



City of Buena Vista City Council Regular Council Meeting

May 1, 2025, 6:00 PM
Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

The City Council for the City of Buena Vista met for a Regular Council Meeting on Thursday, May 1, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Tyson Cooper

Vice-Mayor Danny Staton

Steve Webb

Michelle Poluikis

Stanley Coffey

Melvin Henson

Members Absent: Ronald Cash

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

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

ADG #2: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ADG #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 17, 2025, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, PUBLIC HEARING, & EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

ADG #4: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS

- Jesse Lineberry, 2525 Racey Drive, stated that he had been told by a member of the fire department that there were four fire hydrants that weren't working around Enderly Heights Elementary School, and if this was true he was concerned about the safety of the children at the school. As this was the first time Council or Mr. Tyree had heard this concern, Mayor Cooper asked that Mr. Tyree find out what was going on. Mayor Cooper added that anytime anyone has an immediate concern such as this, to please let us know immediately.

A little later in the meeting, Mr. Tyree received an answer to Mr. Lineberry's concerns about the fire hydrants. Corey Henson, Public Works Director, said that a week or so ago those hydrants were down for about three hours due to a major water line repair and once the leak was fixed, the fire hydrants were back on.

ADG #5: REPORTS

1. Mayor

Mayor Cooper reported that he attended the recent CSPDC meeting as well as the ribbon cutting for the Blue Ridge Abbey B&B. He also mentioned and congratulated the SVU Men's

Volleyball Team for winning the National Championship.

2. City Manager

Mr. Tyree invited everyone to attend the ribbon cutting at Leaf & Lore on May 2nd and mentioned that SVU will be holding their graduation ceremony on May 9th at 11:00 am.

He also noted that as of today, the Budget & Finance Committee came to a balanced budget that will be presented at the next meeting.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees / Members

a. Budget & Finance

Mr. Webb began his report by noting that we started this process at \$1.7M in the hole and we have worked it down to where we've got that balanced. There are going to be fee and rate increases if Council approves. We are the only locality in the region that has not implemented a cigarette tax; this will bring some revenue to the City where it is much needed at this point. After some discussion with Rockbridge and Lexington about what they do, we are looking at 25¢ per pack and that will begin in January 2026. He added that this is something that was looked at previously, but it was decided that we hold off, but now money's so tight that we have to look for nickels and dimes where we can find them. There will also be some price changes at the cemetery and Glen Maury Park, where some of these prices have been the same since 2014.

b. Outdoor Spaces

Mr. Henson reported that the next tour will be on Saturday, May 17th beginning at 9:00 am at City Hall.

c. School Facilities

Mr. Tyree stated that he and Dr. Francis met with a contractor last week to get more honed in on the numbers, so they are working on that for us now. He suggested that once we have this information, we may want to hold another joint Council and School Board meeting to look at the financial modeling and construction costs.

Mr. Webb asked how much the contractor was charging for this work. Mr. Tyree said they are not charging anything as they are using their cost estimator tool, which is basically just plugging in square footage and what we are looking at doing. They are also hoping that by doing this work for us at no cost, that it would look good for them in the bid process and for future business.

Mr. Coffey thanked the B&F Committee for being diligent, for the amount of time that they've spent on the budget, and for the things that they've done to close the \$1.7M gap. He also mentioned that the Guy Carawan Bluegrass Jam is currently going on at the Park and invited everyone to come out, pull up a chair, and listen.

Mr. Webb also reported that there is a big dumpster at the City Shop that we fill with scrap metal and stuff like that all year long. CNS Disposal picked the dumpster up and took it off for recycling then brought the dumpster back at no cost to the City, so he wanted to recognize CNS for doing

that for us.

5. Department Heads / Constitutional Officers / Court Clerks

Wayne Handley – Police Department

- **Calls for Service:** So far in 2025, the Police Department is experiencing a decrease in calls for service compared to the same time last year; at this time last year, we were at 2,441 calls for service, and right now we are at 2,119, which is a 14% decrease.
- **Criminal Arrests:** These are also down; at this time last year, we were at 85 criminal arrests, and we are currently at 62. He added that this is not to be confused with the total number of charges taken as one person might be arrested on three or four subsequent charges where another person may only have one charge; these numbers are the number of people arrested.
- **Traffic Enforcement:** This has been a priority for the BVPD this year. Currently, we are up 335% in traffic enforcement over where we were last year; 516 traffic citations have been issued so far this calendar year compared to 154 at the same time last year. He said that it is important to note that they are still giving warnings on about 10-15% of the stops made, under certain circumstances, noting an example where a man was rushing his son to the hospital and blew through the radar, so when he was stopped and the officer saw what was happening, he sent him on his way without any enforcement action. He added that this is one of the things that citizens bring to his attention and that's what they are trying to work on. He also mentioned that 24th Street is an area they are going to begin focusing on.

The Certified Crime Prevention Community Project is moving along well. Sergeant Tomlin and Officer Guttmann have also developed two other programs. They are doing a camera registry where people who have Ring cameras on their homes can register those and if there is crime in the community, we know that there is a camera there that we may be able to obtain recordings from. It isn't a "promise to participate", but it is an option for people to let us know there's a surveillance camera in this area. They are also working on QR codes for our business checks. There would be a QR code by the door that officers could go by and scan if there's a problem around the business. For example, if they go by a business for an alarm, they can scan the code, and it keeps track of those types of activities.

They have two different summer camps coming up this year. One is with BVCPS, which is their annual camp with two one-week sessions that will be happening the weeks of June 16th and June 23rd. This year they are initiating another camp that is going to be geared towards kids that have a connection to Buena Vista but may not necessarily either be in the public school system or for some other reason may fall through a gap. This is kind of a way to bridge opportunities for kids to go to camp. This camp, for 7- to 12-year-olds is going to be called the Reginald Monk Fix Summer Camp through the BVPD and the Buena Vista Police Foundation and will be held the week of July 28th. They will be doing this camp with their own personnel resources, and the camp is being made possible thanks to a very generous donation from the estate of Reginald Fix. Mr. Fix left a sizable donation to the Police Foundation, which they anticipate will be able to fund this camp for at least two to three years.

The PD is partnering with the Community Care Portal which is a network of faith-based communities where different organizations are able to be vetted and take in recommendations or opportunities where there are needs in the community, then put those into the database. This

allows other members of the Care Portal to see those needs and try to help out. Chief Handley, Morgan Henderson, and Marnie Mikels will be the points of contact with the PD for this program.

6. Invited Community Organizations

Jen Carpenter – Main Street Buena Vista

- **Town Square Progress:** Recent site walk-through with Kathy from Frazier Design Firm and our Virginia Main Street representative. Both were extremely impressed with our current efforts. Kathy will compile suggestions to share soon.
- **DIG Grant Submission:** Applied for a Downtown Investment Grant of \$67,400 to outfit Town Square with infrastructure for hosting events and activating the space. Decision expected later this year.
- **Outdoor Movie Equipment:** Received a grant from the Community Foundation to purchase outdoor movie equipment. Will submit proper event forms with the City once dates and logistics are finalized for summer movie nights in Town Square.
- **Downtown Mural Collaboration:** Excited to be collaborating on the downtown mural project!
- **Friends of Southwest Virginia Visit:** Two-day assessment scheduled for July 30-31. They will evaluate 5-6 buildings to provide development suggestions and recommendations.
 - Day 1 – will include a Kickoff Meeting at 9:00 am and a Community Walking Tour at 6:00 pm
- **Mother's Day:** There is going to be a big Mother's Day "card" installed on the stage in Town Square next week and everyone is encouraged to come by and write an appreciation note to any woman in your life. They will be taking pictures and sharing them on social media.
- **Tourism Passport Program:** Collaborating with Tourism Department to launch a passport/QR gamified platform highlighting local attractions and businesses in Buena Vista, with incentives for visitors.
- **Business Appreciation Month:** Working with Kristina Ramsey on "BAM" initiative including an open house breakfast for our downtown businesses on May 16th beginning at 8:30 am.
- **Newsletter Relaunch:** Relaunching the MSBV newsletter to better communicate events and activities happening in our area; you can sign up on the website.
- **Gravista Bike Race:** This is being held on May 9th and 10th and includes a kid's bike race on the 10th.

ADG #6: CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

None.

OLD BUSINESS

OB #1: SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR ZONING MAP AMENDMENT & CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT: 600 BLOCK OF MAGNOLIA AVENUE

As there were no changes to the text, Councilmember Henson moved to read the Ordinance by title only. Councilmember Coffey seconded the motion, and it was carried by Council.

Mr. Roberts reported on the vehicle accident data that was requested at the previous meeting. Since 2017, there have been five accidents in that area with only one of those resulting in injury. He added that based on the discussion from the last meeting, we will be adding a turning lane off of Magnolia when the road is repaved this summer. Councilmember Coffey asked if the speed limit would be reduced there; Mr. Roberts stated that if there is an issue in the future, we can but there is no plan to do that currently.

Councilmember Webb made a motion to approve the Ordinance as presented, with Councilmember Coffey 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			
Vice-Mayor Staton	X		X		
Mayor Cooper	X		X		

The following Ordinance was unanimously **approved**:

**Zoning Map Amendment & Conditional Use Permit
47-1-1-27-1, 47-1-E---A, and 47-1-1-27-6 through 10
600 through 800 Block of Magnolia Avenue**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, that after a duly called public hearing, in accordance with the general welfare of the citizens of Buena Vista, and in accordance with good zoning practices, the following property shall be rezoning from R3 Residential Limited to R4 Medium Density Residential, and the zoning map for the City will be amended to reflect this change; an approximately two acre area described by Tax Map IDs 47-1-1-27-1, 47-1-E---A, and 47-1-1-27-6 through 10; as shown on "Exhibit A".

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that, pursuant to Section 630.01-3 of the Land Development Regulations, a Conditional Use Permit shall be issued for a reduction of the minimum front setback for primary buildings to 20 feet; a reduction of the minimum side setback to ten (10) feet; and an increase in the maximum height to 40 feet.

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

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

OB #2: SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR RIGHT OF WAY ABANDONMENT: 600 BLOCK OF MAGNOLIA AVENUE

As there were no changes to the text, Councilmember Henson moved to read the Ordinance by title only. Councilmember Coffey seconded the motion, and it was carried by Council.

Councilmember Webb made a motion to approve the Ordinance as presented, with Councilmember Coffey 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			
Vice-Mayor Staton	X		X		
Mayor Cooper	X		X		

The following Ordinance was unanimously **approved**:

**Abandonment of Public Right of Way
300' of Alley in Block 27, Section 1**

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 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.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

NEW BUSINESS

NB #1: PROCLAMATION FOR BUSINESS APPRECIATION MONTH 2025

Ms. Burch presented the following Proclamation:

**Business Appreciation Month
Proclamation**

WHEREAS Buena Vista businesses are the heartbeat of our community, driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and contributing to the unique spirit and charm of our City; and

WHEREAS the success of Buena Vista's economy is directly tied to the hard work, creativity, and determination of our local business owners, who go above and beyond to meet the needs of our residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS these businesses provide valuable jobs, essential services, and high-quality products, supporting not only our local community but also extending their reach across the surrounding areas and beyond; and

WHEREAS Buena Vista is proudly home to 289 business license holders, each playing a vital role in shaping the City's future and ensuring its continued vitality; and

WHEREAS many of these businesses are small, locally owned and operated by passionate entrepreneurs whose dedication helps maintain the unique character of our community; and

WHEREAS Buena Vista is committed to nurturing its growing business community, recognizing that their continued success is key to a vibrant and thriving City; and

WHEREAS we extend our deepest gratitude to all of Buena Vista's business owners for their resilience, their contributions, and their unwavering commitment to making our City a great place to live, work, and visit.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE, The City Council of the City of Buena Vista, will continue to hereby recognize May as **BUSINESS APPRECIATION MONTH** in Buena Vista, and we call this observance to the attention of all our citizens, encouraging everyone to support, thank, and continue to patronize our local business community throughout the month of May and beyond.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

Councilmember Henson made a motion to **approve** the Proclamation, with Councilmember Coffey seconding, and it was carried by Council.

NB #2: PROCLAMATION FOR FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Burch presented the following Proclamation:

**Foster Care Awareness Month
Proclamation**

WHEREAS Buena Vista's children and youth are our hope for the future, and we assert that all children deserve a safe, loving, stable, and nurturing home; and

WHEREAS families, serving as the primary providers of love, identity, self-esteem, and support, are the very foundations of our community; and

WHEREAS a child's success is best supported in a child welfare system that is family-focused, child-centered, and community-based, and preserving families is the primary goal of the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS while Virginia has over 5,000 children and youth aged 18 and younger in foster care, there are nearly 4,000 children and youth supported by a network of dedicated and approved kinship, foster, and adoptive families; and

WHEREAS kinship families and foster families play a critical role in serving as a support, not a substitute, for the parents of children in foster care to make family reunification possible; and

WHEREAS many kinship families and foster families create permanency for children in foster care through adoption when those children cannot be safely reunified with their birth families; and

WHEREAS through the partnerships among kinship, foster, and adoptive families; child welfare staff; and public and private child-serving organizations, efforts are made to ensure that voices are heard and support offered for youth at every step of their foster care journey, including helping young adults successfully transition to independence; and

WHEREAS we honor and celebrate the enduring contributions of kinship, foster, and adoptive families during National Foster Care Awareness Month and recognize the outstanding service and commitments kinship, foster, and adoptive families provide to our children and youth, while recognizing that foster care supports entire families; and

WHEREAS the efforts of the Rockbridge Area Department of Social Services and Intercept Youth Services to raise awareness surrounding this societal challenge are commendable.

NOW THEREFORE, WE, The City Council of the City of Buena Vista, do hereby recognize May 2025

as **FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH** in Buena Vista, and call on all citizens to take action that will positively impact the life of a child in foster care.

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

Councilmember Poluikis made a motion to **approve** the Proclamation, with Vice-Mayor Staton seconding, and it was carried by Council.

NB #3: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF AN APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION

Steve Bolster, Finance Director, reported that the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences awarded Buena Vista \$50,000 to purchase commercial kitchen equipment for the Virginia Innovation Accelerator. This is a reimbursable grant, so we must make the purchases first then seek reimbursement from VDACS. There is a \$2,500 local cash match which is coming from the current Planning Department budget. The grant is part of Virginia's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Fund Infrastructure Grant Program. The program funds capital projects at food hubs, farmers markets, commercial kitchens, and other value-added facilities for processing and packaging Virginia agricultural products. It seeks to incentivize agriculture or forestry businesses to expand or locate in Virginia.

The Regional Tourism Program received the DRIVE Outdoor Grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation to support the following purchases for Glen Maury Park and the City: 1) Disc Golf Tee Pads; and 2) Kayak Locker. The goal of this grant is to enhance outdoor recreational development assets, and entrepreneurial opportunities within Virginia. This is also a reimbursable grant, so we will make the purchases first then seek the reimbursements from the Regional Tourism Program. There is a 50/50 match which Tourism covers.

Mayor Cooper read 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, 2025**, from the UNAPPROPRIATED SURPLUS of the **GENERAL FUND** and expended as follows:

Virginia Innovation Accelerator Commercial Kitchen Equipment (VA DACS Grant)

10.3402.52070	Equipment & Materials	\$50,000.00
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Sub-total 1	\$50,000.00
Total General Fund Appropriation	\$50,000.00

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, 2025**, from the UNAPPROPRIATED SURPLUS of the **PARKS AND RECREATION FUND** and expended as follows:

Disc Golf Artificial Grass Tee Padding & Kayak Locker for GMP (Regional Tourism Grant)		
12.7103.52070	Equipment & Materials	\$10,500.00
Sub-total 1		\$10,500.00
Total Parks and Recreation Fund Appropriation		\$10,500.00

Approved: This 1st day of May 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			
Vice-Mayor Staton	X		X		
Mayor Cooper	X		X		

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Tyson T. Cooper, Mayor