



CITY OF BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

August 20, 2026 | 6:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

The Buena Vista City Council met for a Regular Council Meeting on Thursday, August 20 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Mayor Jesse Lineberry

Vice-Mayor Danny Staton

Michelle Poluikis

Amy Gilliam

Stephanie Noel-Branch

Ronald Cash

Members Absent:

William Kerr

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

Mayor Lineberry called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and delivered the opening prayer.

ADG #2: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ADG #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 6, 2026, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

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

- Eric Wilson, Director of the Rockbridge Historical Society and Co-Chair of the Rockbridge 250 Committee, addressed Council regarding ongoing local commemorations of the nation's 250th anniversary. He noted that while many national celebrations have concluded, Virginia and the Rockbridge area will continue commemorating the anniversary, with Lexington and Rockbridge County approaching their own 250th anniversaries in 2028. Mr. Wilson emphasized the Committee's goal of maintaining momentum and providing opportunities for residents to participate in. He highlighted activities such as history hikes, bike rides, a monthly film series, and related publications and volunteer opportunities. He also noted that 250th anniversary is intended to recognize 250 years of American history and development, rather than focusing solely on the Revolutionary War period. Mr. Wilson thanked the City for its continued support, advocacy, staff assistance, and efforts to promote activities. He specifically noted the VA250 Mobile Museum coming to Buena Vista over the Labor Day weekend and expressed appreciation for the City's involvement in bringing that to the community.

ADG #5: REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Lineberry reminded everyone of the upcoming Connect BV event hosted by Main Street Buena Vista and encouraged everyone to participate in community events throughout the City and Glen Maury Park.

2. City Manager

Ms. Onaitis reported completing initial one-on-one meetings with all department heads and Council members and working with the City Attorney and Clerk to plan a Council retreat and strategic planning session at the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's conference facility in Staunton.

She reported that the City has implemented updated procedures for committee meeting notices, Council agendas, financial reviews and approvals, fund transfers, and larger purchases. The City has also streamlined its marketing and communications review process to promote consistent City branding and messaging through official communication channels.

Ms. Onaitis also reported that 141 tons of hot asphalt have been used for pothole repairs since the spring. Staff is developing a dedicated pothole blitz using cold patch materials to allow for more efficient repairs, with the goal of tracking the number of potholes reported and repaired and the amount of material used. Chestnut Avenue from 14th to 17th Street is scheduled for a mill-and-overlay paving project later this month. Staff has also worked with VDOT regarding appropriate signage for the Woodland Avenue culvert and to improve communication and coordination concerning roadway maintenance.

She provided an update on the wastewater treatment plant consent order, noting that she and Michael Loudermilk met with DEQ's Enforcement Division to review reporting requirements, project priorities, and modernization and replacement needs. She also recognized the City's refuse crew after receiving several positive calls from residents thanking employees for their work.

For economic and community development, Ms. Onaitis reported that the City's resolution supporting SVU's IRF application for the proposed gallery space had been submitted. Staff is also working with DHCD on wayfinding signage associated with the City's downtown grant. She discussed plans to develop an economic development business plan focused on employer retention and investment, workforce housing, regional partnerships, and attracting new businesses. Staff is also exploring the use of an on-call engineering firm to conduct building assessments and studies.

Ms. Onaitis also reported that School Resource Officers had returned to all schools and that the City is working to implement an Incident Command System model for City events and emergency management activities.

Regarding the school expansion project, she reported meeting with Dr. Ault and Davenport & Company, the City's financial advisors. Davenport is conducting a comprehensive review of City finances to develop potential funding strategies for the estimated \$17M school expansion, including consideration of the proposed 1% sales tax for school construction, potential SCAD grant funding, and alternate financing options. A draft financial report is anticipated in late August or early September, with a joint City Council/School Board meeting tentatively anticipated for late September or early October. She also noted that feedback regarding the school grant application has been positive, with a final determination expected on August 27.

Ms. Onaitis also reported that the City is establishing a monthly internal event coordination meeting involving key staff to improve planning and coordination for community events. Upcoming events include the Farmers Market, Labor Day Festival, Mountain Days, and the Virginia 250 Mobile Museum. The new time capsule ceremony is scheduled for 12:30 p.m. on Labor Day at the new flagpole at the Double Decker pavilion.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees/Members

Mr. Cash thanked Ms. Onaitis and City staff for their work preparing for the Labor Day celebration. He encouraged everyone to visit the Virginia 250 Mobile Museum at Camden Field, describing it as an extensive and interactive presentation of Virginia and American History. He also noted that the Paxton

House will be open during Labor Day and local Revolutionary War reenactor, Byron Fadely, will be present at the Mobile Museum as well. He also provided additional information regarding the new time capsule, noting that the City's 1976 bicentennial time capsule had sustained water damage. Public Works has constructed a new, more secure capsule that will be placed near the new flagpole. He also presented Mayor Lineberry with a cleaned and preserved necktie that had been recovered from the 1976 time capsule and suggested that the Mayor wear it during the Labor Day ceremonies.

Mrs. Noel-Branch reported that the Outdoor Spaces Committee submitted a grant application to The Community Foundation to assist with establishing a shelter at Kenny's Basketball Court. The project is anticipated to be completed in phases, with an award decision expected in late October or early November. She also reported that the Outdoor Spaces and Glen Maury Park Committees held a joint meeting and intend to continue combining their meetings due to overlapping responsibilities and interests involving parks, fields, outdoor spaces, and related activities.

Vice-Mayor Staton reported that the joint Committee meeting had a strong turnout and generated several positive ideas. He noted that there was significant agreement among committee members regarding potential improvements and future priorities for Glen Maury Park and outdoor spaces.

5. Department Heads/Constitutional Officers/Court Clerks

None.

6. Invited Community Organizations

Jen Carpenter – Main Street Buena Vista

Mrs. Carpenter thanked Council members who attended the recent downtown walking tour and reported that attendance exceeded expectations. She shared positive feedback from participants, including visitors from Lexington who stated that the tour changed their perception of Buena Vista and downtown.

She reported that the Downtown Love Works sign was made possible through a \$1,000 sponsorship from the Police Foundation. Main Street plans to apply for the sign to be included in Virginia Tourism's Love Works initiative, providing another potential tourism opportunity for the City. She also reported attending a Community Development Financial Institution summit in Richmond, where she made connections with state Main Street officials and potential funding partners and received training regarding state appropriations, advocacy, and lobbying.

Mrs. Carpenter also reminded Council about the upcoming Connect BV event and announced an October 2 ribbon cutting for Vinyl Cuts, which will celebrate their 10th anniversary. She also provided an update on Mountain Days, noting that it will expand to three days this year and that Main Street is working with the Police Department on event safety protocols.

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

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

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

None.

NB #1: CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING ALTERNATE CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. Burch presented the following Resolution:

A Resolution Designating Alternate City Council Representation at Official Engagements

WHEREAS the City of Buena Vista participates in regional organizations, meetings, events, and related civic or governmental activities; and

WHEREAS the Mayor and Vice Mayor often represent the City at such engagements, but scheduling conflicts, work obligations, or other circumstances may prevent their attendance; and

WHEREAS maintaining consistent City representation at regional meetings and events is in the best interests of the City and its residents and helps ensure continuity of communication and collaboration with regional partners; and

WHEREAS the City Council desires to establish a clear process for maintaining Council representation when the Mayor or Vice Mayor is unavailable.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Buena Vista City Council that, when the Mayor, Vice Mayor, or both are unable to attend an official engagement for which City Council representation is appropriate, an alternate member of City Council may be designated to represent the City.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this designation applies to regional meetings, conferences, ceremonies, organizational meetings, and other official engagements where the City is invited or expected to have Council representation, unless a particular organization or governing body requires a specifically appointed representative, prohibits alternate representation, or is governed by a prior appointment made by the City Council to a regional board, authority, committee, commission, or other body. In such cases, the City Council may act separately in accordance with the governing body's requirements.

Adopted this 20th day of August, 2026.

Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Ms. Onaitis explained this resolution is intended to provide continuity of City representation at official events and regional organizations when the Mayor or Vice-Mayor is unable to attend. She noted that most Council members are full-time employees with work responsibilities and that the Mayor and Vice-Mayor in particular have extensive work-related travel schedules, which can make attendance at City and regional engagements difficult.

She emphasized that certain events and organizations require participation by an elected official, including entities such as the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission where elected officials may be required to vote. The resolution would establish a process for arranging alternate Council representation when the Mayor or Vice-Mayor cannot attend, utilizing other Council members based on their availability. She stated that the goal is to ensure the City maintains an elected official's presence and representation at important meetings, events, and regional engagements.

Councilmember Cash moved to approve the resolution, Councilmember Gilliam seconded, and the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor