

December 19, 2023 Council Meeting

The regular meeting of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia was held on December 19, 2023, in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 7:00 PM with Mayor LC Jones presiding. Other Council Members present included Kathy Lawson, Lawrence Mitchell, Aaron Rawls and Tammy Pearson. Staff present included City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, Community Finance Director Mandy McGhee, Utilities Director Durwin Joyce, Development Director Keith Holland, Building Inspector Kris Bridges, Police ??, and City Attorney Paul Jacobson of Sands Anderson.

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order. Council Member Lawson led the pledge and offered invocation. Mayor 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 October 24, 2023 Council Meeting - Council Member Lawson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Vice Mayor Rawls seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Consider approval of the Nuisance Ordinance amendment – Building Inspector Kris Bridges summarized the changes to the ordinance. Vice Mayor Rawls requested that this topic be tabled until the January 23, 2024, Council meeting; Council Member Pearson seconded the vote with all Council Members voting in favor.

City of Martinsville, Virginia

Ordinance No. 2023-__

WHEREAS, the City of Martinsville is empowered through Chapter 1, Section 2-20 of the Martinsville City Charter to compel the abatement and removal of all public nuisances within the city; to require all lands, lots and other premises within the city to be kept clean, sanitary and free from weeds; and generally to define, prohibit, abate, suppress and prevent all things detrimental to the health, morals, comfort, safety, convenience and welfare of the inhabitants of the city; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Martinsville is likewise empowered pursuant to § 15.2-901 and of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, to require that owners of occupied or vacant undeveloped or developed property within the city to cut the grass, weeds and other vegetative growth on such property or any part thereof at such time or times as the City Council may prescribe; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Martinsville is further empowered pursuant to § 15.2-1115 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, to compel the abatement or removal of all nuisances, including but not limited to the removal of weeds from private and public property; to abate such nuisances at the cost of noncompliant landowners; and to assess liens against properties for such abatement expense; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Martinsville has determined that the excessive and untrimmed growth of grass, weeds and invasive or noxious vegetation on real property located within the city tends to accumulate trash, debris and litter; tends to harbor or serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes, rodents and other animals harmful to public health; tends to diminish neighborhood housing values and is otherwise injurious to the public health, safety and welfare and constitutes a public nuisance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of -Martinsville, Virginia, in Regular Session held ____, 2023 that Sections 13-37, 15.5-21 and 15.5-22 of the Code of the City of Martinsville be amended to hereafter read as follows:

Sec. 13-37. Excessive growth of grass, weeds, etc., on real property within the City.

- (a) It shall be the duty of the owner of any parcel of land in the city to cut or cause to be cut all grass, weeds or like vegetative growth so that such growth at no time exceeds a height of ten (10) inches above the ground for a depth of one hundred fifty (150) feet measured from the property line abutting a city-maintained public street, at an angle of ninety (90) degrees with such property line.

(1) Such vegetative growth shall be cut as often as necessary to comply with the standards stated herein, which shall be no less frequent than two (2) times per year, with a cutting to occur at least once between May 15 and June 15; and another cutting to occur at least once between August 1 and September 1.

- (b) The director of community development may grant a variance from these requirements upon a determination that steep slopes or terrain make it impractical to cut such vegetative growth as described above provided that the intent of these requirements is complied with.

- (c) Should the owner of any such property fail or refuse to abide by this requirement, the director of community development shall give a written notice to such owner requiring him to cut or have cut such grass, weeds or vegetative growth within fifteen (15) days after the date of the notice.

- (d) The notice referred to in subsection (b) above shall be given to the owner in the same manner permitted under Section 15.5-22 of the Code of the City of Martinsville.

- (e) Upon the failure or refusal of the owner, after serving of the notice pursuant to this section, to cut or cause to be cut the grass, weeds or vegetative growth within the time provided, the director of community development may have the necessary work done by city employees or city agents under contract. All of the actual costs and expenses of such work, plus the cost of serving the notice, shall be chargeable to and paid by the owner of the property. Any bill sent to the owner which is not paid within thirty (30) days shall be transmitted to the city treasurer, who shall include such bill in the next regular real estate tax bill sent to the owner. Every such charge with which the owner has been assessed and which remains unpaid after the deadline for the payment of the next installment of real estate taxes shall constitute a lien against such property; provided, however, that such lien shall be recorded in the same manner as liens for real estate taxes are recorded. It shall be the duty of the city treasurer to assure the proper recording of any such lien.

- (f) The failure or refusal of any property owner to comply with the terms of any notice to cut grass, weeds or other growth served pursuant to this section shall constitute a Class 4 misdemeanor. In any prosecution, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that any growth exceeding three (3) feet in height creates a potential threat to public health or safety. Nothing herein shall constitute an election of remedies or prevent the City from maintaining a civil action to require the owner or occupant of any property in violation of this section to remedy and abate such violation.

- (g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the cutting of any tree or ornamental shrubbery, unless it is creating a safety hazard.

- (h) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to require the cutting of growth on a wooded lot which is covered by tree canopy at the time of enforcement primarily containing existing trees 4 inches or more in diameter, or upon a lot which is being returned to a wooded state pursuant to a landscaping plan approved by the Zoning Administrator.

- (i) In the event that the director of community development finds it necessary to abate violations of this section in accordance with subsection (c) herein, upon the fourth such abatement within a calendar year for any specific parcel the director of community development may have such property reseeded in non-invasive clover or other non-invasive, low-growth vegetative cover as the director deems appropriate.

Charter reference(s)—Authority of city to require premises be kept clean, sanitary and free from weeds, Ch. 1, § 2(20).

Cross reference(s)—Penalty for Class 4 misdemeanor, § 1-11; removal or screening of accumulations of waste material on private property, § 18-2.

State law reference(s)—Authority for above section, Code of Virginia, §§ 15.2-901, 15.2-1115.

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.

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- (2) Any place of weeds, grass or other noxious vegetation over ten (10) inches in height that is within one hundred fifty (150) feet of an inhabited residence or other occupied structure or within one hundred fifty (150) feet of the front property line of any parcel of land, measured at an angle of ninety (90) degrees from the property line abutting a city-maintained street.
- (3) An open place of collection of water where insects tend to breed. For the purposes of this chapter, an "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. An accumulation of more than forty (40) used automobile tires in any open place shall constitute a nuisance.
- (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.

Nothing in this section shall be deemed to require the cutting of growth on a wooded lot which is covered by tree canopy at the time of enforcement primarily containing existing trees 4 inches or more in diameter, or upon a lot which is being returned to a wooded state pursuant to a landscaping plan approved by the Zoning Administrator. 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.

Sec. 15.5-22. Notice of abatement; correction by city.

- (a) Whenever it shall be reported to the code official heretofore designated by council to enforce the building maintenance code in the city that there exists on any lot or parcel of land in the city any such nuisance, he shall forthwith give the owner or owners, occupant or occupants of said premises written notice to promptly remove, raze, or abate such nuisance and specify a reasonable time for

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such discontinuance or abatement. The council conclusively finds that three (3) days from the receipt of such notice is a reasonable amount of time for completion of removal razing or abatement of any nuisance, and also finds any longer period prescribed by the notifying official to be reasonable. Such notice shall be in writing and shall be served upon the owner or owners, occupant or occupants by mailing a copy thereof to the last known post office address of said person or persons, or by delivery in person or by delivering it and leaving it in possession of any person in charge of the premises, or by posting the notice in a conspicuous place on the premises if such person or persons cannot be found on said premises; and if the person or persons receiving the notice to abate fail to comply within the given period of time, the code official shall cause the corrections to be made, either through other city agencies or by contract or arrangement with private persons, and charge and collect the cost thereof from the owner or owners, occupant or occupants of the property affected in any manner provided by law for the collection of state or local taxes.

- (b) In the event that the director of community development finds it necessary to abate violations of section 15.5-21 of the city code in accordance with subsection (a) herein, upon the fourth such abatement within a calendar year for any specific parcel the director of community development may have such property reseeded in non-invasive clover or other non-invasive, low-growth vegetative cover as the director deems appropriate.

Adopted upon second reading this ____ day of January, 2024. This ordinance shall become effective after ten days have elapsed from the date of adoption recited herein.

Attest:

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

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Conveyance of public property to Danville Housing and Redevelopment Authority – Community Development Director Keith Holland summarized the request for property donation to develop multifamily housing. DRHA has asked for authorization so they can move forward with the plan to development. Vice Mayor Rawls shared that they hope to see 20 housing units on West Church and 200+ housing units on Rives Road. The only thing DRHA has asked from the city other than site control are utility hookups provided by the City. Everything is on the table to negotiate a reasonable contract. Council Member Mitchell expressed concern about 20 units on West Church which is a congested location. Rawls made a motion to authorize the City Manager to draft and execute a contract between the MHRA and DRHA to convey the properties to DRHA by deed for the purpose to develop the two properties for housing under the minimum guarantees within a negotiated time frame, commit to all utility connections be waived for future housing, and subject to be taxable or subject to tax equivalent, or any other terms to be reasonably negotiated to be identified by the City Manager.

Martinsville PROPOSED CHARTER CHANGE

CHANGE, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Martinsville

A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS

Martinsville

A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS



Editor's note: Amendments to the current charter are numerous; see amendment listing at the end of the document.



A-1

In addition to the powers mentioned in the preceding section the said City shall have power:

- (1) to raise annually by taxes and assessments in said City on all subjects the taxation of which by cities is not forbidden by general law, such sums of money as said Councils deemed provided for shall deemed necessary for the purposes of said City, and in such manner as said Council shall deem expedient, in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth and of the United States
- (2) The City Council may levy a tax or a license on any person, firm, or corporation conducting any business, employment or profession whatsoever in the City, except when expressly prohibited by general law, whether a license may be required therefor by the Commonwealth or not, and may exceed the State license, if any be required.
- (3) The Council may require of owners of motor vehicles, trailers and semitrailers, residing or in having a place of business in the City which business the said motor vehicle or semi, license for the privilege of operating such vehicles in the City, such licenses to be issued and the fees therefor fixed by the Council.
- (4) All goods and chattels wherever found, may be distrained and sold for taxes assessed and due thereon, and no deed of trust or mortgage upon goods and chattels shall prevent the same from being distrained and sold for taxes.
- (5) There shall be a lien on real estate for the City taxes as assessed thereon from the commencement of the year for which they were assessed. The Council may require real estate in the City delinquent for the nonpayment of City taxes to be sold for said taxes, with interest thereon at a percent per annum prescribed by Council but in no event to exceed the maximum interest rate allowed by law, and such percent as the Council may prescribe for charges. Such real estate may be sold and may be redeemed in the manner provided by law, provided that at least one year, where no purchase bid the amount chargeable on any such real estate, it shall be lawful for the City Council, by the unanimous vote of the members of the City upon the same terms and conditions prescribed by City law, to the payment of delinquent real estate by the treasurer for the benefit of a city.
- (6) To impose special or local assessments for local improvements and enforce payment thereof, subject, however, to limitations prescribed by the Constitution of Virginia, no such may be in force at the time of the imposition of such special or local assessments.

A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS

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(14) To acquire in the manner provided by the general laws any existing water, gas, or electric plant, works or system, or any part thereof. Any public utility owned or operated by the City of Martinsville, whether it be water, gas, electric plant or otherwise shall not be sold until the same shall have been first submitted to the qualified voters of the City at a general or special election and shall have been approved by two-thirds of such voters voting on the question of such sale, which two-thirds shall include the majority of qualified registered voters owning real estate in said City and voting in said election on such sale.

(17) To establish, open, widen, extend, grade, improve, construct, maintain, light, sprinkle and clean any public highways, streets, alleys, boulevards and parkways, and to alter, or close the same; to establish and maintain public parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; to construct, maintain and operate public bridges, viaducts, subways, tunnels, sewers and drains, and to regulate the use of all public highways, parks, public grounds and parks; to plant and maintain shade trees along the streets and upon such public grounds; to prevent the oblongation of city streets and highways; to regulate the operation and speed of all locomotives, cars, and vehicles using the streets or highways of said City; to regulate the services and fares and rates to be charged by public carriers of passengers, cars, taxicabs and other public vehicles used for hauling passengers and baggage for hire, except when prohibited by the Interstate Commerce Commission of Virginia, or the Interstate Commerce Commission of Virginia and telephone and telegraph wires and any wires and cables carrying electricity to be placed in conduits under ground and to regulate the construction and regulations for the construction and use of such conduits, and to do all other lawful things whatsoever adapted to make said streets and highways safe, convenient and attractive.

(18) To construct and maintain, or aid in constructing and maintaining, public roads, boulevards, parkways and bridges between the limits of the City, in order to facilitate public travel to and from said City and its property owned by said City and situated beyond the corporate limits thereof, and to acquire land necessary for such purpose for the construction or otherwise.

(19) To collect and dispose of sewage, oil, ashes, garbage, carcasses of dead animals and other refuse, and to acquire and operate plants for the utilization or destruction of such material, or any other use, or to contract for and regulate the collection and disposal thereof.

(2) To compel the abatement and removal of all public nuisances within the City, or upon property owned by the City, beyond its limits, to require all lands, lots and other premises within the City to be kept clean, sanitary and free from weeds; to regulate or prevent slaughter houses or other noisome or offensive businesses within said City, the keeping of animals, poultry or other fowls therein, or the exercise of any dangerous or unwholesome business, trade or employment therein; to regulate the transportation of all articles or materials through the streets of the City, to compel the abatement of smoke, odors and dust; to prevent unnecessary noise therein; to regulate the location of stables and the manner in which they shall be kept and constructed, and generally to define, prohibit, abate, suppress and prevent all things detrimental to the health, morals, comfort, safety, convenience and welfare of the inhabitants of the City.

(3) Any ground in the said City shall be subject to be covered by stagnant water or if the owner or occupant thereof shall make any such offensive or unwholesome substance to remain or accumulate therein, the said owner or occupant shall be liable to be fined or imprisoned, or both, at the discretion of the Court.

(4) Any cause such ground to be filled up, raised or drained, or may cause such substance to be covered or removed therefrom, and the person responsible for the same shall be first given the said notice or complaint as herein provided, and if no resident owners of the same have no agent in said City, such notice may be given by publication for not less than ten days in any newspaper published in said City or having general circulation therein.

(5) To direct to prevent the location of all buildings for storing gunpowder or other explosive or combustible substances, to regulate or prohibit the sale and use of dynamite, gunpowders, fireworks, crackers, kerosene oil, gasoline, kerosene, benzine, camphine, burning fluid, and all lighted or combustible materials, the prohibition of fire, the discharge of firearms, the use of candles and light in barns, stables and other buildings, the making of bonfires and the carrying of concealed weapons.

(6) To prevent the running at large in said City of all animals and fowls, and to regulate the keeping or raising of same within said City, and to subject the same to such laws, regulations and taxes as it may deem proper.

(7) To inspect, test, measure and weigh any commodity or article offered for human consumption or use within the City.

(23) To provide for the care, support and maintenance of children and of sick, aged, insane, or poor persons and paupers.

(24) To establish, organize and administer public schools subject to the general laws establishing a standard of education for the Commonwealth.

(27) To provide and maintain, either within or without the City, charitable, recreative, curative, corrective, detentive, or penal institutions.

(28) To provide for the preservation of the general health of the inhabitants of said City, make regulations to secure the same, inspect all food and foodstuffs and prevent the introduction and sale of said City of any article or thing intended for human consumption, which is adulterated, impure or otherwise dangerous to health, and to condemn, seize and destroy or otherwise dispose of any such article or thing without liability to the owner thereof; to provide for the introduction or spread of contagious or infectious diseases, and prevent and suppress the same; generally; to provide and regulate hospitals within or without the City and to enforce the removal of persons afflicted with contagious or infectious disease to hospitals provided for them; to provide for the maintenance of the department of health, to have the powers of a board of health, for said City, with the authority necessary for the efficient performance of its duties, with powers to invest any or all the officials or employees of the department of health with such powers as the police officers of the City have; to establish a quarantine ground for said City limits and such quarantine regulations against infectious and contagious diseases as the said Council may see fit, subject to the laws of the Commonwealth and the United States; and provide and keep records and vital statistics, and compel the return of all births, deaths and other information necessary therefor.

(29) To acquire by purchase, gift, devise, condemnation or otherwise lands, either within or without the City to be used, kept and improved as a place for the interment of the dead, and to make and enforce all necessary rules and regulations for the protection and use thereof, and generally to regulate the burial and disposition of the dead.

(30) To exercise full police powers, and establish and maintain a department or division of police.

(31) To create, regulate and maintain a fire department for the City and to prescribe the duties of said department and its officers.

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City of Martinsville § 2. Powers of the city.	City of Martinsville § 2. Powers of the city.
(34) In every case where a street in said City has been, or shall be encroached upon by any fence, building or otherwise, the Council may require the owner to remove the same, and if such removal be not made within the time prescribed by the Council, it may impose such penalty as it deems proper for each and every day it is allowed to continue thereafter, and may cause the encroachment to be removed, and collect from the owner all reasonable charges therefor, with costs by the same process that Council is hereinafter empowered to collect taxes. Except, in case where there is a bona fide dispute as to the true boundary line or the location of the true street line [and if such passage over such street is not seriously impeded] the same shall be first established and determined by an adjudication of a court of competent jurisdiction in a proceeding instituted by either the City or the property owner for that purpose before the said City shall take any steps to remove the said obstruction or encroachment, or to impose any penalty therefor. No encroachment upon any street, however long continued, shall constitute any adverse possession or to confer any rights upon the persons claiming thereunder as against the said City. (35) Dedication of any street, alley or lane in said City may be made by plat or deed. Any street or alley reserved in the division or subdivision into lots of any portion of the territory within the corporate limits of said City, by a plan or plot of record, shall be deemed and held to be dedicated to public use, unless it appears by said record that the street or alley so reserved is designated for private use. The Council shall have the right to elect, by resolution entered into its minutes, whether it will or will not accept the dedication of any street or alley. (36) To do all things whatsoever necessary or expedient for promoting or maintaining the general welfare, comfort, education, morals, peace, government, health, trade, commerce or industries of the City or its inhabitants.	(37) To make and enforce all ordinances, rules and regulations necessary or expedient for the purpose of carrying into effect the powers conferred by this charter or by any general law, and to provide and enforce such regulations, such ordinances, rules and regulations, or any of them, by law or enforcement, or both, which shall not exceed the maximum of such penalties as are provided under the provisions for enforcement of, or the enforcement of, the maximum penalties allowable under the general laws of this Commonwealth for such traffic infractions; and the City may maintain a suit to redress by injunction the violation of any ordinance notwithstanding such ordinance may be defective, but in addition to the powers enumerated herein or implied thereby, or appropriate to the exercise thereof the said City shall have and may exercise all other powers which are now or may hereafter be possessed or enjoyed by cities under the Constitution and general laws of this State not inconsistent with this charter. (38) Notwithstanding any of the provisions of the Housing Authorities Law (1931, etc., of the Code of Virginia, as amended), the members of the Council of the City of the Town, Virginia, shall not resign their terms of the said City, until the City of the Town, Virginia, has adopted a resolution of the City of the Town, Virginia, for the Martinsville Redevelopment and Housing Authority, whereafter the said Council shall adopt a resolution declaring, (a) The need for an authority to function in the City of Martinsville, and The determination that the members of the Council of the City of Martinsville shall act as the Commissioners of the said Authority. Should the Council determine to act as the Commissioners of the Martinsville Redevelopment and Housing Authority as above provided, it shall designate which of the Commissioners shall be the Chairman of the Authority, and shall also designate which of the Commissioners shall be the person or persons to whom the powers and the action may be taken by the Authority under the vote of a majority of the Commissioners present, unless in any case the Board of the Authority shall require a larger number. The determination of the Council made hereunder and any determination that may be made by the Authority as constituted hereunder shall be effective without the privity of an action being had to determine the question as provided by the Housing Authorities Law. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the Council and the persons from exercising the powers and the action that may be taken by the Authority under the vote of a majority of the Commissioners present or any other provision of Title III of the Code of Virginia, or bonds of the Authority shall be issued under said Title III of the Code of Virginia on the question of such bonds that have approved the same in a referendum held in accordance with § 41 of this charter (1960, c. 193, 1961, c. 389, 1962, c. 329, 1975, c. 416, 1982, c. 33, 1993, c. 15, 1995, c. 198, 1998, c. 199).

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Chapter 2. The Council.	Chapter 3. Ordinances.
§ 7. Powers of mayor. The mayor shall be elected by the council for a term of two (2) years from the date of his election by council at its organizational meeting until his successor qualifies. Provided, however, the mayor elected by the council on September one, nineteen hundred seventy-eight shall serve a term of one year and ten months. He shall preside at meetings of the council and perform such other duties consistent with his office as may be imposed by the council and he shall have a vote and voice in the proceedings, but no veto. He shall be the chief head of the City but shall have no jurisdiction or authority to hire, determine, or try any judicial matters. In times of public danger, or emergency, he, or whoever his absence or disability, the city manager, may take command of the police and maintain order and enforce the laws, and for this purpose, may deputize such assistant policemen as may be necessary during his absence or disability, except as above provided. His duties shall be performed by another member appointed by the council. He shall authenticate by his signature such instruments as the council, this charter, or the laws of the State shall require. (1950, c. 19; 1975, c. 146) § 8. Clerk. The council shall appoint a clerk to serve at the will of the council, and shall have authority to adopt rules and appoint such officers and committees as they may deem proper for the regulations of their proceedings and for the convenient transaction of business. To compel the attendance of absent members, and enforce orderly conduct at meetings. <u>The council may appoint the City Manager, in which case the City Manager may appoint a City Clerk to perform the functions of Clerk as directed by the City Manager.</u> The council shall keep a minute book, in which the clerk shall note the proceedings of the council, and shall record said proceedings at large on its successor books, and provide the same properly indexed. (1950, c. 193)	§ 1. Legislative procedure. Except in dealing with parliamentary procedure, the council shall act only by ordinance or resolution, and with the exception of ordinances or resolutions making appropriations or authorizing the contracting of indebtedness, shall be confined to one subject. (1950, c. 193) § 2. Enactments. (a) Each proposed ordinance, <u>if enacted</u>, shall be introduced in a written or printed form, and the enacting clause of all ordinances passed by the council shall substantially read: "Be it ordained by the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia," and all resolutions shall begin with "Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia." (b) No ordinance shall be passed on the same day it is introduced before the council unless said ordinance shall state that an emergency exists, in which case all councilmen present vote in the affirmative on the question of the emergency (1950, c. 193) § 3. Emergency measures. (a) No ordinance passed by the council shall take effect until at least ten (10) days from the date of its passage; except that the council may, by the affirmative vote of the majority of its members, pass emergency measures to take effect at the time indicated therein. (b) An ordinance may be enacted as an emergency measure in all cases except that no ordinance providing for the selling or conveying of any real estate or making a grant, renewal, extension of a franchise or other special privileges, or regulating the rate to be charged for its services by any public utility shall ever be so passed. (1950, c. 193) § 4. Record. Every ordinance or resolution having the effect of an ordinance when passed shall be recorded by the clerk of council in a book kept for that purpose, and shall be authenticated by the signature of the presiding officer and the said clerk. (1950, c. 193)

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§ 7. Powers of mayor. The mayor shall be elected by the council for a term of two (2) years from the date of his election by council at its organizational meeting until his successor qualifies. Provided, however, the mayor elected by the council on September one, nineteen hundred seventy-eight shall serve a term of one year and ten months. He shall preside at meetings of the council and perform such other duties as may be required by the council. He shall have the right to call and he shall have a vote and voice in the proceedings, but so veto. He shall be the official head of the City, but shall have no jurisdiction or authority to hear, determine, or try any judicial matters. In times of public danger, or emergency, he, or during his absence or disability, the city manager, may take command of the police and maintain order and enforce the laws, and for this purpose, may deputize such assistant policemen as may be necessary. During his absence or disability, except as herein provided, his duties shall be performed by another member appointed by the council. He shall authenticate his signature such instruments as the council, this charter, or the laws of the State shall require. (1950, c. 183; 1975, c. 418) § 8. Clerk. The council shall appoint a clerk to serve at the will of the council, and shall have authority to adopt rules and appoint such officers and committees as they may deem proper for the regulations of their proceedings and for the convenient transaction of business, to compel the attendance of absent members, and enforce orderly conduct at meetings. This Council may also appoint the City Manager as clerk, or, if not, then the City Manager may appoint the City Clerk as clerk, the function of clerk as directed by the City Manager. The council shall keep a minute book, in which the clerk shall note the proceedings of the council, and shall record said proceedings at large on the record book, and keep the same properly indexed. (1950, c. 193)	§ 8. Clerk. — Allow City Council to appoint the City Manager as Clerk of City and then select a Deputy Clerk for assistance with the role.	§ 1. Legislative procedure. Except in dealing with parliamentary procedure, the council shall act only by ordinance or resolution, and with the exception of ordinances or resolutions making appropriations or authorizing the contracting of indebtedness, shall be confined to one subject. (1950, c. 193) § 2. Inactiveness. In such proceedings as the council shall be introduced in a written or printed form, and the existing Clerk of all ordinances passed by the council shall substantially be "be it ordained by the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia," and all resolutions shall begin with "be it resolved by the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia." (b) No ordinance shall be passed on the same day it is introduced before the council unless said ordinance shall state that an emergency exists, in which case all councilmen present vote in the affirmative on the question of the emergency (1950, c. 193) § 3. Emergency measures. (a) No ordinance passed by the council shall take effect until at least ten (10) days from the date of its passage; except that the council may, by the affirmative vote of the majority of its members, pass emergency measures to take effect at the time indicated therein. (b) An ordinance may be enacted as an emergency measure in all cases except that no ordinance providing for the selling or conveying of any real estate or making a grant, reward, extension of a franchise or other special privileges, or regulating the rate to be charged for its services, by any public utility shall ever be so passed. (1950, c. 193) § 4. Record. Every ordinance or resolution having the effect of an ordinance when passed shall be recorded by the clerk of council in a book kept for that purpose, and shall be authenticated by the signature of the presiding officer and the said clerk. (1950, c. 193)	• § 1. Legislative procedure. Added or resolution as an option for passing policy
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[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

- Electricity prices generally reflect the cost to build, finance, maintain, and operate power plants and the electricity grid (the complex system of power transmission and distribution lines).

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Martinsville Current Market Cost and Drivers



The current block purchase cost for CY 23 energy only is \$29.30 MWh.
24-25 CY cost will be \$57.95 MWh



This increase reflects market uncertainty, natural gas prices, and the post-economic recovery after Covid.



Current long-term pricing is trending lower, and opportunities are being explored, such as the Battery Project.



Natural gas prices are one of the main drivers of electric costs. Both domestic and international markets influence the cost of natural gas.

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Market Cost and Drivers

- System efficiency
- Peak demand
- Access to markets (both to buy and sell generated electricity)
- If the utility owns or operates any generation facilities
- Local climate and risk of natural disasters
- State and local regulations



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Electric Fund Overview

- Electric Fund Analysis and impact of adjustments
- History of approved rate adjustments FY18-FY24
- FY24 Electric Fund Projection
 - Revenue & Expenditure



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Electric Fund Analysis

Electric Fund	Audit 2018	Audit 2019	Audit 2020	Audit 2021	Audit 2022	Audit 2023
Operating Revenues						
Charges for Services	18,743,476	19,190,127	19,183,434	19,232,456	19,242,484	19,678,564
Miscellaneous	43,858	55,351	68,175	79,362	107,393	363,105
Total Operating Revenues	18,787,334	19,245,478	19,251,609	19,311,818	19,349,877	20,041,669
Operating Expenses						
Total Operating Expenses	18,207,996	17,653,703	16,735,667	16,865,444	19,866,339	19,475,563
Operating Income/(Loss)	579,338	1,591,775	2,515,942	2,446,374	(516,462)	484,456
Rate Adjustments		4.5% (July)	2.5% (July)			7% (Feb)
Debt Service	361,159	371,221	365,879	361,627	391,131	389,745
Other Sources/Uses of Funds						
Acquisition of Capital Asset	(810,472)	(876,746)	(1,899,663)	(895,244)	(910,008)	(292,962)
Grants				134,494	25,048	-
Non Cash Adjustments	43,792	677,668	1,111,406	(2,787,370)	922,585	-
Total Other Sources/Uses	(766,680)	(199,078)	(788,257)	(3,548,120)	37,625	(292,962)
Surplus/Deficit	(548,501)	1,021,476	1,357,806	(1,463,373)	(869,968)	(198,251)
Beginning Cash and Investments	1,118,138	569,637	1,591,113	2,948,919	1,450,546	541,712
Ending Cash and Investment	569,637	1,591,113	2,948,919	1,485,546	580,578	343,461
Days Cash on Hand	11	33	64	32	11	6

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Electric Fund – History of Rate Adjustments

- Rate Adjustments (history of increases)
 - 07/1/2018 - PCA increased from .00568 to .00124 or 4.5% increase
 - 07/1/2020 - PCA increased from .00124 to .01438 or 2.5%
 - 02/1/2023 - PCA increased from .01438 to .02268 or 7%
 - 07/1/2023 - Base rate increase of 7% (PCA is at 0)
 - 1/1/2024 - Recommended 5.2% PCA
- Purchased Power Contract price nearly doubled for CY24-25.
- The need to maintain Electric Department's fund balance is necessary to cover expected purchased power increase in FY24 budget year and to help increase fund balance to avoid a deficit.
- The Electric Fund must maintain adequate fund balance/cash reserves to absorb weather driven events that also increase the cost of purchased power.
- One weather event can lead to increased demand in generation/demand, at times, costing the Electric Fund an estimated \$500,000 or more.
 - Examples: Winter Storm Elliot, Polar Vortex, Christmas Eve 2022

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Recommended Adjustment

- Energy cost increases will result in an approximate estimated 1.2-million-dollar deficit compared to the current budget.
- The recommended increase in Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) from the current 0 to .00794 per kWh will result in an annual revenue increase of \$1,270,400 based on projected 160,000,000 annual kWh sales. Temperatures primarily drive actual sales.
- Recommending a 5.2% rise in PCA.
- For example, the rate for 1,000 kWh will go from \$152.50 to \$160.44, taxes included, representing a \$7.94 increase monthly per 1,000kWh
- Proposed rate adjustment to be effective on/after Jan 1, 2024.

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Current Fiscal Outlook Electric Fund

The Electric Fund is trying to recover from a lack of rate adjustments in 2021-2023. The Electric Fund is trending toward deficit due to the increase in the cost of purchased power in FY24.

This rate adjustment helps fund critical capital infrastructure and operational costs, extends cash reserve.

\$ 21,938,000

Projected Revenue – Electric Fund

- Does not reflect rate adjustment proposed in Jan 2024
- If rate adjustment is approved by Jan 9, rate adjustment would be applied to Jan electric bill

\$ 23,051,237

Projected Expenditures – Electric Fund

- Projected 1.1M deficit in FY24

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FY24 Budget Highlights

Electric (Fund -14)

- Included an 8% electric rate increase effective July 1, 2023
- FY24 Electric budget's purchased power item is the largest single line-item expense in the City's budget and represents 72.3% of the Electric budget.
- Anticipated a 5.2% additional PCA rate adjustment to occur in Jan 2024
 - Prefer incremental rate adjustments to better assist citizens and customers with increased electric charges.
- Electric is significantly under the recommended reserve requirement and is expected to remain so for the near future. Rate adjustments should increase reserves over time.
- The FY24 budget implemented many cost savings strategies across the all funds.
- Increases in Electric Fund expenditures are primarily driven by purchased power costs.

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Electric Fund Fiscal Year 2023-23 Fiscal Challenge

- According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, residential retail electricity prices are expected to rise in 2022, although at a slightly slower rate.
- In 2022, the average nominal price is expected to increase by 3.9% to 14.26 cents/kWh. However, Statista predicts that the average end-use electricity price in the United States will decrease in the coming three decades, to reach some 11 U.S. cents per kilowatt-hour by 2050.
- It's important to note that electricity prices are influenced by various factors such as fuel costs, weather, and government regulations.
- Therefore, it's difficult to predict with certainty how electricity prices will change in the future. However, it's safe to say that electricity prices are likely to fluctuate in the coming years.

MM/DD/YYYY

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Consider approval of proposed changes to the City Charter – Paul Jacobson, City Attorney summarized changes that were made to the proposed charter change. Mayor Jones opened the public hearing. No one approached the podium so the public hearing was closed. Council Member Pearson made a motion to approve the changes to the City Charter and then read through those proposed amendments. Council Member Lawson seconded the motion with the following roll call vote: Rawls, aye; Lawson, aye; Mitchell, aye; Pearson, aye; and Jones, aye. Motion passes with a 5-0 vote.

Consider information related to the City proposed 2024 Legislative Agenda – City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding City Council Strategic Goals, Virginia General Assembly Transportation, education, etc. Natalie Davis, Consultant for the West Piedmont Workforce Development shared a PowerPoint and general overview for workforce development.



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. Fund and upgrade seven miles of US Route 220 between the Martinsville Bypass and North Carolina line with the Southern Connector and/or other significant upgrades to improve safety and accommodate/facilitate imminent industrial growth at Commonwealth Crossing.
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 in 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.

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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. Fund and upgrade seven miles of US Route 220 between the Martinsville Bypass and North Carolina line with the Southern Connector and/or other significant upgrades to improve safety and accommodate/facilitate imminent industrial growth at Commonwealth Crossing.
4. Request \$3.75M in funds for the redevelopment of brownfields located within the City.
5. Request \$6.25M in funds for the elimination and redevelopment of blighted areas in the City.
6. 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.
7. Extend high speed broadband service throughout southern Virginia.
8. 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.
9. 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

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CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC GOALS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Attract business investment and investment that increases the tax base, provides quality employment and increases quality of life.	INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS Build strong, collaborative working relationships with Henry County and seek opportunities to leverage state and federal funding to enhance the services through regional coordination.	CITIZEN/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Foster strong citizenry through outreach and effective two-way communications.
HEALTHY COMMUNITY Affordable prices and programs that enhance community physical and mental well-being.	HOUSING Provide an environment that supports the development of safe, affordable, and diverse housing options to accommodate growth and enhance quality of life in the City.	EDUCATION Support life-long learning and training for all residents and businesses.
RENEWAL AND REDEVELOPMENT Reduce blight in the City by using voluntary methods to address distressed structures.	GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE Continually work to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and service delivery with all appropriate organizational structure, and strong selection and retention of personnel, policies, procedures, and practices, and ensure that practices that support a culture of customer service.	PUBLIC SAFETY Protect life and property, plan for emergency management, mitigate risks, and respond to individual and community-wide crises.

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City of Martinsville

Virginia General Assembly Transportation

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3. Increase VDOT funding for road construction and repaving.

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City of Martinsville

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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 in 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.
8. Support Senator McPike's bill (SB14) allowing all localities to hold a referendum to increase the local sales tax 1% to be earmarked for school construction.

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City of Martinsville

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Economic Development City of Martinsville 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. 2 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. A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS	Governance City of Martinsville 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 2024 Session. 2. Amend Code of Virginia §1-155.2 to allow Constitutional Officers, 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 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. A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS
Governance City of Martinsville 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. 3 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. 2 23. Amend Code of Virginia §22.1-25 to grant RCI 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 A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS	United States Congress City of Martinsville 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. Fund and upgrade seven miles of US Route 220 between the Martinsville Bypass and North Carolina line with the Southern Connector and/or other significant upgrades to improve safety and accommodate/facilitate imminent industrial growth at Commonwealth Crossing. 4. Request \$3.75M in funds for the redevelopment of brownfields located within the City. 5. Request \$6.25M in funds for the elimination and redevelopment of blighted areas in the City. 6. 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. 7. Extend high speed broadband service throughout southern Virginia. 8. 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. 9. Oppose the elimination or reduction of the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit A CITY WITHOUT LIMITS

Business from the Floor – Ural Harris 217 Stuart Street, said that a statement made that the Rives Road site was not suitable for industrial development and questioned why it would be considered suitable for residential. Harris has not received the IDA report as requested. There are other sites within the City that could be used for housing, and he questions what the cost will be for infrastructure. Harris says Council has not been upfront with the residents on the cost and it will be wrong to increase taxes to cover the cost. There were statements made at the last meeting about school funding and industries moving to the City. Harris said that scores of less than 30% in math and less than 60% of reading are not top scores in the state and questioned why two Council Members won't send their own children to Martinsville City schools. Harris presented a copy of the Martinsville Bulletin to the Mayor and Council Members, stating that Vice Mayor Rawls had denied a statement at the previous Council meeting but he was quoted in the paper. Council has shown a complete lack of transparency and Harris said that three of the Council Members should resign for the damage they've done this past year. Rico Johnson, owner of Korna Kitchen expressed concern regarding the crosswalk at 37 Main Street. The level of traffic, rate of speed and visual blockage of oncoming traffic makes that area extremely dangerous to cross the street. Council Members discussed potential solutions to reduce speed including installation of rumble strips or flashing lights. Lawson recommended using the same methods as the crosswalk at Uptown Pinball installed last year.

Comments by City Council – Council Member Mitchell said it would soon be 2024, 2023 has been an interesting year for Martinsville government. Coming up on the holidays, people look forward to visiting with friends and family, but everyone needs to consider the safety during the holidays with fast driving and drinking. Charity is helping people, he asked residents to consider

December 19, 2023 Council Meeting

charity over the holidays. It's now time to get to work in 2024. Council Member Pearson would like to see a Year-End review on everything done in 2023 that can be posted on the City website. The City has seen a lot of positive things this year. Pearson wished all a blessed Christmas and wonderful New Year and she asked that everyone remember their blessings and give thanks. Pearson thanked the City Manager, staff, Council Members and their families. Council Member Lawson congratulated Esther Artis and Kris Schrader on their retirement. Lawson said giving is more than writing a check, local organizations provide that extra touch needed for this season but it's the people that make that possible. Lawson thanked the Sheriff's Office, Public Works and other City departments who help organizations. Merry Christmas to everyone, please take the time to spend with family and appreciate the season. 2024 will be another great year. Vice Mayor Rawls mentioned doing a town hall/state of the city possibly in January regarding accomplishments from 2023 and a deviation from the historic community meetings. Mayor Jones thanked everyone for attending and watching from home. Jones shared details about the Heads of State Community Toy Drive which would be held on Saturday for families still needing Christmas gifts for children. Jones thanked all City employees; it's been a tough year and a lot of changes. Jones wished all citizens a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Comments by the City Manager – City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides thanked Council and shared that it had been an interesting year for Martinsville. As we end this year, Council will receive a calendar from her, and budget season begins the first of the year. Her son graduated from the University of Kansas and she's proud of him but she's prouder of her grandmother who was insistent she would attend the graduation even after having a stroke. Please check on our seniors and those who lost loved ones this past year. On behalf of the staff, thank you. Not only did Council allow them the half-day for Christmas but the full day meant so much to them.

There being no further business, Council Member Lawson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm.

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

LC Jones, Mayor