



CITY OF BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARINGS

June 18, 2026 | 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

The Buena Vista City Council met for a Regular Council Meeting and Public Hearings on Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Mayor Jesse Lineberry

Vice-Mayor Danny Staton

Michelle Poluikis

William Kerr

Stephanie Noel-Branch

Ronald Cash

Members Absent:

Amy Gilliam

ADG #1: CALL TO ORDER

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

ADG #2: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ADG #3: BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing #1

Zoning Text Amendment to adopt new Section 702 Accessory Dwelling Units, for the purpose of allowing and regulating detached and attached accessory dwelling units.

Tom Roberts explained that accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, are secondary residential units located on the same property as a primary dwelling. Examples include apartments above garages, basement apartments, and detached tiny homes. He noted that the City's current zoning ordinance does not adequately provide for ADUs and that the City's housing study recommended adopting regulations to address them. Although the Commonwealth of Virginia has adopted legislation related to ADUs, Mr. Roberts stated that the law does not take effect until 2027 and recommended that the City adopt local regulations in advance of the state requirements.

Proposed Ordinance Provisions

- ADUs would be permitted on lots containing a single-family dwelling.
- The maximum size of an ADU would be 50% of the primary dwelling's floor area; the minimum size would be 320 square feet.
- Occupancy would be limited to two people with a maximum of one bedroom.
- The property owner would be required to occupy either the primary dwelling or the ADU.
- Detached ADUs would be subject to the same setback requirement as other accessory structures.
- One off-street parking space would be required.
- ADUs would only be permitted on properties with single-family dwellings and would not be allowed in conjunction with duplexes or other multifamily dwellings.
- All ADUs would be required to comply with applicable building codes.

Mr. Roberts noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendment. He explained that the restriction limiting ADUs to single-family properties was added after the Planning Commission's recommendation as a policy clarification and could be retained or removed by City Council. In response to Vice-Mayor Staton's question about minimum lot size, Mr. Roberts stated that no additional lot size requirements were proposed beyond those already required for a legal residential lot.

Councilmember Poluikis noted that the City already has several existing ADUs. Mr. Roberts agreed, explaining that many have existed for decades. He added that some property owners have recently converted garages or other structures into apartments without obtaining permits, and one purpose of the proposed ordinance is to create a legal process that encourages compliance with building and zoning regulations.

Councilmember Cash asked whether existing ADUs that do not meet the proposed minimum square footage standards would be affected. Mr. Roberts explained that legally established existing ADUs would be grandfathered. However, if an illegally created ADU were later submitted for legalization and did not meet the minimum size requirement, it could present an issue. He noted that a conditional use permit process could allow case-by-case consideration of reduced minimum square footage, if appropriate.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Lineberry adjourned Public Hearing #1.

Public Hearing #2

Zoning Map Amendment and City Right-of-Way abandonment in the 100 block of South Hazel Avenue, consisting of all lots in Block 57, Section 1. The ROW abandonment would consist of 150' of undeveloped alley in the center of this block.

Tom Roberts explained that a developer plans to build six single-family homes on the wooded property. The request includes rezoning the property from R-2 to R-3 to allow smaller lot sizes and abandoning an undeveloped 150-foot alley to accommodate the proposed development. He stated that two homes would front South Hazel Avenue, while four homes would be accessed by a private cul-de-sac.

Mr. Roberts explained that road design, water and sewer connections, stormwater management, and erosion control would be addressed during the site plan review process. He also noted that drainage improvements along Hazel Avenue would be evaluated as part of the project. The proposed right-of-way abandonment would involve approximately 2,250 square feet of alley property, with a purchase price of \$1,687.50.

Councilmember Cash asked whether the cul-de-sac would be designed with a traditional circular turnaround. Mr. Roberts responded that the final design had not yet been determined and could be either a traditional bulb or a T-turnaround, both of which meet VDOT standards for emergency vehicle access.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Lineberry adjourned Public Hearing #2.

Public Hearing #3

City right-of-way abandonment of alley in "Block 1, Forest Addition," 300 block of Longhollow Road. The alley is approximately 800 feet long by 15 feet wide, is not developed or in use, and has not been mapped on official City plat maps in many decades, if ever.

Tom Roberts explained that the alley originated from a subdivision plat recorded in the late 1800s but was never developed or shown on the City's official maps or GIS system. The issue came to light when a property owner sought a boundary adjustment that could not be approved while the platted alley remained in place. Mr. Roberts recommended abandoning the alley at no cost, noting that most affected property owners were likely unaware of its existence and that the abandonment would help clear property titles.

Councilmember Cash asked whether utilities existed within the alley. Mr. Roberts said he was unaware of any utilities in the specific area but noted that the abandonment ordinance includes standard language reserving the City's rights to access and maintain any existing or future utility infrastructure, if needed. Mr. Cash suggested notifying adjacent property owners that any gardens or improvements placed within the former alley area could be disturbed if utility work became necessary in the future.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Lineberry adjourned Public Hearing #3.

ADG #4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 4, 2026, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Kerr moved to approve the minutes, Councilmember Poluikis seconded, and the motion carried.

ADG #5: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS – NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- Allison Clark, a Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduate student at Liberty University and Rockbridge County native, addressed the need for expanded access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder. She stated that the closest methadone clinic is approximately one hour away, creating a barrier for individuals seeking care. Ms. Clark shared her personal experience with addiction and recovery, explaining that methadone treatment helped her achieve sobriety, leave an abusive relationship, complete her undergraduate degree, and pursue graduate studies. She referenced research comparing methadone and Suboxone outcomes, noting that methadone has shown higher long-term retention rates for individuals with severe opioid dependence. Ms. Clark asked Council to work with Rockbridge County and the City of Lexington to consider a feasibility study or task force on establishing a local methadone treatment clinic. She said the goal would be to improve recovery opportunities, workforce participation, and family stability by increasing access to evidence-based treatment.

ADG #6: REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Lineberry expressed appreciation for recent City events and shared enthusiasm for upcoming activities.

2. Interim City Manager

Mr. Handley reported on a recent visit to the National Center for Healthy Veterans in Altavista with representatives from Purple Heart Homes. He said the visit highlighted opportunities to connect veterans completing rehabilitation and job training programs with employment in Buena Vista. He noted that the organization is developing tiny home communities and manufacturing tiny homes to support the program, which could help attract skilled workers and new residents to the City.

Mr. Handley announced that a joint meeting of the Buena Vista City Council, Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors, and Lexington City Council was tentatively scheduled for July 28 at the Natural Bridge Hotel. The meeting would give local leaders an opportunity to discuss regional issues and hear from Rockbridge Regional Jail Superintendent Colonel Derek Almarode regarding jail operations, overcrowding, and future facility needs.

Mr. Handley also reminded Council that the Budget & Finance Committee would meet on June 22 at 4:00 p.m.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees/Members

Cemetery Committee

Mr. Staton reported that the Cemetery Committee recently reviewed operations and pricing at Green Hill Cemetery. The Committee identified the need to update the cemetery's fee structure and policies and plans to bring recommendations to Council.

Outdoor Spaces Committee

Mrs. Noel-Branch announced that the Outdoor Spaces Committee's "Make a Splash" campaign had provided summer pool passes for 25 children. She also reminded everyone that the Committee would meet the following Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Events Committee

Mr. Cash reported that preparations were progressing well for the July 4th celebration at Inspiration Hill in Glen Maury Park. He announced that retired Air Force veteran and Parry McCluer High School graduate Jay Brown would serve as keynote speaker. The historic time capsule would still be opened during the event, but placement of the new time capsule had been postponed until Labor Day. He encouraged the public to attend the ceremony, which will include patriotic music by the SVU Choir under the direction of Dr. Ben Gaughan.

5. Department Heads/Constitutional Officers/Court Clerks

Michael Loudermilk – Public Works

Mr. Loudermilk summarized Public Works' May activities, including collecting 263.5 tons of household refuse, digging ten graves at Green Hill Cemetery, repairing seven water leaks, treating an average of one million gallons of water per day, and removing four dead animals. He also noted that Public Works Appreciation Week was recognized through social media and a staff appreciation lunch.

6. Invited Community Organizations

Jen Carpenter – Main Street Buena Vista

Mrs. Carpenter reported that the Rubber Duck Race during Rockbridge Outdoors Fest was successful, with all 120 ducks recovered. She also announced that Main Street Buena Vista received a tourism marketing grant double the previous year's award and earned its first Virginia Main Street Merit Award for 1,000 volunteer service hours supporting downtown revitalization.

She introduced the "Get to Gnome BV" self-guided downtown scavenger hunt, noted that downtown businesses would welcome riders during the upcoming Norton Rally, and reported that Mountain Day vendor applications had opened, with more than 70 vendors registering in the first week. She also highlighted the launch of mainboothly.com, a new online vendor management platform where the public can view participating vendors and event maps.

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

None.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

ADG #8: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS – NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

None.

NB #1: FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO ADOPT NEW SECTION 702 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Ms. Burch presented the following Ordinance:

**Zoning Text Amendment
Section 702 Accessory Dwelling Units**

AN ORDINANCE to amend Section 302 and adopt new Section 702 of the Land Development Regulations of the Code of the City of Buena Vista, as amended, for the purpose of regulating Accessory Dwelling Units.

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, Section 302 is hereby amended, and Section 702 is hereby adopted as shown in the attached "Exhibit A".

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

NB #2: FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR ZONING MAP AMENDMENT IN THE 100 BLOCK OF SOUTH HAZEL AVENUE

Ms. Burch presented the following Ordinance:

**Zoning Map Amendment
100 Block of Hazel Avenue
Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, and 18 of Block 57, Section 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, the following property shall be rezoned from R2 Residential to R3 Residential Limited pursuant to Section 617.03-3 of the Land Development Regulations, and the zoning map for the City shall be amended to reflect this change: Lots 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17, and 18 of Block 57, Section 1, located in the 100 block of South Hazel Avenue.

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

NB #3: FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR RIGHT OF WAY ABANDONMENT IN THE 100 BLOCK OF SOUTH HAZEL AVENUE

Ms. Burch presented the following Ordinance:

**Abandonment of Public Right of Way
Portion of Alley in Block 57, Section 1**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA, that in accordance with Section 15.2-2066 through 2008 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, that the public right of way described in "Exhibit A" and "Exhibit B" attached hereto ("the Property"), shall be vacated and abandoned upon receipt of the consideration noted in "Exhibit B".

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 #4: FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR ROW ABANDONMENT IN THE 300 BLOCK OF LONGHOLLOW ROAD

Ms. Burch presented the following Ordinance:

**Abandonment of Public Right of Way
Alley in Block 1, Forest Addition, 300 Block of Longhollow Road**

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

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

NB #5: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF AN APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION

Steve Bolster explained that the appropriation resolution addressed two administrative budget items. First, it would transfer funds from the General Fund to the Green Hill Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund to replace money transferred out over many years without a replacement plan. He said the transfer would restore the fund to approximately its 2001 balance and support long-term cemetery maintenance. Second, the resolution would correct an administrative oversight by properly recording the FY25 school division carryover transfer on the General Fund side.

Councilmember Cash emphasized the importance of rebuilding and protecting the Perpetual Care Fund. He noted that the Cemetery Committee is reviewing cemetery fees and the percentage of lot sale proceeds dedicated to the fund to support its long-term sustainability. He also asked whether the school carryover funds could be used for the school construction project. Superintendent Dr. Heather Ault stated that the carryover funds had already been used for renovations at the Ramsey Center and temporary improvements at the high school and must be spent by the end of the fiscal year.

Councilmember Poluikis asked whether the Perpetual Care Fund should have increased beyond its 2001 balance through investment earnings and additional lot sales. Mr. Bolster explained that the fund is invested in certificates of deposit and the Local Government Investment Pool, where it earns interest, and said staff would continue looking for opportunities to strengthen the fund in future budget cycles.

Councilmember Cash asked staff to provide updated information on the current value of the Perpetual Care Fund and future funding needs as the Cemetery Committee develops fee recommendations. Mr. Bolster noted that staff has discussed a long-term goal of building the fund to support future cemetery maintenance and operations.

Ms. Burch presented the following Resolution:

Appropriation Resolution

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

General Fund – Transfers to Other Funds

10.9314.67540	Transfer to Green Hill Cemetery Fund	\$215,000.00
10.9314.67590	Transfer to School Fund	<u>\$688,927.00</u>

Sub-total 1 **\$903,927.00**

Total General Fund Appropriation **\$903,927.00**

Approved: This 18th day of June 2026.

Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

On motion by Councilmember Noel-Branch, seconded by Councilmember Cash, and carried by Council, the Resolution was unanimously approved.

NB #6: DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION REQUESTING A REFERENDUM FOR A ONE PERCENT (1%) INCREASE IN THE SALES TAX TO PROVIDE REVENUE SOLELY FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OR RENOVATION OF SCHOOLS IN THE CITY TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 3, 2026, IF ALLOWED

City Attorney Brian Kearney explained that the proposed 1% sales tax is expected to generate approximately \$600,000 annually and could support debt service for future school capital improvements. Because the General Assembly had not finalized the enabling legislation, Mr. Kearney prepared two resolutions to address possible legislative outcomes. One reflected the House version of the state budget, which could allow approval of the referendum through July 22; the other reflected the Senate version, which could require court approval by June 29 because of election timing requirements.

Mr. Kearney said Council's action would position the City to move quickly if the legislation is approved. He noted that no court action could occur until the enabling legislation is enacted and that additional legal and public notice requirements would have to be completed before the referendum could be placed on the ballot. Councilmember Noel-Branch asked whether the two resolutions were intended to prepare for either legislative outcome. Mr. Kearney confirmed that they were intended to allow the City to proceed promptly once the state budget and enabling legislation were finalized.

Ms. Burch presented the following Resolution(s):

Buena Vista City Council Resolution

WHEREAS there is currently pending an amendment to 58.1-605.1 of the 1950 Code of Virginia that would allow the City of Buena Vista to hold a referendum to increase the local sales tax by one percent (1%) to provide revenue solely for capital projects for the construction, renovation, and/or equipping of schools in the city and to finance such projects; and

WHEREAS Buena Vista anticipates that this proposed legislation will become effective upon the passage of the current budget for the Commonwealth of Virginia before the end of June 2026; and

WHEREAS in order to hold a referendum on November 3, 2026, a Circuit Court Order needs to be entered by June 29, 2026 (or July 22, 2026).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Council for the City of Buena Vista hereby requests the Circuit Court for the City of Buena Vista enter an Order, subject to the pending legislation being finalized by the

Commonwealth of Virginia, to allow the following referendum as part of the General Election for November 3, 2026:

SALES TAX

Should the City of Buena Vista be authorized to levy a general retail sales tax at a rate not to exceed one percent (1%), provided the revenue from the sales tax shall be used solely for capital projects for the construction, renovation, and/or equipping of schools in the City of Buena Vista, to finance such projects, and that the sales tax shall expire by June 17, 2046?

[] Yes

[] No

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Attorney prepare the appropriate Petition and Order for such a referendum and to sign the same on behalf of the City.

This referendum shall take effect immediately.

Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

Mr. Kearney added that, under the proposed state legislation, the 1% sales tax could remain in effect for up to 20 years. He explained that the expiration date in the resolution reflects the maximum period allowed by law and is not tied to a specific debt obligation. Any funding need beyond that period would require a future referendum.

Councilmember Kerr moved to approve the Resolution, Councilmember Noel-Branch seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor