



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

December 11, 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, December 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Tyson Cooper

Vice-Mayor Danny Staton
Michelle Poluikis
Melvin Henson

Steve Webb
Stanley Coffey
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 abandonment of a City right-of-way: approximately 5.400 sq. ft. of alley in “Block Y” of Enderly Heights adjacent to the former Northwest Hardwoods sawmill property.

Mayor Cooper opened the Public Hearing.

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

ADG #3: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilmember Coffey moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilmember Webb, and carried by Council.

ADG #4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 20, 2025, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Councilmember Henson, seconded by Councilmember Coffey, and carried by Council.

ADG #5: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS

- Mayor Cooper made note of comments that were submitted via email to Council from Mrs. Hannah Becker.

ADG #6: REPORTS

1. Mayor

Mayor Cooper reported on a successful week of community events, highlighting the ribbon cutting at the Virginia Innovation Accelerator, the Christmas parade and tree lighting, and the Christmas Basket Program. He thanked everyone who helped coordinate the events and those who attended.

2. City Manager

Mr. Tyree thanked everyone who helped organize the Christmas parade and tree lighting. He advised Council that George Bains is serving as Interim Public Works Director, the position will be posted, and he will begin accepting applications after the first of the year.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees / Members

a. Budget & Finance

None.

b. Outdoor Spaces

None.

c. School Facilities

None.

Mr. Coffey expressed appreciation to his fellow Council members for the opportunity to serve the past seven years and thanked the public for their support of the City and encouraged continued support for the incoming Council members.

5. Department Heads / Constitutional Officers / Court Clerks

Tom Roberts – Community Development

Mr. Roberts first reported on the successful tree giveaway held on November 15th through the BV Cool Trees Program. A total of 83 trees were distributed to Buena Vista households, with assistance from interns, Boxerwood staff, and members of the Tree Board. He also noted that the Tree Board continues to meet regularly.

He also updated Council on the 21st Street Streetscape Project, with construction expected to begin next week. The project includes new sidewalk corners and landscape bump-outs at 21st Street and Forest; new traffic signals and pedestrian countdown timers at 21st Street and Magnolia and at 21st Street and Sycamore; replacement of damaged sidewalk segments on 21st Street; installation of new street trees; and new street lighting along portions of 21st Street and Sycamore. Construction will begin at Forest Avenue and is expected to last approximately four to six weeks, followed by work on Magnolia Avenue in January and Sycamore Avenue after that. Intersections will remain open to traffic, though temporary restrictions and limited parking impacts are expected. A meeting with affected residents and businesses is scheduled for Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. at Asunder.

6. Invited Community Organizations

Jen Carpenter – Main Street Buena Vista

Main Street Buena vista assisted with logistics for the Christmas parade, coordinated a downtown scavenger hunt and holiday activities for kindergarten students, and organized a downtown holiday window decorating contest with eight participating businesses.

Mrs. Carpenter highlighted several economic impact achievements, including receiving more than \$47,000 in state-provided redevelopment services, assistance in securing \$20,000 in National Business Grant funding for two businesses, support for multiple organizations applying for VTOP wage match funding, and \$5,000 in private sponsorships. She noted increased communication efforts with downtown businesses and ongoing discussions with potential investors following the downtown inventory and redevelopment study.

Main Street supported or hosted more than 15 major events and initiatives during the year, including record attendance at Mountain Day, Spooktacular, the inaugural golf cart parade, Shop Small Saturday, the Christmas tree lighting, the Christmas parade, downtown movies, scavenger hunts, and a downtown visioning walking tour that was among the largest in the state.

Main Street Buena Vista has achieved the highest tier designation within the Virginia Main Street program, and Mrs. Carpenter noted that maintaining this status will require meeting increased program requirements, which may involve a request for additional local funding in the coming year.

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

Rockbridge Area Recreation Organization

Mr. Bryson Adams has resigned from the RARO Board. This appointment will begin immediately and will expire on December 31, 2027. This is the first time it has appeared on the agenda.

Applicant: Nick Roberts

Councilmember Webb made a motion to appoint Mr. Nick Roberts to the RARO Board. Councilmember Henson seconded the motion, 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 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.

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 third 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 A BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE

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

Councilmember Henson made a motion to **approve** the Ordinance, with Councilmember Coffey 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.

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>
Sub-total 1		\$1,034,795.00
Total General Fund Budget Amendments		\$1,034,795.00

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>
Sub-total 1		\$226,350.00
Total Parks & Recreation Fund Budget Amendments		\$226,350.00

This Ordinance will be effective through the 30th day of June 2026.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

NEW BUSINESS

NB #1: FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR RIGHT OF WAY ABANDONMENT IN BLOCK Y OF ENDERLEY HEIGHTS

Mr. Roberts presented the request from RYT, LLC, owner of the former Northwest Hardwoods sawmill property off Linden Avenue and 10th Street, to abandon portions of a platted City alley and a segment of Piedmont Avenue that have long functioned as part of the sawmill property and lie within its fenced area. The proposed abandonment would not affect access to the residence at the end of Piedmont Avenue. The areas proposed for abandonment total approximately 12,600 square feet, with an estimated value of \$9,450 based on the 75¢ per square foot formula. The Planning Commission discussed the request at its November meeting but was unable to take formal action due to the lack of a quorum; however, the members present raised no concern.

Ms. Burch presented the following Ordinance:

Abandonment of Public Right of Way Alley within Block Y, Section E & West End of Piedmont Avenue

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", "Exhibit B", and "Exhibit C", 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; telephone; 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."

This ordinance shall be effective 30 days following adoption by City Council.

NB #2: ADOPTION OF A PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA & THE MODINE MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Kristina Ramsey presented an overview of Modine's announced expansion in Buena Vista, thanking Modine for their long-standing partnership with the City. She noted that Modine has operated in Buena Vista for more than 60 years and is the City's largest employer, currently employing approximately 268 people at its Magnolia Avenue facility.

Miss Ramsey reported that Modine has purchased the former REA Wire building on 10th Street, adding approximately 169,000 square feet to its operations and expanding its heating division, including new testing and office facilities, and relocation of the division's headquarters to Buena Vista. The project represents a \$19.6 million capital investment, the creation of 57 new direct jobs with wages significantly above the City's prevailing wage, and additional indirect jobs.

She explained that the project was competitive with out-of-state locations and the state and local incentives were critical in securing the expansion. The Commonwealth awarded a \$300,000 Commonwealth Opportunity Fund grant, contingent on a dollar-for-dollar match from the City, along with support through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program. The City's proposed incentive package, developed under the existing public-private partnership policies, is performance-based and includes a rehabilitated real estate tax exemption, partial machinery and tools tax rebates, building permit fee rebates, and water and sewer credits. The total City investment is \$300,121.20, meeting the required match.

Miss Ramsey noted that incentives are contingent upon verified job creation and capital investment benchmarks and will not reduce existing City revenues. Based on economic modeling, the City is expected to realize a return on investment before the end of year four, with an estimated three-to-one return by year ten.

Councilmember Henson made a motion to **approve** the Agreement. Councilmember Coffey seconded the motion, and it was carried by Council. 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 Performance Agreement was unanimously **approved**.

NB #3: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF AN APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION

Steve Bolster presented two school-related appropriation items for Council's consideration. The first is a School Security Grant. In September, the school division was awarded a Virginia Department of Education school security grant totaling \$74,426. City staff and the school division are coordinating to ensure appropriations at the Council level align with school-level spending. The second appropriation request was for the School Nutrition Fund carryover. The school division has a carryover of \$43,197 from the previous year in the School Nutrition Fund. The School Board approved this carryover in October, and Council is being asked to appropriate the funds to maintain alignment with the School Board.

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 **SCHOOL FUND** and expended as follows:

School Fund - New Grant Award (School Security Equipment Grant Program)

19.6600.69130	School Expenses	<u>\$74,426.00</u>
Sub-total 1		\$74,426.00
Total School Fund Appropriation		\$74,426.00

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 **SCHOOL NUTRITION FUND** and expended as follows:

School Nutrition Fund - Carryover Funding

26.6600.69150	Nutrition Expenses	<u>\$43,197.00</u>
Sub-total 1		\$43,197.00
Total School Nutrition Fund Appropriation		\$43,197.00

Approved: This 11th day of December 2025.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Webb moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Poluikis seconding and it was carried by Council. 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 #4: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUITON HONORING THE BUENA VISTA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT'S 120-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring the 120th Anniversary of the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department**

WHEREAS the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department was first organized in 1891 and formally chartered in 1905, appointing its first Fire Chief, C.D. Hinkle, thus beginning a proud tradition of volunteer service to the residents of the City of Buena Vista; and

WHEREAS for more than 120 years the Department has served as a steadfast guardian of the City of Buena Vista, with generations of volunteer firefighters answering the call to protect life, property, and community with courage and unwavering dedication; and

WHEREAS the Department has grown into a highly trained and skilled emergency response organization, with its current roster including 65 active members whose extensive training and certifications, including Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Swift Water Rescue, and Vehicle Extraction, ensure that the citizens of Buena Vista receive the highest standard of emergency response; and

WHEREAS by 2003, the Department had outgrown its original building, and moved into its new firehouse on March 7, 2004, a modern facility that has strengthened operations, enhanced response readiness, and better supported the Department's mission of serving the public; and

WHEREAS the Department proudly supports and continues to invest in the next generation of public safety leaders through its Junior Volunteer Program providing hands-on education, training, and mentorship to prepare young people for future service; and

WHEREAS the Department is further supported by its Ladies' Auxiliary, whose members provide meals, assist with fundraising events, and offer provisions at major incidents, ensuring that firefighters and emergency personnel are supported and sustained during challenging operations; and

WHEREAS the City of Buena Vista recognizes that the strength and longevity of the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department are rooted in the dedication of its members, the support of their families, and the loyalty of community partners over many generations.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista proudly honors and commemorates the 120th anniversary of the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department and expresses its deepest gratitude to all past and present members for their extraordinary service and sacrifice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be presented to the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department as a lasting expression of the City's admiration, appreciation, and respect for their invaluable service to the people of Buena Vista.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Webb moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Coffey seconding and it was carried by Council

NB #5: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION HONORING MR. LARRY MOORE

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring Larry D. Moore for Years of Service on the
Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department**

WHEREAS the City of Buena Vista proudly recognizes individuals whose dedication and service have strengthened the safety and well-being of our community; and

WHEREAS Mr. Larry Dean Moore, born December 27, 1961 to Carl and Emma Golde Moore, is a lifelong resident of Buena Vista and brother to Penny, Fonda, and Teresa; and

WHEREAS Larry graduated from Parry McCluer High School in 1980 and, along with his father, as operated the family's garage and towing business for more than 55 years, serving countless residents and travelers in the Buena Vista area; and

WHEREAS Larry joined the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department in January 1978 as a junior member while in the tenth grade, inspired by his interest in fire trucks, the television show *Emergency!*, and a personal desire to serve his community; and

WHEREAS during his decades of service, Larry has held every line officer position, including serving as Fire Chief in 2014, and stepped forward as Acting Chief during a time of departmental need with Chief Pidge Grow became ill; and

WHEREAS Larry's exceptional dedication, leadership, and commitment to the values of the fire service have been recognized through multiple honors, including Chiefs' Awards and Fireman of the Year; and

WHEREAS his long-standing service reflects not only technical skill and leadership, but also deep compassion and steadfast commitment to the residents of Buena Vista; and

WHEREAS Larry has been supported throughout his years of service by his wife, Karen, whom he married on August 1, 1998, and by his daughters Brittany and Kyleigh, whose encouragement has made his service possible.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia, hereby honors Larry Moore for his outstanding years of service, dedication, and leadership within the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department and expresses its heartfelt gratitude for his contributions to the safety and strength of our community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be presented to Larry D. Moore as a lasting expression of the City's gratitude and respect for his years of service and contributions to the City and its residents.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Cash moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Coffey seconding and it was carried by Council

NB #6: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION HONORING MR. HERBERT HUFFMAN

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring Herbert W. Huffman for Years of Service on the
Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department**

WHEREAS Herbert "Herbie" William Huffman, born on November 22, 1959 to Henry and Ruby Huffman, is a lifelong resident of the City of Buena Vista; and

WHEREAS Herbie is a 1978 graduate of Parry McCluer High School and a devoted family man, having married Mary Lee Huffman in 1989, raising their daughter, Morgan, and now celebrating the joy of four grandchildren; and

WHEREAS Herbie joined the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department in November 1974 at just 14 years old, serving as a Junior Firefighter until 1970, beginning what would become more than five decades of faithful service to his community; and

WHEREAS when asked what drew him to the Department, Herbie shared that many of his neighbors were firefighters and encouraged him to attend an open house—an invitation that sparked a lifelong commitment to public safety and service; and

WHEREAS in 1979 Herbie joined the United States Forest Service, where he spent more than four decades fighting wildfires across 32 states, serving in roles including engine boss, helicopter manager, and helibase manager, before concluding his distinguished federal service in 2021; and

WHEREAS Herbie's commitment and skill were recognized early in his career when he was named the 1981 Jaycees Fireman of the Year, and he later earned the Firefighter 1 designation further strengthening his service as both a responder and a leader; and

WHEREAS at just 22 years old, Herbie became the youngest person ever elected Captain of the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department, demonstrating exceptional leadership potential, which he continued to build upon throughout his decades of service; and

WHEREAS during his long career with the Department, Herbie has served in numerous operational and administrative leadership roles, including Captain, Assistant Fire Chief, multiple terms as President, and currently as Vice-President, providing steady guidance, direction, and support to the Department and its members; and

WHEREAS for the past four years, Herbie has continued to serve as Fire Police, ensuring scene safety, traffic control, and operational support during emergencies; and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Buena Vista recognizes that Herbie's lifelong record of service—spanning local volunteerism, national wildfire response, and dedicated organizational leadership—represent an extraordinary legacy of courage, commitment, and public stewardship.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista proudly honors Herbert W. Huffman for more than 50 years of outstanding service to the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department and expresses profound gratitude for Herbie's leadership, his contributions to firefighting both locally and nationwide, and the example he continues to set for future generations of firefighters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be presented to Herbert W. "Herbie" Huffman as a lasting expression of the City's respect, admiration, and heartfelt thanks for his extraordinary and enduring service to the community.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Webb moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Poluikis seconding and it was carried by Council

NB #7: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION HONORING MR. MELVIN HENSON

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring Melvin E. Henson for Years of Service on the
Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department**

WHEREAS Melvin E. Henson joined the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department in 1974 and, through more than 50 years of unwavering dedication, has become a Life Member whose service has left an enduring impact on the Department and the community it protects; and

WHEREAS when asked why he chose to join the Department, Melvin shared that he saw it as an opportunity to give back to his community and was encouraged by members to “give it a try”—a decision that would benefit the City of Buena Vista for more than five decades; and

WHEREAS Melvin’s dedication and professionalism earned him recognition early in his career, including being named First Runner-Up for Outstanding Young Firefighter in the state by the Virginia Jaycees; and

WHEREAS throughout his distinguished tenure, Melvin has served in numerous leadership roles within the Department—including Training Officer, Lieutenant, and Captain—and contributed his expertise to several key committees responsible for equipment organization, planning the purchase of a new Mack truck, assisting with the annual Carnival, and supporting the Department’s longstanding chicken cooking tradition; and

WHEREAS Melvin served as President of the Fire Department during the planning, process, and completion of the Department’s new firehouse, providing steady leadership during one of the most significant milestones in the Department’s modern history; and

WHEREAS Melvin dedicated 2 years as an adjunct instructor with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, attending and teaching many of its courses and contributing to the development of several state training programs used by firefighters across Virginia; and

WHEREAS Melvin’s commitment to education and preparedness extended beyond the Commonwealth as he attended specialized programs at the National Fire Academy and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, strengthening his skills and broadening his impact as an instructor and responder; and

WHEREAS he further served as a past member of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors and supported community safety as a member of the Buena Vista Chapter of the American Red

Cross, for which he also taught First Aid and CPR courses; and

WHEREAS though his decades of training service, both locally and statewide, Melvin promoted the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department across the Commonwealth, helping shape the skills, professionalism, and readiness of firefighters far beyond the City limits.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, hereby honors and celebrates Melvin E. Henson for more than 50 years of exemplary service and lifelong commitment to the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department, and extends its deepest gratitude to Melvin for his decades of sacrifice, mentorship, and dedication to public safety, all of which have strengthened the Department and improved the lives of countless citizens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be presented to Melvin E. Henson as a lasting expression of the City's appreciation and respect, with sincere congratulations on this remarkable milestone of service.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Webb moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Coffey seconding and it was carried by Council with Councilmember Henson abstaining.

NB #8: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION HONORING MRS. SAMMY BURNETT

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring Sammy D. Burnett for Years of Service on the
Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department**

WHEREAS the City of Buena Vista wishes to recognize individuals whose lifelong dedication, leadership, and volunteer spirit have strengthened the safety, unity, and well-being of our community; and

WHEREAS Mrs. Sammy D. Burnett, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and community leader, dedicated her life in service to the fire service and remained an active member of the Buena Vista Fire Department Auxiliary until her passing in February 2025; and

WHEREAS Sammy and her husband, Tally Burnett, first served in Forest, Virginia, where Tally was a founding member the Forest Fire Department and Sammy was a founding member the Forest Fire Department Auxiliary, demonstrating from early on her strong commitment to supporting first responders and serving her neighbors; and

WHEREAS upon returning to her hometown of Buena Vista, Sammy became one of the charter members of the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, established on May 1, 1967, alongside just thirteen other founding members; and

WHEREAS Sammy served the Buena Vista Fire Department Auxiliary faithfully for 57 years, holding numerous leadership positions and providing steady support during emergencies, fundraisers, special events, and the daily operations that sustain the Department; and

WHEREAS her service was defined by compassion, reliability, and an unwavering dedication to caring for firefighters on scene—ensuring they had meals, drinks, comfort, and encouragement during long and difficult incidents; and

WHEREAS Sammy was deeply connected to the fire service through her family, proudly supporting her husband, children, and grandchildren who have served as firefighters, and modeling for them the values of service, strength, and devotion to the community; and

WHEREAS her commitment and leadership live on through her friends, fellow Auxiliary members, and the many firefighters whose work she supported for more than five decades; and

WHEREAS although this recognition is posthumous, the City of Buena Vista wishes to ensure that her legacy of service is remembered, honored, and celebrated as an irreplaceable part of the history of the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department and Fire Department Auxiliary, and expresses its profound appreciation for her enduring contributions to the safety, strength, and spirit of our community.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Cash moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Poluikis seconding and it was carried by Council

NB #9: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION HONORING MR. MIKEL CLEMENTS

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring J. Mikel Clements for Years of Service on the
Buena Vista Volunteer Rescue Squad**

WHEREAS James Mikel “Mike” Clements was born on May 17, 1956, to Leonard and Ruth Clements, and grew up in Buena Vista alongside his five sisters and three brothers, becoming a lifelong and devoted member of the community; and

WHEREAS Mike is a proud 1974 graduate of Parry McCluer High School, a dedicated husband to his wife of 31 years, Barbara, and a loving father to their two children, Mikel and Holly; and

WHEREAS Mike is an active member of the Buena Vista Baptist Church and has demonstrated throughout his life a deep and abiding commitment to service, faith, and community; and

WHEREAS at only 12 ½ years old, in November 1968, Mike helped start and organize the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department Junior Program, inspired by his father’s example and motivated by a desire to help others; and

WHEREAS Mike pursued firefighting classes early in life and, in August 1969 following Hurricane Camille, assisted the Fire Department and Rescue Squad in emergency cleanup efforts by pumping outflooded basements, salvaging items from homes and businesses, and helping restore what could be saved for affected families; and

WHEREAS at age 15, in May 1971, Mike joined the Junior Volunteer Rescue Squad, beginning what would become more than five decades of extraordinary service in emergency medical response and community support; and

WHEREAS throughout his career, Mike earned Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) certification, training in Vehicle Extraction, and multiple certifications from the American Red Cross, including Standard First Aid, Advanced First Aid, and CPR; and

WHEREAS after becoming a Senior Member of the Rescue Squad, Mike was honored to become an instructor for these courses, traveling across the Commonwealth to teach lifesaving skills to others; and

WHEREAS Mike served with distinction on the Buena Vista Rescue Squad during years when the squad placed numerous times at the Virginia State Convention, often ranking at or near the top, and he continued to his involvement by serving as a state judge in competitions multiple times; and

WHEREAS Mike has devoted 52 years of active service to the Buena Vista Volunteer Rescue Squad, offering his time, skill, compassion, and leadership to those in need, and continues today support the organization as a valued member of its Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Buena Vista recognizes that Mike’s lifelong service—beginning in childhood and extending through more than five decades of training, rescue operations, teaching, and leadership—represent an extraordinary legacy of dedication to the safety and well-being of the citizens of Buena Vista.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista honors James Mikel “Mike” Clements for more than 50 years of outstanding and selfless public service, and extends its deepest gratitude for Mike’s lifelong example of commitment, courage, and compassion, and for the countless lives he has touched throughout his service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be presented to James Mikel Clements as a lasting expression of the City’s gratitude, respect, and admiration for his remarkable contributions to the community.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Coffey moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Webb seconding and it was carried by Council

NB #10: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION HONORING MS. TERESA ELLISON

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring Teresa R. Ellison for Years of Service to
Buena Vista City Public Schools**

WHEREAS Ms. Teresa R. Ellison grew up in Smyth County in Southwest Virginia and is a graduate of Chilhowie High School in Chilhowie, Virginia; and

WHEREAS Ms. Ellison continued her education at Virginia Tech, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a minor in History, and later received a Master of Education degree in Reading Education from The University of Virginia, preparing her for a distinguished career in teaching and instructional leadership; and

WHEREAS Ms. Ellison began her teaching career in 1974 at Enderly Heights Elementary School in the City of Buena Vista, where she taught 3rd grade for 16 years and 4th grade for three years, shaping the academic foundation and futures of countless students; and

WHEREAS Ms. Ellison went on to serve as Director of Instruction, K-12, for Buena Vista City Public Schools for 11 years, providing dedicated leadership and oversight of curriculum, instruction, and educational standards—contributing to a total of 30 years of service to Buena Vista City Schools; and

WHEREAS after retiring from full-time service in Buena Vista, Ms. Ellison continued her commitment to education by teaching part-time at Alleghany High School, where she has served as a Reading Specialist and English Language Learners teacher; and

WHEREAS Ms. Ellison is now beginning her 22nd year with Alleghany, bringing her total years of service in public education to more than five decades; and

WHEREAS in 2008 Ms. Ellison was elected to the Buena Vista City Public School Board, where she has provided thoughtful leadership and strong advocacy for students, families, and educators; and

WHEREAS Ms. Ellison has served multiple terms as Chair of the School Board and has represented the region with distinction, including service as Valley Regional Chair; and

WHEREAS Ms. Ellison continues to serve in statewide education leadership as an At-Large member of the Virginia School Boards Association (VBSA) Board of Directors, now in her second term, demonstrating her continued devotion to advancing public education across the Commonwealth;

and

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Buena Vista recognizes that Ms. Ellison's lifelong dedication—as a teacher, administrator, mentor, and community leader—has made an extraordinary and lasting difference in the lives of students and families, and in the strength of public education locally and statewide.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista proudly celebrates Ms. Teresa R. Ellison for more than 50 years of exceptional service as an educator and for her unwavering commitment to public education and expresses its deepest appreciation for her leadership, her mentorship to countless educators, and her lifelong devotion to the academic success and well-being of the students she has served.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be presented to Ms. Teresa Ellison as a lasting expression of the City's gratitude, respect, and admiration for her remarkable career and enduring contributions to the community.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Coffey moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Poluikis seconding and it was carried by Council

NB #11: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE PARRY MCCLUER HIGH SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY TEAM

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Honoring the Parry McCluer High School
Boys' Cross Country Team**

WHEREAS the City of Buena Vista celebrates the achievements of its student-athletes, who through dedication, discipline, and teamwork bring pride and recognition to our community; and

WHEREAS the Parry McCluer High School Boys' Cross Country Team has achieved extraordinary success during the 2025 season, earning distinction not only within Class 1 competition but across all classifications in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

WHEREAS the Fighting Blues completed the season ranked #1 in the entire state across all classifications by MileState.com, and set a new school record with a remarkable top-five average of 15:58, demonstrating historic program depth and competitive excellence; and

WHEREAS the 2025 season culminated in the team winning its third consecutive VHSL Class 1 State Championship and its sixth overall title, placing Parry McCluer at #7 on the VHSL all-time wins list and establishing the program as the most decorated in Class 1 history; and

WHEREAS the team reached new heights during the season, placing fourth at the Virginia XC Showcase while competing against multiple state-championship teams from South Carolina, North Carolina, and Maryland, and defeating Albemarle High School—then ranked #1 in Virginia—solidifying their position as the top team in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS the team's success reflects the outstanding leadership, strategy, and training provided by Head Coach Chris Poluikis, who has dedicated 21 years of service to Parry McCluer High School, and by Assistant Coach Jacob Zimmerman; and

WHEREAS the team was led by Individual State Champion Kebryl Chandler, along with All-State athletes Caleb Cooper, Logan Wheelock, and Josh Cooper, and strong performances from Hinckley Lovelace, Sebastian George, and Sam Carpenter.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista hereby commends the Parry McCluer High School Boys' Cross Country Team for its historic accomplishments, its third consecutive state championship, and its recognition as the #1 high school boys' cross country team in Virginia across all classifications, and extends their deepest appreciation to the athletes, coaches, families, and school staff whose support and dedication made these achievements possible.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be presented to the team and coaching staff as an expansion of the City's pride and gratitude.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Webb moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Cash seconding and it was carried by Council

NB #12: APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE BUENA VISTA LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD

Mayor Cooper presented the following Resolution:

**Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia
Establishing the Melvin E. Henson
Lifetime Service Award**

WHEREAS the City of Buena Vista seeks to honor extraordinary individuals whose lifelong dedication, leadership, and public service have significantly strengthened the community; and

WHEREAS Mr. Melvin E. Henson, born April 28, 1948 to Melvin and Frances Henson, is a lifelong resident of Buena Vista and a graduate of Parry McCluer High School, Class of 1966, later attending Dabney S. Lancaster Community College; and

WHEREAS Mr. Henson honorably served in the United States Army, demonstrating the commitment to duty and service that would define his entire life; and

WHEREAS Melvin began his career with Buena Vista Public Works in 1974, working in street maintenance, water and sewer operations, and ultimately serving as Public Works Director, retiring after 33 ½ years of faithful service; and

WHEREAS Melvin is a Life Member of the Buena Vista Volunteer Fire Department, serving for over 50 years and holding multiple leadership roles, while also serving as a 25-year adjunct instructor with the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, contributing to statewide training and curriculum development; and

WHEREAS his dedication to public safety and emergency response further includes membership in the International Society of Fire Service Instructors, service with the American Red Cross, and years of teaching first aid, CPR, and related lifesaving skills; and

WHEREAS Melvin has strengthened community life through his 54-year membership in the Floyd Davison Post 126 of the American Legion, lifelong membership at Buena Vista Baptist Church, support for Boys Scout and Eagle Scout projects, and assistance with countless fundraising events; and

WHEREAS he additionally served the City as Animal Control Officer, Building Inspector, a member of the Planning Commission since 2011, and as a member of City Council for 16 years, during which he served on the Public Works-Public Safety Committee, the Parks & Recreation Committee, and several regional bodies, consistently advocating for improvements that benefit the citizens of Buena Vista; and

WHEREAS through every role, Melvin has demonstrated unwavering commitment, integrity, and a deep desire to make Buena Vista a better place for all; and

WHEREAS the City wishes to establish an award that recognizes individuals whose lifetime of service reflects the same exceptional dedication shown by Mr. Henson.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia, hereby establishes the “Melvin E. Henson Lifetime Service Award” to honor individuals who have provided outstanding, long-term service and leadership to the Buena Vista community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that only one recipient may be selected for this award each year, in order to preserve its significance and purpose; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Mr. Melvin Eugene Henson is hereby named the first recipient of the Melvin E. Henson Lifetime Service Award in grateful recognition of his extraordinary, decades-long contributions to the City of Buena Vista.

Adopted this 11th day of December, 2025, by the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Webb moved to **approve** the Resolution with Councilmember Poluikis seconding and it was carried by Council with Councilmember Henson abstaining.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor