



CITY OF BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & EXECUTIVE SESSION

June 4, 2026 | 6:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

The Buena Vista City Council met for a Regular Council Meeting and Executive Session on Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Mayor Jesse Lineberry

William Kerr

Vice-Mayor Danny Staton

Stephanie Noel-Branch

Amy Gilliam

Ronald Cash

Michelle Poluikis

Members Absent:

None

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

Mayor Lineberry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

ADG #2: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilmember Gilliam moved to approve the agenda, Councilmember Kerr seconded, and the motion carried.

ADG #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 21, 2026, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING

Councilmember Noel-Branch moved to approve the minutes, Vice-Mayor Staton seconded, and the motion carried.

ADG #4: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- Thomas DeSantis, 215 Vista Links Drive, provided an update on property damage caused by contractors installing Brightspeed fiber optic lines. He stated that trenches and cables were placed across his backyard and that the disturbed ground has not been adequately restored. He reported limited communication and follow-up from Brightspeed representatives despite prior discussions and assurances that the matter would be addressed. Mr. DeSantis also raised concerns about possible future work on the property and requested clarification regarding the sewer easement, including ownership, repair responsibility, and whether permits are required for fencing within the easement. He questioned whether Brightspeed and its contractors must obtain City business licenses and what notice property owners are entitled to receive before utility work occurs. He also noted that grass on adjacent City-owned property had not been mowed and expressed concern about potential damage to his mowing equipment due to ground conditions. He stated that he is still awaiting a response from Brightspeed regarding restoration of his property.
- Jeanne DeSantis, 215 Vista Links Drive, echoed Mr. DeSantis's concerns about contractors entering private property to perform utility work without prior notice. She stated that residents should be notified before such work occurs and asked who is responsible for ensuring property owners receive that information. Mrs. DeSantis also expressed concern about maintenance of the City-owned property adjacent to their home, noting that portions had not been mowed and that unmanaged vegetation can spread invasive plant species and create future maintenance issues. She emphasized

the need for routine mowing and vegetation maintenance on City property and encouraged the City to address the matter.

- Dianara Biaz spoke in support of the proposed Rockbridge Creative Institute project, stating that it would give young people valuable opportunities to learn practical trades and hands-on skills, including construction and equipment operation. She shared that her two sons, who attend RCI, have gained responsibility, work skills, and confidence through the program. Ms. Biaz said the institute would benefit local youth and students from across the country by supporting workforce development and preserving skilled trades. She also noted that the project could attract visitors to Buena Vista and have a positive impact on the community and local economy.
- Jordan Clark expressed concern about the recent increase in family pool membership fees, noting that the new rate is significantly higher than the prior year and may burden families already facing rising household costs. He stated that many families expected fees to remain unchanged based on prior communications and emphasized the pool's importance as an affordable recreational resource that supports public health, youth activities, and family engagement. Mr. Clark said higher fees could reduce participation or lead residents to seek recreation outside the City. He questioned the reason for the increase, how additional revenue would be used, whether impacts on membership had been evaluated, and whether alternatives such as other funding sources or phased increases had been considered. He also asked whether lifeguard compensation would be affected and requested clarification on the City's financial considerations. He urged Council to reconsider the increase, stating that many community members shared concerns about affordability and access.
- Austin Rehl provided an update on the Rockbridge Creative Institute project, stating that students and apprentices are gaining hands-on experience in areas such as electrical work, grounds maintenance, and sawmill operation. He reported that the organization received state approval for its internship program, allowing college students to participate in a state-sponsored Virginia initiative. He explained that college-age interns would work alongside high school-age assistants under the supervision of program staff and mentors. Mr. Rehl said the project continues to progress, expressed appreciation to those involved, and acknowledged that challenges are expected with any major undertaking. He emphasized the organization's goal of creating a program that is both beneficial and valuable to the community.

ADG #5: REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Lineberry expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming opening of the new visitor center and encouraged residents to visit and tour the facility once it opens. He also noted his attendance at the recent PMHS graduation and congratulated the local graduates.

2. Interim City Manager

Mr. Handley reported continued progress on the wastewater treatment plant project, including coordination with the EPA regarding \$2.3 million in congressionally directed spending. He stated that required paperwork will be completed in the fall and that staff will meet with engineers and Public Works leadership to determine the most effective use of the funds.

