



CITY OF BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & EXECUTIVE SESSION

September 17, 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, September 17, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Vice-Mayor Danny Staton
Amy Gilliam
Michelle Poluikis

William Kerr
Stephanie Noel-Branch
Ronald Cash

Members Absent:

Mayor Jesse Lineberry

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

Vice-Mayor Staton called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and Councilmember Kerr delivered the opening prayer.

ADG #2: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilmember Noel-Branch moved to approve the agenda, and Councilmember Poluikis seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ADG #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2026, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, PUBLIC HEARING, & EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

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

- Avery Brinton, 1 University Hill Drive, is a Southern Virginia University student studying music and psychology. She shared her appreciation for living in Buena Vista and expressed her desire to become more involved in the community, better understand the City, and find ways to contribute. Ms. Brinton thanked Council for their service and leadership and expressed her appreciation for work being done on behalf of the community.
- Dylan Williams, 1 University Hill Drive, is a senior political science major at SVU. He expressed his appreciation for living in Buena Vista and said that his experience in the community during the past two years has been very positive.
- Kristie Gibbons, 2075 Maple Avenue, assistant to SVU President Aaron Hale, invited Council and the community to an October 24 event at 7:00 p.m. honoring Jane Armstrong through the establishment of a scholarship benefiting local Buena Vista and Rockbridge-area students attending SVU. The event will include light refreshments and campus tours, with the goal of encouraging more local students to attend SVU.
- Lily McBride, 1 University Hill Drive, SVU student body vice president for campus engagement, spoke on behalf of the University's student government. She reported that student government is seeking additional opportunities to give back to and serve the Buena Vista community and plans to have student representatives regularly attend City Council meeting. Ms. McBride also described her positive

experience living in Buena Vista since 2022 and her involvement as the musical theatre choreographer at PMHS, which has allowed her to build relationships with local families and youth.

ADG #5: REPORTS:

1. Mayor

None.

2. City Manager

Ms. Onaitis provided an update on recent City activities and initiatives. She reported continued engagement with SVU, including an upcoming meeting with President Aaron Hale, as well as meetings with citizens regarding stormwater concerns and support for Glen Maury Park. She also noted her plans to attend National Night Out at Maury River Middle School. Executive team meetings are now being held biweekly on Thursdays when Council does not meet to improve communication and coordination among department heads. Council's strategic planning retreat is scheduled for October 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the BRITE Transit Facility in Fishersville, with a second session tentatively planned for November.

Regarding process improvements, she reported ongoing challenges with the new financial system, particularly the water billing interface. Staff is continuing manual meter readings while an improved interface is developed, and citizens remain within a 45-day grace period to report unusual bills for review and potential adjustments. Standardized credit card purchasing and requisition procedures have been implemented. GIS improvements are also underway, including development of a publicly accessible parcel layer. Staff is additionally developing a process to prioritize derelict, abandoned, and fire-damaged properties for condemnation and demolition.

In operations, Public Works crews have continued work on curbing, storm-related brush removal, water meter checks, and repairs related to the ballfield water system, including a collapsed pipe and hydrant issues. The Public Works Director will attend VDOT's locally administered projects training to increase the City's capacity for project management and provide additional staff redundancy. The City will submit its first DEQ report under the wastewater consent order and is prioritizing water and sewer plant maintenance and capital projects in connection with the City's congressionally directed funding and DEQ commitments. The City is also engaging AECOM to inspect bridges and culverts, with inspections due to VDOT in February. Staff is evaluating long-term paving needs, including Longhollow Road and the 12th and Cherry corridor, for potential inclusion in future budgets and VDOT funding applications.

Ms. Onaitis reported progress at Magnolia Square, including repairs to the concrete seat wall and Christmas tree pipe cover, with completion of the donor wall anticipated in the fall. An indoor air quality study has been initiated for City buildings, beginning with City Hall. Economic and Community Development efforts include finalizing the community garden MOU, advancing the DHCD wayfinding project, launching the City's economic development business plan, meeting with prospective investors, and continuing regional economic development and tourism partnerships.

She also reported upcoming meetings with the Superintendent and the City's financial advisors regarding school funding scenarios and noted that staff is considering an informational community conversation regarding the proposed 1% sales tax referendum. She further reported that staff had attended a webinar regarding Virginia's emerging cannabis marketplace and that the new state legislation will require Council to consider related actions in the coming months.

3. City Clerk

Ms. Burch announced that City Council will host a "Meet Your Manager" open house on Thursday, October 1, from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., immediately prior to the regular Council meeting. The event will

provide residents and community members an opportunity to meet City Manager Krystal Onaitis, introduce themselves, and visit with her informally. Light refreshments will be provided.

4. City Attorney

None.

5. Council Committees/Members

Mr. Cash reported that he has been actively participating in planning for the upcoming Mountain Days Festival. He highlighted the expanded children's activities planned for the event, including games, competitions, a petting zoo, pony rides, and prizes, and encouraged Council members to volunteer and participate in activities for children and families.

Mr. Staton reported that he and Mrs. Noel-Branch are working on the Magnolia Square Christmas celebration and hope to create a community-decorated Christmas tree with community participation.

6. Department Heads/Constitutional Officers/Court Clerks

None.

7. Invited Community Organizations

Jen Carpenter – Main Street Buena Vista

Mrs. Carpenter reported that the City's downtown walking tour was highlighted in the Virginia Main Street blog. She also announced that MSBV and Main Street Lexington have been invited to participate on a panel at the Governor's Summit of Rural Prosperity at the Virginia Horse Center on October 14-15 and will assist with downtown walking tours for approximately 200 attendees. She encouraged community members to volunteer for Mountain Days through the event's online volunteer registration.

She also announced two October 2 ribbon cuttings: Vinyl Cuts, celebrating its 10th anniversary, and Baker Box, a bakery operating from a trailer. She noted that invitations and additional information would be coming soon.

ADG #6: PRESENTATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL & THE PUBLIC

None.

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

None.

OLD BUSINESS

OB #1: SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT IN THE 600 BLOCK OF MAGNOLIA AVENUE

There being no changes to the text of the ordinance, Councilmember Noel-Branch moved to read by title only. Councilmember Cash seconded the motion, and it carried.

Ms. Burch read the ordinance by title.

Councilmember Cash moved to approve the ordinance, and Councilmember Poluikis seconded the motion. Ms. Burch then conducted a roll-call vote of 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			

The following ordinance was **approved** unanimously.

Conditional Use Permit

600 Block Magnolia Avenue, Tax Maps 47-1-1-27-1, 47-1-E---A, and 47-1-1-27-6 through 10

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 603.03-8 and 630.01-3 of the Land Development Regulations, a Conditional Use Permit shall be issued for construction of two two-family dwellings on the property, and the front setback requirement for the said two-family dwellings shall be reduced to ten feet, at the property known as the 600 block of Magnolia Avenue, Tax Maps 47-1-1-27-1, 47-1-E---A, and 47-1-1-27-6 through 10. This shall be 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.

Daniel L. Staton, Vice-Mayor

Attest:

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Date of Adoption

NEW BUSINESS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

According to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, for the purpose of discussing the behavior of an employee and to discuss the alignment and assignment of duties for employees.

On motion by Councilmember Kerr, seconded by Councilmember Gilliam, and carried unanimously, City Council convened in an Executive Session at 6:29 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

ADG #8: CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion by Councilmember Noel-Branch, seconded by Councilmember Kerr, and carried by Council, City Council reconvened in Regular Session at 6:55 p.m. and adopted 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 *absent*

AYES – 6

NAYS – 0

Members absent during vote: Mayor Lineberry

Members absent during meeting: Mayor Lineberry

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Daniel L. Staton, Vice-Mayor