



## **City of Buena Vista City Council Regular Council Meeting & Public Hearing**

November 20, 2025, 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

The City Council for the City of Buena Vista met for a Regular Council Meeting & Public Hearing on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

### **Members Present:**

Mayor Tyson Cooper	
Vice-Mayor Danny Staton	Steve Webb
Michelle Poluikis	Stanley Coffey
Melvin Henson	Ronald Cash

**Members Absent:** None

### **ADG #1: CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, & PRAYER**

Mayor Cooper called the meeting to order and Councilmember Poluikis delivered the opening prayer.

### **ADG #2: BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING**

**The City Council of the City of Buena Vista will receive comment on the proposed FY2026 budget amendments. These amendments include federal ARPA funding and additional general fund appropriations utilized during FY2025.**

Mayor Cooper opened the Public Hearing.

- Amy Gilliam, 1710 Spruce Avenue, asked for clarification on where the \$1,230,000 listed in the appropriation resolution is coming from. Mr. Tyree explained that the funding is from a Community Development Block Grant, not straight from the General Fund. Mrs. Gilliam then asked whether the funds were tied to the façade grand improvements. Mr. Tyree explained that the CDBG funds are designated for the 21<sup>st</sup> Street Corridor Project, and that the façade grants are separate and funded through other sources. Mrs. Gilliam asked where the CDBG funding is coming from and Mr. Tyree replied that it comes from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Cooper closed the Public Hearing.

### **ADG #3: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Councilmember Coffey moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Vice-Mayor Staton, and carried by Council.

### **ADG #4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 30, 2025, INTERJURISDICTIONAL MEETING & THE NOVEMBER 6, 2025, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING**

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilmember Coffey, seconded by Vice-Mayor Staton, and carried by Council.

## **ADG #5: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS**

- Kevin Neighbors, 2335 Birch Avenue, addressed Council regarding ongoing speeding issues in his neighborhood and throughout the City. He shared that he is particularly sensitive to the issue due to the loss of his grandson in a speeding-related incident. Mr. Neighbors stated that vehicles frequently travel well above the speed limit—estimating them at over 50 mph—in residential areas. He noted that despite contacting the Police Department, he has not observed increased patrols or enforcement. He also expressed concerns that the portable radar sign often has a low battery. He emphasized safety risks for children and pedestrians, mentioning the lack of sidewalks in his neighborhood, and asked for additional measures to be taken to address the issue.
- Wayne Fitzgerald, 545 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, reiterated Mr. Neighbors' concerns as he lives next door to him and has witnessed the excessive speeding as well. He stated that vehicles often travel well above the speed limit and do not consistently stop at intersections, noting the "California rolls" at the stop signs, creating more safety risks for children and pedestrians. Mr. Fitzgerald shared that he has contacted the Police Department in the past but has not seen any significant change in enforcement. He mentioned providing Ring doorbell footage of violations and expressed concern that residents are often told enforcement is difficult without an officer actually witnessing the incident. He urged Council to increase police visibility and speeding enforcement.
- Amy Gilliam, 1710 Spruce Avenue, questioned the second reading of the right-of-way abandonment ordinance for SVU when the university had requested to postpone consideration of the building approval, stating that she feels that it is out of sequence to abandon the rights-of-way before approving the project.

## **ADG #6: REPORTS**

### **1. Mayor**

None.

### **2. City Manager**

Mr. Tyree thanked Council for allowing him time off to be with his wife during her recent surgery and apologized for missing the last meeting. He informed Council that Chief Handley will be retiring in June 2026 and expressed appreciation for the Chief's service and leadership during a challenging period for the department. He noted that he will begin the recruitment process for a new police chief in January.

He reported that construction continues on the new DSS building. He noted that the exterior will soon be bright yellow due to the application of waterproofing materials—this will only be temporarily.

He also reminded Council of the swearing-in ceremony for newly elected officials on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m., followed by the Christmas tree lighting at 6:30 p.m. and the parade at 7:00 p.m.

He also noted that City Hall will be closed Wednesday-Friday of Thanksgiving week.

### **3. City Attorney**

Mr. Kearney reported that the bankruptcy court has approved the Purdue Pharma opioid settlement. As a result, the Commonwealth will receive approximately \$104 million over a 15-year

period, and the City will receive annual payments of about a few thousand dollars based on the state's allocation formula. He added that this settlement is one of the largest opioid-related cases, involving the Sackler family.

#### **4. Council Committees / Members**

##### **a. Budget & Finance**

None.

##### **b. Outdoor Spaces**

They held their final City tour on Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Henson said the tour was informative and beneficial. Mrs. Poluikis added that the tour revealed many opportunities she had not previously been aware of and thanked Mr. Henson for organizing it. Mr. Coffey added that although many of the properties they viewed are not City-owned, there may be potential for development if private builders engage with the property owners.

##### **c. School Facilities**

None.

Mr. Henson also reported that he attended a recent Workforce Development meeting, noting the committee is currently working to coordinate a workshop with VMI and SVU. The goal is to inform students about local job opportunities in hopes of encouraging graduates to remain in the area.

#### **5. Department Heads / Constitutional Officers / Court Clerks**

##### **Kristina Ramsey – Economic Development & Marketing**

- The ED department assumed responsibility for radio communications in July, partnering with 3WZ. Recordings now occur twice monthly and provide City updates, events, and news. A rotating schedule now allows all departments to participate.
- They are making minor refinements to the City's logo and developing standardized templates to ensure consistent, reliable public-facing communications across all departments.
- Work continues on increasing content generation and posting frequency for social media. A structured posting schedule is in development. An introductory video for Buena Vista is planned for spring.
- The annual year in review is underway and will highlight departmental activity, key statistics, and community milestones. Council members are also invited to share content ideas.
- The new City website is finally expected to launch in early 2026.
- Modine's \$19.6 million expansion has been announced. This will add 57 new jobs and includes the purchase of a second facility on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Formal approval documents will come to Council in December.
- They FY2026 Façade Improvement Grant application cycle closed with five applications, all of whom were awarded the full grant amount. These projects will generate over \$30,000 in private investment, with nearly \$100,000 combined private investment from FY2025-2026.

- The Housing Symposium in October drew over 150 attendees, exceeding registration expectations. Three follow-up action team meetings will be held December 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> at Rockbridge County High: public policy; market supply; and housing for all. She encouraged Council members to attend to public policy session if possible.
- Journey Group of Charlottesville has been hired to design the new visitor center at the VIA. Design concepts will be presented soon and the target opening in April-May 2026. The plan is to also incorporate local history and storytelling.
- The Small Business Development Center has served 82 clients in the Rockbridge area so far this year, many being in Buena Vista. They maintain office hours at the MGCC Wilson Workforce Center and provide free consultation services to small businesses.
- Magnolia Square construction is nearing completion, with final touches pending. Main Street Buena Vista and the Women's Club is working on the LOVE sign. The total amount of support—including grants, donations, and in-kind labor—is approximately \$375,000. The plan is to celebrate in the spring.
- Tractor Supply is now aiming for a March/early spring opening.
- They have completed a pitch deck for the Bontex redevelopment with the help of DEQ funds. The Bontex owner is working toward securing investors by early 2025, with meetings to begin soon.
- The Shenandoah Valley Partnership recorded an economic development forum featuring representatives from Rockbridge County High School, Mountain Gateway, and VMI. The final product will be shared when available.
- Currently assisting six new business prospects seeking locations in the City.
- Meeting closely with eight existing businesses on challenges and growth.
- Managing three active business prospects, ranging from downtown commercial to industrial.
- The Virginia Innovation Accelerator's Junction 245 will hold its grand opening and ribbon cutting on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

## **6. Invited Community Organizations**

### **Kim Shaw & BreAnne Rogers – Rockbridge Area Community Services**

- RACSB served approximately 18-20 Buena Vista clients this year—this does not include their prevention programs.
- They have a new same-day access brochure to guide residents on how to enter services.
- They have two active Substance Abuse Intensive Outpatient Program groups with 12-15 participants each. One group is conducted in partnership with the new Maury River Recovery Court where RACSB provides the treatment component. Participants commit to at least nine hours of weekly services.
- Two of the prevention programs they offer to the schools are the Catch My Breath anti-vaping curriculum and the Dangers of Fentanyl curriculum.
- RACSB staff participated in the regional housing symposium.

- They are increasing their marketing and outreach efforts. Council was encouraged to follow their Facebook page and visit their newly updated website. They also provide same-day access information online.
- They hold monthly veterans breakfasts on the second Tuesday of each month at the VFW building on Route 60.
- The Magnolia Players will be holding their holiday performances on December 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. These are free performances that are produced entirely by the participants of the Magnolia Center's adult day program.
- They have established a new group for families or caregivers supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities.

## **ADG #7: CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES**

### **Maury Service Authority**

Mr. Bill Fitzgerald has resigned from the MSA Board. This appointment will begin immediately and will expire on May 31, 2029. This is the second time it has appeared on the agenda.

There were no applicants for this opening, so it will be carried over to the next meeting.

### **Board of Zoning Appeals**

Mrs. Christina Himes' term on the BZA expires on December 31, 2025. Mrs. Himes is willing to server another term if reappointed. This appointment will begin January 1, 2026, and will expire on December 31, 2030. This is the first time it has appeared on the agenda.

Councilmember Henson moved to reappoint Mrs. Christina Himes to the BZA, with Vice-Mayor Staton seconding, and it was carried by Council.

### **Board of Zoning Appeals**

Ms. Jamie Green's term on the BZA expires on December 31, 2025. Ms. Green is not interested in serving another term at this time. This appointment will begin January 1, 2026, and will expire on December 31, 2030. This is the first time it has appeared on the agenda.

There were no applicants for this opening, so it will be carried over to the next meeting.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **OB #1: SECOND READING OF AN ORDINACE FOR RIGHT OF WAY ABANDONMENT FOR PORTIONS OF BLOCKS 22, 25, 30, & 31 OF SECTION 5**

Councilmember Cash asked about the two homes located at the western end of campus near Hardee's. Mr. Ballstaedt stated that one home is being purchased by SVU and the other is occupied by Kenny Camden and is not owned by the University. Councilmember Cash also asked how public street access will be maintained for the Camden property following the abandonments. Mr. Roberts explained that the 27<sup>th</sup> Street connection will remain a public right-of-way to provide continued access. The route will be restricted to resident and emergency vehicle access only, through signage or physical measures to limit campus traffic. Although portions of the travel-way currently lie partly in a platted alley and partly on SVU property, its public function will remain unchanged. SVU will be

required to grant an access easement through its future parking area to ensure legal access from the opposite direction. Councilmember Cash also asked about some of the roads to be abandoned. Mr. Roberts clarified that Magnolia Avenue and University Hill Drive will remain public streets. Rights-of-way west of Magnolia within the dorm project area are proposed for abandonment. Councilmember Cash also emphasized the importance of avoiding situations that leave private properties without public access, stating that he was satisfied that access to the Camden residence would be preserved.

As there were no changes to the text of the Ordinance, Councilmember Webb moved to read by title only, seconded by Councilmember Cash, and carried by Council.

Councilmember Webb made a motion to **approve** the Ordinance, with Councilmember Cash seconding, and it was carried by Council. Ms. Burch competed a roll call vote of Council as follows:

Member	Present	Absent	Yes	No	Abstain
Councilmember Henson	X		X		
Councilmember Poluikis	X		X		
Councilmember Webb	X		X		
Councilmember Coffey	X		X		
Councilmember Cash	X		X		
Vice-Mayor Staton	X		X		
Mayor Cooper	X		X		

The following Ordinance was **approved** unanimously, with Mayor Cooper abstaining.