He also reported that City staff, Public Works, and Finance recently conducted a citywide review of street conditions to develop a prioritized paving and maintenance plan. The plan will divide the City into grid sections to schedule roadway improvements within available funding. He noted that milling and paving costs are substantial, even for relatively small roadway sections.

Mr. Handley recognized staff in the Commissioner of Revenue and Treasurer's Offices for their work during the recent software transition and tax bill preparation. He announced that tax bills will be mailed soon and are due June 30.

He also recognized Public Works staff for responding to a weekend citizen service call and assisting with diagnosis and resolution of a reported sewer-related issue.

Lastly, Mr. Handley provided an update on the City Manager recruitment process. He stated that 16 candidates were initially reviewed, two finalists were selected for Council interviews on June 25, and a final selection is expected in July. A transition period is planned, with the new City Manager anticipated to begin duties in August.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees/Members

Budget & Finance Committee

Mrs. Poluikis responded to recent comments about pool fees. She acknowledged that the increase may be difficult for some residents but stated that raising fees for optional recreational services is preferable to increasing taxes, which would affect all residents. She compared Buena Vista's rates with Lexington's, noting that Lexington's base rate applies to two individuals and includes additional fees for larger families, making the overall costs comparable. She also shared personal observations about differences in rules and amenities between the Lexington and GMP pools and expressed a preference for GMP. Mrs. Poluikis acknowledged affordability concerns but reiterated that the current approach avoids a broader tax increase and its impact on the community.

Cemetery Committee

Mr. Cash reported that the Cemetery Committee is reviewing and updating operational guidelines to address current needs and rising maintenance costs. He stated that future rate increases for cemetery lots and related services may be considered, noting that current rates are below those of comparable local cemeteries. He emphasized the need to strengthen the perpetual care fund to support long-term maintenance of Green Hill Cemetery, explaining that the fund is currently insufficient. Mr. Cash also discussed efforts to inventory decorations and items placed at grave sites, noting that some may interfere with maintenance. He said clearer standards may be needed to balance memorial practices with cemetery upkeep and emphasized that cemetery operations require long-term financial planning and sustained effort.

Events Committee

Mr. Cash provided an update on preparations for the July 4th celebration. Planned activities include an 8:00 a.m. flag-raising ceremony with a new flagpole and large American flag, participation from local students, potential musical performances, speeches, community involvement, and a ceremonial dedication. He also described plans for a new flag display area and time capsule activity, including burial of a new capsule and opening of the existing one, with community input on items to include.

Mr. Cash also provided early planning updates for Mountain Day in October, including proposed community events, children's activities, and an outdoor movie screening. He requested assistance from Council members and volunteers with event coordination and youth programming.

5. Department Heads/Constitutional Officers/Court Clerks

Kristina Ramsey – Economic Development

Miss Ramsey reported on Business Appreciation Month, noting that City staff and partners distributed gifts and thank-you cards to nearly all 125 brick-and-mortar businesses. She thanked those involved and said feedback from local businesses was very positive.

Miss Ramsey announced that she will leave her position as Economic Development Director, with her last day scheduled for June 23. She stated that she has accepted a position with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation as Director of Engagement and External Affairs, where she will work with gateway

communities across Virginia while remaining connected to Buena Vista regionally. Reflecting on her tenure since 2019, she described the work as personally and professionally meaningful and emphasized the importance of collaboration among City staff, elected officials, business owners, nonprofit partners, and residents in advancing economic development.

She described economic development as relationship-driven work centered on coordination, problem-solving, and community-building, and credited collective community efforts for recent local progress. She encouraged continued investment, collaboration, and openness to new ideas as Buena Vista continues to grow.

Miss Ramsey outlined transition plans, noting that she will coordinate meetings with key employers, partners, and project stakeholders in the coming weeks. Economic Development and Marketing Assistant Ally Haney will serve as the primary office contact during the transition, with support from City leadership and partner organizations. Miss Ramsey said she will remain available to assist with continuity as needed and expressed gratitude to City Council, staff, partners, and the community for their support and collaboration.

Councilmember Cash recognized Miss Ramsey's contributions to the City's economic development efforts and commended her impact on local growth and business development initiatives.

6. Invited Community Organizations

Josh Elrod & Greg Hornback – Maury River Recovery Court

Mr. Elrod provided an update on the Maury River Recovery Court and thanked Council for allocating approximately \$11,000 in opioid abatement funding to the initiative. He reported that the program currently serves 13 participants, with enrollment expected to increase to 15 or 16, approaching the original capacity goal of 20. He stated that faster-than-expected enrollment reflects ongoing community need related to substance use disorder. Recovery Court meets weekly on Tuesday mornings at the Rockbridge County Courthouse and is open to the public, and he encouraged Council members to attend.

Mr. Hornback, Director of Clinical Services at Rockbridge Area Community Services, offered additional comments. He said that although he initially had reservations about the program, he has been encouraged by participants' engagement and commitment to recovery. He explained that participants complete at least nine hours per week of intensive outpatient treatment, along with ongoing court supervision and support, and may remain in the program for up to two years. He emphasized that participants are choosing treatment and long-term recovery over shorter sentencing options, expressed strong support for the program's collaborative approach, and encouraged Council members to observe a session.

Chad Coffey – RARO

Mr. Coffey provided an end-of-year update on RARO programming, noting strong participation growth in spring and early summer sports. He thanked Public Works and Parks & Rec staff for maintaining athletic fields and facilities, stating that field conditions have improved significantly in recent years. He also recognized RARO staff, approximately 350 to 400 annual volunteers, and Buena Vista residents for their continued participation and support.

Mr. Coffey reported that participation is trending toward another record year, with more than 500 participants and an increase of approximately 60 percent since RARO's early years in Buena Vista. He said RARO continues to focus much of its programming in Buena Vista and is strengthening partnerships with the local school system to expand indoor and winter opportunities. He also reported progress toward installing a new scoreboard at Secrist Field through private fundraising and noted that proceeds from an upcoming Tri-Brook Club fundraiser will support improvements to Buena Vista recreation assets.

He also reported that RARO implemented new recreation management software to improve registration and program administration and continues to emphasize coach and official training. Looking ahead, Mr. Coffey emphasized continued collaboration with the City and school system, encouraged residents to contact RARO staff with program questions or concerns, and reaffirmed RARO's commitment to consistent, high-quality recreational programming.

Brooke Dalton – Main Street Buena Vista

Mrs. Dalton reported that MSBV received a service award recognizing more than 1,000 volunteer hours, which will be accepted at the Virginia Economic Development Association conference. She also announced that MSBV received a \$2,000 tourism grant to support Mountain Day marketing, the largest grant received for that purpose to date. She noted continued momentum for Mountain Day, thanked Councilmember Cash for his involvement in planning, and reminded attendees of MSBV's rubber duck race at Rockbridge Outdoors Fest on June 13th.

Mrs. Dalton also expressed appreciation for Kristina Ramsey, stating that her leadership and guidance have significantly supported MSBV's progress and success.

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

Rockbridge Regional Library Board

Mrs. Leece Bachman's term on the RRLB expires on June 30, 2026. Mrs. Bachman is unable to serve another term at this time. This appointment will be for a four-year term expiring on June 30, 2030.

Applicant: Janice Burguires

Councilmember Noel-Branch moved to appoint Ms. Burguires to the Library Board. Councilmember Cash seconded the motion, and it carried.

Public Recreational Facilities Authority

The following terms on the PRFA expire on June 30, 2026: Mr. Bill Fitzgerald, Mrs. Deidra Dryden, Mr. Melvin Henson, Mr. Tim Petrie, and Mrs. Joanna Clark. They are all willing to continue serving if reappointed. These will all be four-year terms expiring on June 30, 2030.

Councilmember Poluikis made a motion to reappoint all five members of the PRFA. Councilmember Kerr seconded the motion, and it carried.

Planning Commission

Ms. Lynette Johnson's term on the Planning Commission expires on June 30, 2026. Ms. Johnson is willing to continue serving if reappointed. This will be for a four-year term expiring on June 30, 2030.

Councilmember Gilliam moved to reappoint Ms. Johnson to the Planning Commission. Councilmember Noel-Branch seconded the motion, and it carried.

OLD BUSINESS

OB #1: SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO GRANT A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR A CAMPGROUND AT 801 MERIDIAN PARKWAY

There being no changes to the ordinance text, Vice-Mayor Staton motioned to read by title, seconded by Councilmember Poluikis, and carried by Council.

Councilmember Noel-Branch requested clarification regarding the RCI's residential program, specifically asking about the age of students who would participate in building and potentially residing in structures on-site.

Mr. Rehl explained that the primary residential program, including the “Master Builder” track, is intended for post-secondary participants, generally adults or individuals in their 18th year. He noted that in limited circumstances, minors may participate in short-term or specialized camps with parental consent and appropriate oversight. He clarified that residential spaces would primarily be used by students in post-secondary programs, visiting faculty, or short-term course participants rather than long-term minor residents. He further stated that students in the residential program would be high school graduates or otherwise of adult age for long-term participation.

Councilmember Cash moved to **approve** the ordinance. Vice-Mayor Staton seconded the motion, and Ms. Burch polled the Council as follows:

Member	Present	Absent	Yes	No	Abstain
Mrs. Poluikis	X		X		
Mrs. Gilliam	X		X		
Mr. Kerr	X		X		
Mrs. Noel-Branch	X		X		
Mr. Cash	X		X		
Vice-Mayor Staton	X		X		
Mayor Lineberry	X		X		

The following ordinance was unanimously approved:

**Conditional Use Permit for a Campground
Rockbridge Creative Institute, 801 Meridian Parkway, Tax Map 8-1---1**

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, pursuant to Section 617.03-3 of the Land Development Regulations, a Conditional Use Permit shall be issued for the operation of a campground with 20 spaces at the Rockbridge Creative Institute, 801 Meridian Parkway, Tax Map 8-1---1, in accordance with the staff report and site plan attached hereto as “Exhibit A”.

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

Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

NEW BUSINESS

ADG #7: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS – NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

None.

NB #1: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF A REIMBURSEMENT RESOLUTION

Mr. Handley presented a reimbursement resolution related to the planned capital project for the Perry McCluer school facility, which is being developed to consolidate two schools under one roof. He explained that the estimated project cost is approximately \$17 million and that the City will need to explore financing options for the project. He stated that the purpose of the reimbursement resolution is to allow the City, if it proceeds with the project, to reimburse itself for certain pre-development “soft costs”, such as financing consultation, engineering, and architectural services, by incorporating those expenses into future debt financing.

He noted that the City has engaged Davenport, a public finance advisory firm, to assist in evaluating financing options for the project. He explained that approval of the resolution would allow the City to include eligible project-related expenditures incurred within the prior 60 days in the overall financing package, if the project moves forward. He emphasized that the resolution does not obligate the City to proceed with the project or incur debt but instead preserves flexibility should the project advance. He further noted that without the resolution, the City would not be able to reimburse itself for these pre-development costs through future financing.

Mr. Kearney reiterated that the resolution is a standard mechanism used to preserve financing options and does not require the City to proceed with the project.

Ms. Burch presented the following Resolution:

Resolution of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia

Declaring Its Intention To Reimburse Itself From The Proceeds Of One Or More Tax-Exempt Financings For Certain Expenditures Made And/Or To Be Made In Connection With School Projects In The City Of Buena Vista, Virginia

WHEREAS the Buena Vista School Board (**the “School Board”**) is a political subdivision organized and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and owns and operates certain school facilities in the City of Buena Vista, Virginia (**the “City”**); and

WHEREAS the City and the School Board have paid or may pay certain costs (**the “Expenditures”**) relating to the renovation of the School Board’s high school in the City to include the School Board’s middle school, including but not limited to financial consultants, legal and architectural, and engineering design costs relating to the same (**hereinafter, the “Project”**), beginning no earlier than 60 days prior to adoption of this resolution, and to be advanced on and after the date hereof (**the “Expenditures”**) in connection with the Project; and

WHEREAS the City has determined that those moneys previously advanced no more than 60 days prior to the date hereof and to be advanced on and after the date hereof to pay the Expenditures are available only for a temporary period and it may be necessary to reimburse the School Board or the City for the Expenditures from the proceeds of one or more issues of borrowings by the City through issuance of tax-exempt bonds (**the “Bonds”**).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City hereby declares, in accordance with U.S. Treasury Regulation Section 1.150-2, as amended from time to time, the City’s intent to reimburse the City or the School Board with the proceeds of the Bonds for Expenditures with respect to the Project made on and after the date which is no more than 60 days prior to the date hereof, unless an exception applies to such timeframe.

Section 2. Each Expenditure was and will be either (a) of a type properly chargeable to a capital account under general federal income tax principles (determined in each case as of the date of the Expenditures),

(b) a cost of issuance with respect to the Bonds, (c) a nonrecurring item that is not customarily payable from current revenues, or (d) a grant to a party that is not related to or an agent of the City or School Board so long as such grant does not impose any obligation or condition (directly or indirectly) to repay any amount to or for the benefit of the School Board or the City.

Section 3. The City, based on representations of the School Board, at this time, estimates that the total costs of the Project may be up to \$17,000,000, which is expected to be paid for from significant grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia school construction program (approximately \$5,100,000) and potential borrowings by the City for the School Board in a maximum principal amount of the Bonds expected to be issued for the Project of \$11,900,000 (whether through programs such as the Literary Loan or the Virginia Public School Authority or from other borrowing sources).

Section 4. The City or School Board will make a reimbursement allocation, which is a written allocation by the School Board that evidences the School Board or the City's use of proceeds of the Bonds to reimburse and Expenditure, no later than 18 months after that later of the date on which the Expenditure is paid or the Project is placed in service or abandoned, but in no event more than three years after the date on which the Expenditure is paid. The City recognizes that exceptions are available for certain "preliminary expenditures", costs of issuance, certain de minimis amounts, expenditures by "small issuers" (based on the year of issuance and not the year of expenditure), and expenditures for construction projects of at least 5 years.

Section 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its passage.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS 4th day of June 2026.

The Clerk of the City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia hereby certifies that the above-referenced resolution was adopted by a majority vote of the City Council at a regular meeting, duly called and held on June 4, 2026, during an open meeting as follows:

AYES: Mrs. Poluikis, Mrs. Gilliam, Mr. Kerr, Mrs. Noel-Branch, Mr. Cash, Mr. Staton, Mr. Lineberry

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

Attested to:

Clerk, City Council of the City of Buena Vista, Virginia

NB #2: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF THE 'MAKE A SPLASH' PROGRAM

Councilmember Noel-Branch presented the proposed Make a Splash program, a community-sponsored initiative designed to provide summer pool memberships to children in Buena Vista who face financial barriers. She explained that the program's goal is to raise \$12,500 to fund pool passes for up to 100 eligible children through donations from individuals, businesses, and community organizations. She stated that eligibility would be limited to Buena Vista residents age 17 and under who demonstrate financial need through participation in qualifying assistance programs. Applications will be reviewed confidentially, and all donated funds would be pooled to ensure fairness and privacy.

Lori Turner, Executive Director of The Community Foundation, explained that the Foundation will receive and administer donations, allowing contributions to be tax-deductible. She noted that donors have committed to covering any funding shortfall needed to reach the program's goal. She also clarified that

eligible applicants would receive assistance on a first-come, first-served basis and that additional children could be served if donations exceed the initial fundraising target.

Mr. Kearney clarified that this is a City-sponsored program administered through the Outdoor Spaces Committee, with The Community Foundation serving as the fiscal agent through a memorandum of understanding.

Councilmember Cash moved to **approve** the Make a Splash program, Councilmember Kerr seconded, and the motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

According to Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, for the purpose of discussing the hiring process and compensation for a new City Manager.

On motion by Councilmember Noel-Branch, seconded by Councilmember Cash, and carried unanimously, City Council convened in an Executive Session at 7:44 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

ADG #8: CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion by Councilmember Noel-Branch, seconded by Councilmember Cash, and carried by Council, the City Council reconvened in regular session at 8:12 p.m. with the following certification:

Certification of Executive Meeting

WHEREAS the Buena Vista City Council has convened in an Executive Meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS Section 2.1-344.1 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Buena Vista City Council that such Executive Meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Buena Vista City Council hereby certifies to the best of each member's knowledge that: (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the Executive Meeting to which this certification resolution applies; and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the Executive Meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Buena Vista City Council.

VOTE:

Councilmember Poluikis ✓

Councilmember Gilliam ✓

Councilmember Kerr ✓

Councilmember Noel-Branch ✓

Councilmember Cash ✓

Vice-Mayor Staton ✓

Mayor Lineberry ✓

AYES – 7

NAYS – 0

Members absent during vote: None

Members absent during meeting: None

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor

