    | \$76.718    | 0%   | 0%        | \$76.718    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.0%        |  |  |
| 10   | Commercial of Virginia             | 2                 | 90,804      | \$51,629     | \$1,432     | \$1,404.84   | \$1,444      | \$1,432        | \$68,019     | \$126.78    | 0%   | 0%        | \$126.78    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 9.3% |           | 0.2%        |  |  |
| 11   | Other Industrial                   | 1,518             | 275,240     | \$193.840    | \$6         | \$193.840    | \$205.196    | \$6            | \$209.196    | \$13.251    | 0%   | 0%        | \$13.251    |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 7.9% |           | 0.0%        |  |  |
| 12   | Low Voltage Lighting               | 3,493             | 881,280     | \$6          | \$6         | \$6          | \$6          | \$6            | \$6          | \$6         | 0%   | 0%        | \$6         |  |  |
|      |                                    |                   |             |              |             |              |              |                |              |             | 0.0% |           | 0.0%        |  |  |
| 13   | Total Revenue                      | 22,240            | 131,173,880 | \$119,228    | \$2,474,708 | \$18,368,262 | \$18,600,854 | \$2,474,708    | \$24,891,431 | \$1,626,828 | 9.3% |           | \$1,626,828 |  |  |

| Estimated Value Residential Electric Rates |                                                                 |                          |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Municipality                               | Summer, Fall 2012 for 100 Watts<br>Number of electric utilities | Electric consumption?    |
|                                            | \$100                                                           |                          |
| British Columbia (utility) - \$110.20*     |                                                                 |                          |
| Fort St. John - \$114.42                   |                                                                 |                          |
| ABC - \$116.38*                            |                                                                 | 2.6% - \$117.60*         |
|                                            |                                                                 | 2.9% - \$117.87*         |
| Marathon - \$120.23                        |                                                                 | Community - \$119.19     |
| Leaven - \$118.05                          |                                                                 |                          |
|                                            | \$120                                                           |                          |
| Wichita - \$120.41                         |                                                                 |                          |
| Estimate - \$120.15                        |                                                                 |                          |
| Estimate - \$120.58                        |                                                                 | Pass-through - \$122.49* |
| Marathon - \$118.64                        |                                                                 | Peak Sizing - \$124.76   |
|                                            |                                                                 |                          |
|                                            | Electricity 100 Watts - \$119.15                                |                          |
|                                            | \$120                                                           |                          |
|                                            |                                                                 | NGW - \$140.20           |
| Marathon - \$114.58                        |                                                                 | Marathon - \$140.40      |
|                                            |                                                                 | NGW - \$140.40*          |
|                                            | Domestic - \$130.80*                                            |                          |
|                                            |                                                                 | NGW - \$130.80           |
|                                            |                                                                 | Schedule - \$138.10*     |
|                                            | \$140                                                           |                          |
|                                            | Domestic - \$140.11*                                            |                          |
| Chicago Peak - \$140.00 (100-120)          |                                                                 |                          |
|                                            |                                                                 | Rate - \$140.58          |
| Residential - \$144.13                     |                                                                 |                          |
| Wichita - \$140.10                         |                                                                 |                          |
| Marathon - \$144.42                        |                                                                 |                          |
| Chicago - \$140.00                         |                                                                 |                          |
|                                            | ABC - \$140.87*                                                 |                          |
|                                            | \$150                                                           |                          |
| Denver - \$151.00                          |                                                                 |                          |
|                                            | ABC - \$151.80*                                                 |                          |
|                                            | \$170                                                           |                          |
|                                            |                                                                 | Cong-Schedule - \$171.41 |



The City of Martinsville appreciates the efforts its legislators undertake at both the state and federal level on behalf of its citizens. Listed below are the City's priorities requested of its legislative delegation in 2023.

#### Virginia General Assembly

##### **Transportation**

1. In the short term, upgrade those portions of Route 220 overlaying I-73 to interstate standards. Any construction or upgrades to the I-73 corridor should begin on those sections passing through Henry County.
2. Continue to place priority on Route 58 improvements, particularly the section between Stuart and Hillsville, Virginia.
3. Increase VDOT funding for road construction and repaving.

##### **Education**

1. City Council endorses the concept asserted by Sen. Bill Stanley that the Virginia Constitution and United States Supreme Court precedent requires statewide parity in state funding for school construction, maintenance and operations.
2. City Council endorses the agenda proposed by the Martinsville City School System and also endorses the educational priorities adopted by Henry County, on behalf of its school system.
3. Oppose the imposition of unaided education mandates and on the event of revenue cuts by the Commonwealth opposes targeted cuts by the Commonwealth, instead preferring local decision making authority on where to make any such cuts.
4. Request the Commonwealth to fully fund the expenditures imposed upon local school systems by implementing the Standards of Quality.
5. Encourage the Commonwealth to continue or increase the current levels of financial support provided to Patrick & Henry Community College.
6. Request the Commonwealth to provide incentives for consolidation of school systems.
7. Continue to support funding for school resource officers and ensure that decisions regarding usage of resource officers in schools remain as a local choice option.

##### **Economic Development**

1. Maintain current levels of funding for economic development incentives, including but not limited to the Governor's Opportunity Fund.
2. Enhance the authority granted to localities to address and eliminate blighted properties, and the formation of interstate compacts to allow expedited recourse against out-of-state property owners. (City Priority)
3. Increase funding levels for the Virginia Museum of Natural History.
4. Request enhanced state and federal financial assistance for localities which exceed the average state unemployment rate by 150% for a period of five consecutive years.
5. Support continued tourism awareness initiatives in the Martinsville-Henry County region.
6. Expand local authority to designate Enterprise Zones and establish incentives.

7. Oppose efforts by Henry County PSA to reopen the Lower Smith River Wastewater Treatment Plant, absent a regional study concluding that such is in the best interests of Martinsville-Henry County taxpayers, customer base, economic needs and state environmental policy.
8. Expand grants and resources available to fiscally stressed localities, and to business development entities in such localities, to aid in the encouragement or development of small and entrepreneurial businesses. (City Priority)
9. Support the Virginia Grocery Investment Fund, as a public-private initiative to improve nutrition and access to quality food, and enhance economic development by encouraging the development of grocery stores in neighborhoods where none exist.
10. Support continued funding of the Virginia Food Access Investment Fund Grants program.

##### **Governance**

1. Adopt the recommendations of the Virginia Commission on Local Government in its 2018 Annexation Moratorium Study, and urge the General Assembly to enact those recommendations in the 2023 Session.
2. Amend Code of Virginia 51-1-155.2 to allow Constitutional Offices, abolished by reversion of any city to town status, to take early VRS retirement, free of penalty.
3. Urge the General Assembly to conform the state tax code to the 2018 changes in the Federal income tax code.
4. Require full funding for HB 599 funds, in fulfillment of the Commonwealth's commitment to cities in return for their acquiescence in the annexation moratorium.
5. Require that the Commonwealth fully fund its obligations to the Virginia Retirement System, and refrain from borrowing from VRS funds.
6. Request the elimination of "local aid to the Commonwealth" in the state budget; local aid artificially inflates state revenues by shifting responsibility for cuts in vital services onto localities.
7. Elimination of all unfunded mandates from the Commonwealth to localities. (City Priority)
8. Oppose any elimination or alteration of local revenue streams, and specifically oppose any amendment to the current manner in which the Business Occupation and Licensing Tax and the Machinery and Tools Tax are levied, unless a replacement revenue stream, not subject to biennial appropriation, is guaranteed by the Commonwealth.
9. Preserve intact local authority to regulate zoning, land use, and regulation of the installation of wireless communication equipment.
10. Request at a minimum, level funding for operational requirements of the Henry-Martinsville Department of Social Services.
11. Request that the General Assembly leaves intact the fire programs fund and the rescue squad assistance funds and not use these funds as a way to balance the state budget.
12. Request that the Commonwealth fully fund its obligations to constitutional officers.
13. Oppose any attempt to curtail the doctrine of sovereign immunity for localities.
14. Oppose any attempt to permit collective bargaining for state and local government employees.
15. Oppose any amendment of the existing burden of proof or process in local tax appeals cases.
16. Request authority to refund erroneously paid taxes at an interest rate which differs from that imposed on delinquencies, and to refund taxes erroneously paid through the fault of the taxpayer at no interest.
17. Support VML's endorsement of a JLARC study of assigning a proportional share of lottery sales revenue to the localities generating such sales.
18. Require the Commonwealth to fund 100% of the per-diem costs of housing state inmates in local jails.
19. Support all state efforts to provide aid and support services to fiscally stressed localities, but oppose any attempts to interfere with localities' right to solve their own financial problems locally.

1

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20. Support the alteration of award criteria in the "REACH Virginia" and all other VHDA programs to a per-capita income-based model.
21. Request that any legislation adopted by the General Assembly concerning the decriminalization of marijuana include local authority to regulate commercial distribution and use.
22. Amend Code of Virginia 15.2-4106 to provide explicit guidance on consolidation of school systems upon municipal reversion. Grant authority to special courts established via 15.2-41 authority to consolidate small school systems based on the criteria enumerated in 22.1-25.
23. Amend Code of Virginia 22.1-25 to grant BOE direct authority to consolidate school systems with small & declining student populations based on the criteria enumerated in the same section.
24. Properly fund the local Public Defender's office

United States Congress

1. Request the addition of the urban center of micropolitan statistical areas to the eligibility list of "Entitlement Cities."
2. Oppose any effort to impose additional taxation or regulation of electrical power generation by coal or natural gas.
3. Urge the Federal Highway Commission to adopt the CTB's designated route for I-73, or alternatively to preserve the current record of decision in the event the CTB's route is rejected.
4. In the short term, upgrade those portions of Route 220 overlaying I-73 to interstate standards.
5. Request \$3.75M in funds for the redevelopment of brownfields located within the City.
6. Request \$6.25M in funds for the elimination and redevelopment of blighted areas in the City.
7. Request legislation to provide special federal incentives to businesses locating in regions which have experienced job losses in excess of 5% of the total workforce and/or declines in median incomes since the adoption of NAFTA, WTO or GATT. Target such areas for increased federal funding in education or workforce retraining.
8. Extend high speed broadband service throughout southern Virginia.
9. Request enhanced state and federal financial assistance for localities which exceed the average state unemployment rate by 150% for a period of five consecutive years.
10. Oppose the elimination or reduction of the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

Staff Designations

City Council empowers the following staff members to speak on its behalf and in its best interests to the Virginia General Assembly and United States Congress, its members and committees:  
City Manager Leon Towarnicki  
Other department heads as appointed by the City Manager

Business from the Floor – Leroy Hairston, Terry Street, congratulated the Mayor and Vice-Mayor. He hopes tonight will be a gain for all in attendance. As he leaves here, he asked Council if they are satisfied with the way the City is going and if they are not satisfied, how can they make a difference. He is very concerned about the City. Hairston said he feels that some Council Members know things they are not releasing but those skeletons will eventually come out. Whatever a man sows, that he shall reap. Are we willing to work together and stop putting on a show?

Comments by City Council – Council Member Martin stated that although the vote about ending reversion has already happened, residents have seen the pending electric rate increase and the budget will be a very ugly process. Residents don't realize how fiscally strapped Martinsville is. Martin is glad to see Martinsville youth grow up to be successful in the community, referring to a couple of local reporters in attendance. Council Member Lawson shared that the flags will be out Monday for Martin Luther King Day and Saturday is the MLK Leadership breakfast at NCI. 2023 is a reassessment year for real estate and letters will be going out shortly. Lawson requested that when preparing the narrative on the new committee, to please include if any staff time and costs that will be included on the new committee from a budget standpoint. Council Member Pearson thanked everyone for speaking and sharing insights tonight; your voice is being heard and that is why Council Members want to move so quickly to action with the new Committee. Pearson would like to recognize the Martinsville Bulletin for reporting on the NCI issues and homeless situation; the Bulletin has been stellar



January 10, 2023 Council Meeting

along with many other articles and editorials. Pearson encourages residents to subscribe to the Bulletin. Vice Mayor Rawls also recommended residents subscribe to the Bulletin; staff has done well looking into local issues and he hopes those stories and changes to the community continue. Rawls wants to move forward with a purpose, there is a lot to be done and change can be difficult. Because things can be contentious does not mean it's bad. Rawls is thankful for every person who's contacted him with their concerns and he hopes residents will continue to reach out to them. Mayor Jones thanked everyone for attending tonight, stating that this was a long meeting but what happened tonight needed to happen. Council needed to hear the voices of the residents on the issues. There are so many sides that have not been heard. Jones encourages residents to bring concerns forward and don't be afraid to speak out.

Comments by the City Manager – City Manager Towarnicki shared that the City Municipal building and offices will be closed for Martin Luther King Day. In the event of an emergency when the offices are closed, there is an afterhours number to contact.

Council Member Lawson made a motion to adjourn at 10:30pm; Rawls seconded the motion.

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Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

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LC Jones, Mayor