**Abandonment of Public Right of Way  
Portions of Streets & Alleys Surrounding Blocks 25 & 31, Section 5**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA**, that in accordance with Section 15.2-2006 through 2008 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, that the public right of way described in “Exhibit A” and “Exhibit B” attached hereto, (The “Property”), shall be vacated and abandoned upon receipt of the consideration noted in “Exhibit A”.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED** that as a condition of the aforesaid abandonment and vacation, the City retains a perpetual easement over, under, and across the Property for the installation, maintenance, repair, or replacement of all utilities, including, but not limited to, water and sewer lines; electric; cable; communications; and gas lines; and garbage pick-up.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED** that this ordinance shall be recorded in the Clerk’s Office of the Circuit Court for the City of Buena Vista, Virginia, and indexed under the names listed in “Exhibit A.”

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Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

**NEW BUSINESS**

**NB #1: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF AN APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION**

Mr. Tyree explained that four previously approved and budgeted projects require formal appropriations. The first is for the final costs for additional networking equipment for the Municipal Building Network Server Room Project using the remaining federal ARPA funds. This project involves moving the networking equipment out of the elevator shaft and into the basement server room; there is no local match required. The second appropriation supports the downtown VDOT Streetscape Project using VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program funds; it is a fully reimbursable grant with no local match. The next is the remaining funding for the City’s Flood Hazard Resilience Plan. The Department of Conservation & Recreation provides \$52,000, with a \$6,800 local match. The last appropriation is part of the DHCD Community Development Block Grant for the 21<sup>st</sup> Street corridor improvements; the grant covers streetscape, wayfinding signage, and administrative components of the project and includes a \$45,000 in-kind and \$156,500 cash local match. Mayor Cooper confirmed that these projects had already been approved by Council, and these appropriations are part of the procedural requirements for expending the funds.

Ms. Burch presented the following Resolution:

**Appropriation Resolution**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the City Council of Buena Vista, Virginia, that the following appropriations are, and the same is hereby made, for the period ending June 30, 2026, from the UNAPPROPRIATED SURPLUS of the GENERAL FUND and expended as follows:

**Municipal Building Networking/Server Room Project – ARPA Funding**

10.1203.50400	ARPA Fixed Assets	<u>\$1,393.00</u>
Sub-total 1		\$1,393.00

**Streetscape Project – VDOT Funding**

10.8402.56183	VDOT TAP Streetscape	<u>\$906,000.00</u>
Sub-total 2		\$906,000.00

**Buena Vista Flood Hazard Resilience Plan – DCR Grant (FY25 Carryover)**

10.8402.56187	CFPD Resilience Plan Grant	<u>\$58,800.00</u>
Sub-total 3		\$58,800.00

**Downtown Revitalization Project – CDBG Grant Funding**

10.8402.60680	Connect BV CDBG Grant	<u>\$1,230,000.00</u>
Sub-total 1		\$1,230,000.00

Total General Fund Appropriation\$2,196,193.00

**Approved:** This 20<sup>th</sup> day of November 2025.

Attest:

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Webb moved to **approve** the Resolution as presented, with Councilmember Henson seconding. Ms. Burch completed a roll call vote of Council as follows:

Member	Present	Absent	Yes	No	Abstain
Councilmember Henson	X		X		
Councilmember Poluikis	X		X		
Councilmember Webb	X		X		
Councilmember Coffey	X		X		
Councilmember Cash	X		X		
Vice-Mayor Staton	X		X		
Mayor Cooper	X		X		

The Resolution was unanimously **approved**.

**NB #2: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS FUNDS (CFPF)**

Ms. Burch presented the following Resolution:

**City of Buena Vista  
Community Flood Preparedness Fund  
Grant Application Resolution**

**WHEREAS** the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has established the Community Flood Preparedness Fund (“CFPF”) to assist local governments in planning and construction of measures to reduce the risk of flooding in the Commonwealth; and

**WHEREAS** the City of Buena Vista (“City”) has begun a Flood Hazard Resilience Plan (“Plan”), funded by the CFPF, which is studying existing and potential infrastructure improvements to reduce the risk of flooding in the City; and

**WHEREAS** both the draft Plan and City staff have identified the culvert carrying Pedlar Gap Run under the intersection of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Woodland Avenue as structurally failing and in critical condition; and



**WHEREAS** the City is eligible to apply for a CFPF grant to conduct a study of this location to design a replacement structure; and

**WHEREAS** the estimated total cost of such study is up to \$130,000, which under the terms of the CFPF could be funded with up to \$117,000 of grant funds and \$13,000 of local cash matching funds from the General Fund.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Buena Vista authorizes City Manager Jason Tyree or his designee to sign all documents necessary to submit an application for this project as described.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Council acknowledges that if the grant is awarded, the matching funds will be appropriated to meet grant requirements.

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Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

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Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

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Date of Adoption

Mr. Roberts reported that the culvert at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Woodland is collapsing along the entire length. Emergency repairs were made earlier this year, but they only served as a temporary fix. The culvert was installed in the 1970s and is undersized for storm flows and acts as a constriction point in Pedlar Gap Run. The 1999 watershed plan recommended replacing the culvert with a bridge, though hydraulic analysis is needed to determine the best structure. Funding is available through the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's CFPF program, which can cover studies, engineering design, and construction. As a low median income locality, the City is eligible for a 90% state/10% local match. The engineering project has been estimated to cost around \$120,000; Mr. Roberts plans to apply for \$130,000 to cover any contingencies. This resolution will authorize the submission of the grant application ONLY; no funds are being appropriated at this time.

There was discussion regarding how a bridge would be configured given the angle of the existing culvert and nearby streets which will be part of the engineering analysis. Alternatives such as box culverts could be considered depending on hydraulic capacity needs and costs. Other points made included rerouting buses, placing weight-limit signage to restrict truck traffic, and having Public Works conduct post-storm inspections to monitor further deterioration.

The grant award is expected late spring to early fall next year with engineering and design to follow. The City may then apply for construction funding in the CFPF cycle. The estimated construction start is approximately two years from now depending on funding and design outcomes.

Councilmember Cash made a motion to **approve** the Resolution. Councilmember Henson seconded

the motion, and it was carried by Council.

**NB #3: FIRST READING OF A BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE**

Ms. Burch presented the following Ordinance:

**Budget Amendment Ordinance**

**WHEREAS** on May 16, 2024, the City of Buena Vista adopted its budget for Fiscal Year 2025; and

**WHEREAS** the City Council on November 20, 2025, held a public hearing on a proposed budget amendment for Fiscal Year 2025; and

**WHEREAS** the City Council approved certain projects and activities requiring additional funds and the usage of fund balances to be appropriated during the current fiscal year.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Council for the City of Buena Vista, Virginia, in accordance with Section 15.2-2507 of the 1950 Code of Virginia that the FY 2025 adopted budget be amended to increase or modify the following line items by the amount shown:

**GENERAL FUND**

**FY 2025 Budget Amendments**

10.1203.50400	ARPA Fixed Assets	\$39,793.00
10.5309.65800	CSA Expenditures	\$503,863.00
10.9700.65010	Contributions-Community Foundation	<u>\$491,139.00</u>
<b>Sub-total 1</b>		<b>\$1,034,795.00</b>

<b>Total General Fund Budget Amendments</b>	<b>\$1,034,795.00</b>
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**PARKS & RECREATION FUND**

**FY 2025 Budget Amendments**

12.7102.59000	Electrical Services	\$51,116.00
12.7103.52730	Playground	\$138,512.00
12.7104.68015	Program Activities	<u>\$36,722.00</u>
<b>Sub-total 1</b>		<b>\$226,350.00</b>

<b>Total Parks &amp; Recreation Fund Budget Amendments</b>	<b>\$226,350.00</b>
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This Ordinance will be effective through the 30<sup>th</sup> day of June 2026.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

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Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor