CITY OF BUENA VISTA COUNCIL AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING

OCTOBER 15, 2026 | 6:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

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

ADG #2: **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

ADG #3: **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 1, 2026 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, PUBLIC HEARING, & EXECUTIVE SESSION**

ADG #4: **RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS**

Citizens who desire to speak to council regarding items **NOT listed** on the agenda will be recognized at this time. Please limit your statement to three (3) minutes.

ADG #5: **REPORTS:**

1. Mayor
2. City Manager – Managerial Activities Update
3. City Attorney
4. Council Committees/Members
5. Department Heads
    A. Tom Roberts, Community Development – Community Garden MOU Update / Upcoming AFID Grant Application
6. Invited Community Organizations
    B. Jen Carpenter, Main Street Buena Vista

ADG #6: **PRESENTATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL & THE PUBLIC**

1. Kim Shaw, Rockbridge Area Community Services

ADG #7: **CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES**

None.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

ADJOURNMENT

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- October 19 | 6:00 PM – Cemetery Committee
- October 26 |4:00 PM – Budget & Finance Committee
- November 5 | 6:00 PM – City Council

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Every Monday | 6:30 PM – Line Dancing @ The American Legion
- Every Friday | 3:00 PM – Farmers Market @ Magnolia Square
- Every Friday | 6:00 PM – Friday Events @ Straws
- October 16 | 7:00 PM – Word Bridge Wright Night @ Leaf & Lore
- October 17 | 8:00 AM – Heroes Breakfast @ The American Legion
- October 17 | 4:30 PM – BVFD Annual Harvest Dinner
- October 21 | 7:00 PM – Book Club @ Leaf & Lore
- October 31 | 4:00 PM – Spooktacular
- October 31 | 1:00 PM – Halloween Festival @ GMP
- October 31 | 6:00 PM – Spooktacular Golf Cart Parade
- October 31 | 6:30 PM – Halloween Film Night @ Straws

ADG #3

Draft

CITY OF BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING, PUBLIC HEARING, & EXECUTIVE SESSION

October 1, 2026 | 6:00 PM

Council Chambers – 2039 Sycamore Avenue

The Buena Vista City Council met for a Regular Council Meeting, Public Hearing, and Executive Session on Thursday, October 1, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Mayor Jesse Lineberry
Vice-Mayor Danny Staton
Amy Gilliam
Michelle Poluikis
William Kerr
Stephanie Noel-Branch
Ronald Cash

Members Absent:

None

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

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

ADG #2: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

ADG #3: BUENA VISTA CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 15.2-1800, the Buena Vista City Council will receive public comment on the following matter:

First Amendment to Lease, 5.104 acres to Advanced Drainage Systems. This amendment would extend the end date of the lease from 2036 to 2046.

- City Attorney Brian Kearney explained that the property currently leased by Advanced Drainage Systems is part of a proposed land exchange between ADS and the City. Under the proposed exchange, the City would acquire the rear portion of the property, while the front portion would be conveyed to The Advancement Foundation. The existing pipes and related materials would be relocated to the rear portion, with the relocation expected to take about six months. He stated that ADS recently renewed its lease for an additional 10 years but requested an extension to ensure sufficient time to recoup the substantial investment it anticipates making in the property as part of the relocation. ADS has indicated that it will execute the deed of exchange once the lease extension is in place. The parties have also agreed to the other terms associated with the exchange, including a new lease term of approximately 19 years. Mr. Kearney noted that because the proposed amendment would extend the lease beyond its current term, a public hearing is required before Council may consider the amendment.

There being no public comment, Mayor Lineberry adjourned the Public Hearing.

ADG #4: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2026, REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING & EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

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

- Mike Clements, 403 Magnolia Avenue, addressed Council regarding concerns about responsiveness, transparency, and the manner in which issues raised by citizens are addressed. He stated that it was discouraging to see issues remain unresolved and questioned when and how matters would be addressed. He emphasized that an issue that may seem small to one person can be significant to another. Mr. Clements encouraged Council to recognize that residents have different perspectives and that disagreements should be discussed and worked through together. He stressed that when a citizen contacts an elected official with a request or concern, the resident should receive a response, whether by phone, email, or text, and stated that citizens deserve that level of respect and communication. He reminded Council that they were elected by the citizens to serve and encouraged them to consider their responsibilities carefully, including whether they are able to adequately fulfill the duties of their office and whether they are treating residents fairly. Mr. Clements also expressed concern regarding Council attendance and communication among members, asking that members notify the remainder of Council when they are unable to attend a meeting. He noted that citizens are aware of Council schedules and activities and encouraged them to represent the City in a positive manner when attending meetings or events. He concluded by emphasizing that citizens are paying attention to what is happening in the community, stating, “You can fool the fans, but you can’t fool the players,” and urged Council to follow through when residents ask for assistance rather than passing the matter to another Council member. He expressed concern that unresolved issues were contributing to conditions becoming progressively worse and asked Council to take action and address concerns brought forward by residents.

- Avery Brinton, 1 University Hill Drive, spoke about her desire to become more involved in the community and use the next several months to serve local residents. She offered to assist with community service needs and shared that she has been considering organizing SVU students to host a free community car wash, providing residents with an opportunity to have their vehicles washed locally rather than traveling to Lexington. Ms. Brinton expressed appreciation for Council’s service to the community and shared that she greatly enjoys living in Buena Vista, describing it as one of the most beautiful places she has ever lived.

- Evan Pearson, 1 University Hill Drive, has lived in Buena Vista for about two years. He spoke about his appreciation for the community and his desire to become more involved. He noted that he is originally from the Harper’s Ferry area, and Buena Vista reminds him of home because of its close-knit community and the sense that residents know and support one another. He shared that he has seen his hometown community become increasingly urbanized as new residents have moved into the area, resulting in a loss of the close community connections that once existed. He expressed a desire to contribute to a community where residents remain connected and engaged in local government. Mr. Pearson stated that he and Ms. Brinton are willing to assist with community service projects and help wherever their efforts may be useful.

- Mealy Sizer, thanked City Council for the opportunity to work for the City for 23 years, stating that it had been an honor and that she had met many wonderful people during her time with the City. She also expressed concerns regarding the deactivation of her City-issued cell phone while she was returning from vacation and the presence of three police vehicles at the park when she arrived for work the following morning. Mrs. Sizer stated that, at 80 years old and not being a violent person, she

did not feel the police presence was necessary and did not appreciate the way it was handled. She concluded by thanking Council and wishing the best for the park and the City.

ADG #6: REPORTS:

1. Mayor

Mayor Lineberry expressed his excitement for the upcoming fall season and announced several upcoming community events, including Mountain Days, scheduled for October 9-11, and the upcoming Halloween festivities in downtown and at Glen Maury Park.

He also announced that the City is planning a family-oriented New Year's Eve celebration on December 31, 2026, to conclude the nation's 250th anniversary year. The event is expected to include early activities, cider, hot cocoa, and fireworks. More details to come.

2. City Manager

Ms. Onaitis acknowledged Mealey Sizer and expressed appreciation for her years of service to the City. She also addressed the importance of communicating Council member schedules and apologized for any recent oversight, stating that she would ensure this information is included in future reports.

She reported on several recent citizen, utility, and media inquiries, including questions related to City-funded community organizations and the utility billing grace period. She also recorded a new BV Mini Beat segment and met with SVU leadership and other stakeholders to discuss collaboration, economic development, and the university's role in the community. She attended Mr. Spencer Suter's retirement celebration and announced her plans to attend the upcoming Baker's Box ribbon cutting at Magnolia Square.

Regarding regional initiatives, Ms. Onaitis reported that work continues on the regional Department of Social Services facility, including completion of the construction punch list and discussions regarding a future right-of-way. The City is also working with VDOT regarding acceptance of the access road serving the 911 dispatch center and DSS facility. The City is working with Rockbridge County and Lexington on a potential third-party facility maintenance agreement for the DSS building.

She also reported that the three localities are working with the Virginia Department of Health to explore the possibility of adding a VDH location at the DSS site. Discussions are underway regarding potential funding and state support. She also plans to meet with the regional Community Services Board to learn more about available programs, services, and grant opportunities.

Ms. Onaitis provided an update on Rockbridge Recovery and Hope House, noting that she has been communicating with board members regarding improvements to internal controls so the City can evaluate future disbursements of opioid abatement funds. She also reported discussions with other area administrators regarding the administration and distribution of those funds and noted that the City and other localities are working to complete required opioid abatement reporting.

She reported meeting with the Maury Service Authority regarding support for the City's ongoing consent order efforts and to learn more about the Authority's future plans. She also reported that she is working with RARO on a potential "Last Chance Before the Frost" tournament at Glen Maury Park in November.

Regarding staff and Council efforts, she reported recent meetings with the Public Works Director, Chief of Police, Parks and Rec Director, Finance Director, and other staff. She noted an upcoming meeting with DEQ regarding the City's consent order. She also reported holding her fourth executive team meeting and attending the Budget & Finance Committee meeting, where topics included RDA, the financial system, school expansion efforts, and financial policies.

She reported that Public Works staff have received additional guidance regarding overtime, call-out duty, timekeeping, and recording hours worked. She also met with the Commissioner of the Revenue and Treasurer regarding business processes and operational challenges. She also provided an update

on RDA and utility billing, stating that City staff are compiling a list of business and operational issues with the financial system. Once the issues are identified, she plans to meet with RDA management to address the concerns and determine whether additional legal action may be necessary. She also reported that utility staff are conducting manual meter readings as a backup to the current billing system to help ensure accurate billing while system issues are being addressed.

As for process improvements, Ms. Onaitis reported that the City has begun inventorying existing standard operating procedures and identifying areas where procedures are needed. A similar inventory is being conducted for finance and purchasing policies, with an update expected at a future Budget & Finance Committee meeting.

For economic and community development, she announced that the Economic Development Authority's façade improvement program opened October 7 and will accept applications through November 6. The program provides reimbursement of up to $5,000 for qualifying exterior building improvements. She also reported that the City, Main Street Buena Vista, and economic development staff will begin holding monthly meetings to improve coordination and resource alignment. Mountain Days planning was a primary topic of the most recent meeting. Ms. Onaitis reminded Council that funding for MSBV will be an important consideration during the upcoming budget process because maintaining certified Main Street status requires a certain level of funding. She also reported that the EDA recently discussed Brownfield applications and that the City and EDA may each submit applications for up to two sites annually.

Regarding public safety, she reported that the Police Department participated in a Rockbridge Report media interview related to police technology. She also mentioned that National Night Out had a strong turnout. She discussed plans to strengthen coordination among local first responders and develop a City-wide Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) addressing operations during emergencies or disasters.

Ms. Onaitis also reported that funding analyses are continuing to determine how the City can support school needs, particularly in connection with the proposed expansion. She reminded Council that a community conversation regarding the proposed 1% sales tax referendum is scheduled for October 20 at 6:00 p.m. at the Buena Vista Fire Department. The meeting will provide an opportunity for residents to receive factual information and ask questions, with the Superintendent participating. She also noted that staff are developing revenue projections for school funding formulas and the upcoming budget. In addition, she plans to provide Council with a first-quarter expenditure report in November showing expenditures in relation to the allocated budget.

3. City Attorney

None.

4. Council Committees/Members

Mrs. Gilliam reported that the Budget & Finance Committee discussed the City's committee structure and potential changes to how committees are organized; additional information will be provided as the discussion progresses.

Mr. Cash encouraged residents to attend Mountain Days and highlighted children's activities including a pie-eating contest and a pumpkin seed-spitting contest, as well as the variety of outdoor-themed prizes available for children, including fishing poles, electronic shooting earmuffs, a backpack, sleeping bag, tent, and other outdoor-related items. He noted that the event is designed to connect children with the outdoors, local culture, heritage, and Appalachian traditions.

5. Department Heads/Constitutional Officers/Court Clerks

None.

6. Invited Community Organizations

Jen Carpenter – Main Street Buena Vista

Mrs. Carpenter extended three invitations to Council and the community. She encouraged everyone to attend Mountain Days, October 9-11. She also invited Council members to participate in a downtown walking tour on October 14 from 4:00-5:00 p.m. as part of the Governor's Summit on Rural Prosperity. The tour will begin at the VIA. Lastly, she invited the community to attend Spooktacular in "Boona Vista" and noted that additional information and social media promotions will be coming soon.

ADG #7: PRESENTATIONS TO CITY COUNCIL & THE PUBLIC

None.

ADG #8: CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, & COMMITTEES

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

ADG #9: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS – NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

None.

NB #1: CONSIDERATION OF AN APPROPRIATION RESOLUTION

Finance Director Steve Bolster presented the proposed appropriation resolution, which included an additional $2,930 in state Fire Program funding received on September 18. The additional revenue was not included in the original budget estimates and requires a corresponding expenditure appropriation. He also presented a request to appropriate $615,055 in unexpended, multiyear grant and other funding for the School Fund. The funds, which remained unexpended as of June 30, would be carried forward to allow the school division to continue the associated programs in FY 2027. Approval would also align the City's appropriations with those previously approved by the School Board.

Ms. Burch 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, 2027**, from the UNAPPROPRIATED SURPLUS of the **GENERAL FUND** and expended as follows:

Fire Program Grant Funds

10.3202.60010	Fire Programs Grant	$2,930.00
Sub-total		**$2,930.00**
Total General Fund Appropriation		**$2,930.00**

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, 2027**, from the UNAPPROPRIATED SURPLUS of the **SCHOOL FUND** and expended as follows:

FY2026 Carryover Grants (Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV B-21, IDEA 611, Technology, School Nutrition, and Textbook Funding)

19.6600.69130	School Expenses	$615,055.00
Sub-total		**$615,055.00**
Total School Fund Appropriation		**$615,055.00**

Approved: This 1st day of October 2026.

_____
Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor

Attest:

_____
Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

Councilmember Noel-Branch moved to approve the resolution, Councilmember Cash seconded, and the motion carried.

NB #2: CONSIDERATION OF ADVANCED DRAINAGE SYSTEMS LEASE AMENDMENT

Based on the explanation provided by Mr. Kearney during the public hearing, Councilmember Cash moved to approve the 10-year lease extension for ADS. Councilmember Kerr seconded, and the motion carried.

The approved Lease Amendment is as follows:

FIRST AMENDMENT TO LEASE

THIS FIRST AMENDMENT TO LEASE ("First Amendment") is made and entered into as of the 1st day of October, 2026 (the "Effective Date") by and between **THE CITY OF BUENA VISTA, VIRGINIA**, a municipal corporation, whose address is 2039 Sycamore Avenue, Buena Vista, Virginia 24416 ("Lessor"), and **ADVANCED DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, INC**., a Delaware corporation with principal offices located at 4024 Green Stipe Lane, Hilliard, Ohio 43026 ("Lessee").

RECITALS

WHEREAS Lessor and Lessee entered into a certain Lease dated as of the 1st day of August, 2016 (the "Original Lease") for approximately 5.104 acres of land as set forth on Exhibit "A" to the Original Lease for a ten (10) year period commencing August 1, 2016 and ending July 31, 2026.

WHEREAS via letter to Lessor dated April 24, 2026, and pursuant to Section 6 of the Original Lease, Lessee exercised its option to renew the Lease for an additional ten (10) year period commencing on August 1, 2026 and ending on July 31, 2026 (the "Renewal Letter") (collectively, the Original Lease and the Renewal Letter are hereinafter referred to as the "Lease").

WHEREAS Lessor and Lessee now desire to amend the Lease with regard to the definition of the Premises and provide an additional ten (10) year option to renew the Lease as hereinafter set forth.

NOW THEREFORE, for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, Lessor and Lessee hereby agree as follows:

1. **Definition of Revised Premises**. As of the Effective Date, the Premises is hereby redefined as Parcels C and D, as set forth on Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference (the "Revised Premises").
2. Lessor hereby gives its approval and grants permission to Lessee to fence, grade, alter, disturb and place gravel, electrical and lighting on the Revised Premises.
3. Lessee, having complied with all obligations under the Lease, and upon giving written notice t Lessor no later than May 1, 2036, is hereby granted one (1) additional option to renew the Lease for ten (10) years commencing on August 1, 2036 and ending on July 31, 2046.
4. All other terms, conditions and provisions contained in the Lease not specifically amended herein, are hereby ratified and confirmed and shall remain in full force and effect.

NB #3: CONSIDERATION OF COMMUNITY GARDEN MOA

Community Development Director Tom Roberts provided an overview of the proposed memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Community Garden. He explained that the Garden has operated for about 12-14 years, with Sam Roberts leading the volunteer organization for the past seven or eight years. The MOA formalizes the arrangement between the City and the Community Garden, clarifies responsibilities and expectations, and establishes a more structured agreement. The document has been reviewed by City staff, the City Manager, and the City Attorney. Mr. Roberts also noted that the Community Garden has obtained liability insurance.

Councilmember Noel-Branch asked whether the agreement would limit public access to the timber frame pavilion located on the property. Mr. Roberts explained that the Community Garden would be responsible for managing the pavilion and establishing its use policies, including scheduling events and activities. Ms. Onaitis clarified that the MOA is intended to support the Community Garden's operations, including gardening-related workshops and programming, rather than establish the pavilion as a general-purpose public gathering space. Councilmember Noel-Branch requested clarification to ensure residents understood the intended use of the property.

Councilmember Gilliam asked who would oversee property maintenance and ensure the garden remained orderly and well-maintained. Mr. Roberts confirmed that he would oversee enforcement responsibilities, with support from zoning and code enforcement as appropriate. Councilmember Gilliam expressed concerns about overgrown areas, raised beds, and deteriorating materials on the property. Ms. Onaitis explained that the MOA places ongoing maintenance responsibilities on the Community Garden and that compliance could be addressed through the agreement and applicable zoning requirements.

Councilmember Cash moved to approve the agreement, Councilmember Poluikis seconded, and the motion carried.

The approved MOA is as follows:

Memorandum of Agreement between City of Buena Vista & Buena Vista Community Garden for Use of Land as a Community Garden

1. This agreement is entered into between the City of Buena Vista (hereinafter referred to as "Property Owner") and the BV Community Garden Project (hereinafter referred to as the "Project") for the use of land located at 1704 Magnolia Avenue as a community garden. The purposes of this garden are primarily, but not exclusively

a. To provide fresh produce to the residents in Buena Vista, neighboring communities, hikers, and the Bridge to Hope Food Pantry
b. To provide hands-on educational opportunities for students, families, and the general public
c. To enhance the vitality of downtown Buena Vista by activating green space

2. The term of this agreement is three (3) years and may be renewed indefinitely.

3. Responsibilities of the Property Owner. The Property Owner agrees to:
    a. Provide use of the parcel of land at no cost, located at 1704 Magnolia Ave, for use as a community garden;
    b. Provide water at no cost;
    c. Provide trash pickup to the garden once per week of two trash cans;
    d. Share, at its discretion and as capacity allows, information regarding significant Community Garden events or initiatives through existing City communication channels, such as community announcements, press releases, or event listings, in a manner consistent with how the City supports other community organizations;
    e. Prune or remove large trees when needed; and
    f. Clear ice or snow from the sidewalk along Magnolia Avenue in front of the property

4. Responsibilities of The Project. The Project agrees to:
    a. General Operations
        i. Oversee all operations of the community garden, including setting policies for use of the property and managing access and use of the property;
        ii. Permit City staff to access the site at reasonable times for safety, inspection, and maintenance purposes;
        iii. Bear all costs of operating the garden and maintaining the property, except as otherwise addressed in this agreement;
        iv. Maintain the following insurance coverage, at its sole cost, during the term of this agreement:
            1. Commercial General Liability (occurrence form) with limits not less than $1,000,000 per occurrence and $2,000,000 aggregate, covering bodily injury, property damage, personal/advertising injury, and products/completed operations; the policy shall name the City of Buena Vista, its officers, employees, and agents as Additional Insureds on a primary and non-contributory basis and include a waiver of subrogation in favor of the City.
            2. Workers' Compensation and Employers' Liability as required by Virginia law, if the Project has employees.
            3. Volunteer/Participant Accident Medical coverage (or equivalent) for volunteers and program participants, or alternatively, obtain signed participant/volunteer waivers. Waivers shall disclose inherent risks of gardening activities (use of tools, uneven ground, weather, insects, allergens, etc.)

        Certificates of Insurance evidencing the above coverages shall be provided to the City prior to commencement of activities and upon renewal.
    b. Use and Maintenance of Property

i. Make reasonable efforts to keep an orderly garden space that appears tended and maintained. Both parties recognize that this is an active, working, volunteer-based garden and not a manicured display garden.

ii. To use the property only for purposes related to the Project's primary goals. Other uses of the property require written City approval. Storage of unrelated items or vehicles is not permitted.

iii. Build and maintain beds and structures for growing vegetables and fruit.

iv. Create and maintain a compost site, mulch site, and a seedling bed.

v. Perform all routine landscape maintenance of the property, including mowing and weed eating within and outside any fenced enclosures. Grass outside the fence must be kept no taller than 10".

vi. Construct and maintain, for the duration of the agreement, a perimeter fence with the following specifications:

1. No more than eight (8) feet tall
2. Metal wire material spanning between metal or wooden posts
3. Black color
4. Set back no less than three (3) feet from the sidewalk along Magnolia Avenue, and no less than three (3) feet from the property line on 17th Street

vii. To use restricted-use pesticides only with prior written City approval.

c. Engagement and Development

i. Solicit and manage volunteers and community partners, as appropriate;

ii. Train students and volunteers to maintain the garden, seedling bed, and composting site and monitor for pest damage;

iii. Harvest gardens and share yield for distribution to partnering food providers;

iv. Schedule events to bring awareness and community to the garden space;

v. Be responsible for its own communications, outreach, and promotional activities, including the maintenance of any website, social media platforms, and promotional materials related to garden programs and events; and

vi. Secure possible local funding for the garden space through grants and fundraisers to maintain hard structures

5. Points of Contact and Breach of Agreement

a. The parties agree to use the following points of contact for all communication:

i. City:

1. Thomas Roberts, Director of Community Development
2. Krystal Onaitis, City Manager

ii. Project:

1. Cressia (Sam) Roberts
2. Danielle Linderman

b. Both parties agree to make all reasonable efforts to communicate with each other and resolve or correct any actual or perceived breaches of the agreement prior to termination.

c. The City may terminate this agreement at any time for cause without notice or may terminate with 60 days' notice with cause.

d. The Project may terminate this agreement with 60 days' notice with or without cause. Upon termination of the agreement, the Project will leave the site in a clean and neat condition, i.e., free of trash and debris and garden structures removed or left in good repair.

6. Cessation of Activities
    a. In the event the Project plans in advance to cease or wind down operations, the Project agrees to the following:
        i. To seek a successor organization to take over maintenance and operation of the property as a community garden
        ii. To clean up the property to the greatest extent possible, including removing seedling beds, cutting back vegetation, removal of dead or decaying matter, and removal of storage equipment, tools, and similar items
    b. Permanently affixed improvements to the property and all structures, including the perimeter fencing, the timber frame pavilion, and the garden shed, shall be considered City property and not removed except by permission of the City. Smaller enclosures within the perimeter fencing, raised bed structures, movable furniture, equipment, and plants (other than major trees) shall be considered property of the Project.

7. General Terms of the Agreement
    a. The Project understands that it is not sponsored by the City, nor is it a part of the City government, and may not use City logos or branding materials without permission.
    b. Both the Property Owner and the Project agree to abide by all applicable provisions and regulations of the federal, state, and city laws and ordinances.
    c. Neither the City nor the Project shall assign, transfer, or encumber any rights, duties, or interests accruing from this Agreement without the prior written consent of the other.
    d. Amendment: This Agreement may be modified or amended with the written approval of both parties, provided the party proposing a modification or amendment submits the same in writing to the other party at least thirty (30) days in advance to allow for negotiations and Board approval as may be required.
    e. The Project, and any of its employees, volunteers, or community partners shall protect, defend, indemnify and save harmless the City, its officers, employees and agents from any and all costs, claims, judgments or awards of damages, arising out of or in any way resulting from the negligent acts or omissions of the Project. The City shall protect, defend, indemnify and save harmless the Project, its officers, employees and agents from any and all costs, claims, judgments or awards of damages, arising out of or in any way resulting from the negligent acts or omissions of the City, its officers, employees or agents.
    f. Applicable Law: This agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Virginia.
    g. Entire Agreement: The agreement is the entire and only agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior understandings and practices between the parties.

NB #4: DISCUSSION OF GREEN HILL CEMETERY FEE STRUCTURE

Vice-Mayor Staton provided an update on the Cemetery Committee's ongoing discussion regarding Green Hill Cemetery fees and maintenance policies. He reiterated the recommendation to increase burial lots prices and opening and closing fees by $500, noting that the fees had not been adjusted in decades and would remain well below those charged by other cemeteries in the area.

He also discussed potential restrictions on benches and other items placed at gravesites, particularly in the older section of the cemetery, where such items increase maintenance time and costs. He suggested

limiting the installation of benches in both the older and new sections and considering flat grave markers to simplify grounds maintenance. He further proposed limiting flowers and other decorations to designated vases during mowing season, while allowing greater flexibility around holidays and during the off-season.

Mayor Lineberry expressed support for considering seasonal restrictions on benches and decorations, noting that items could potentially remain in place during the winter but should not interfere with mowing and grounds maintenance during the spring and summer.

Mr. Kearney suggested also reviewing whether burial lots with upright headstones should carry higher fees than those with flat markers, given the additional maintenance required around upright monuments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

According to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1) of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, for the purpose of discussing the interaction of City Council members with City employees appointed by, or through, the City Manager.

On motion by Vice-Mayor Staton, seconded by Councilmember Cash, and carried unanimously, City Council convened in an Executive Session at 6:55 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

ADG #10: CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION

On motion by Vice-Mayor Staton, seconded by Councilmember Kerr, and carried by Council, City Council reconvened in Regular Session at 7:31 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 7:32 p.m.

_____ _____

Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council Jesse D. Lineberry, Mayor

MAIN STREET BUENA VISTA

City Council Report

October 15, 2026 | Jen Carpenter, Executive Director

GRANT AWARD

Buena Vista awarded $9,000 Downtown Investment Grant from Governor Spanberger's administration

Main Street Buena Vista was selected for a Downtown Investment Grant through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. The project adds discovery and wayfinding signage connecting downtown, the River Walk, and Glen Maury Park:

- Four new discovery and wayfinding signs featuring downtown businesses, attractions, public amenities, and recreation
- Directional roadway markings for the City-approved golf cart route between Glen Maury Park and downtown
- Builds on the existing signage at the Glen Maury Park entrance

If someone is staying at Glen Maury Park, we want them to know how to get downtown. If someone is downtown, we want them to find the River Walk and the GMP. I am coordinating with City leadership to confirm the City's in-kind match, particularly installation and construction assistance, before we begin.

RECENT WINS AND PROGRESS

Mountain Day: three days for the first time ever. Friday's free Sounder screening and presentation, Saturday's festival on Magnolia Avenue, and Sunday's inaugural Gospel Sing. More than 140 vendors across approximately 160 booth spaces, sold out about five weeks early, with overflow and Kid Zone at VIA. The $2,000 Rockbridge Regional Tourism grant was fully invested in regional radio, print, and social advertising.

- **Special thanks.** Mr. Ron Cash, our Mountain Day MVP, for the Friday film, the Gospel Sing, and the Kids Zone's traditional Appalachian activities. VIA, for opening its private property for vendors and activities. The Buena Vista Arts Council, helping with volunteers and marketing, plus the City, BVPD, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, our sponsors, volunteers, vendors, and downtown businesses! It takes a community to pull off a successful event!
- **Governor's Summit on Rural Prosperity.** MSBV served on the "Welcome to Rockbridge" panel and led downtown walking tours for statewide leaders, with stops featuring our business owners. Thank you to Tyson Cooper, Brooke, our business owners, volunteer guides, and every Council member who helped welcome visitors. The Blue Grass Pickers even played for our guests!!!
- **Homestay tourism grant awarded.** Funds a campaign promoting registered homestays and lodging partners through a new accommodations section on the MSBV website, plus Google and social media ads. Participating homestays must be registered with the City, which supports compliance and lodging tax collection. Launch planned after infrastructure and partnerships are in place.
- **Ribbon cuttings.** Baker Box Cottage Bakery and Vinyl Cuts (Ruthie Lawhorne's 10 years downtown!) both celebrated October 2. Congratulations!

SPOOKTACULAR · SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

- Downtown trick-or-treating
- 2nd annual community golf cart parade, free to enter
- Family-friendly activities and games
- Fundraiser cornhole tournament, using collegiate-level equipment purchased with grant funds

Our downtown businesses collectively invest thousands of dollars in candy, supplies, and activities simply to give back to Buena Vista families. Please come support them!

GRANTS AND PIPELINE

PROJECT	STATUS	DETAILS
Downtown Investment Grant (wayfinding)	**Awarded**	$9,000. Confirming City in-kind match.
Homestay tourism marketing	**Awarded**	Building infrastructure now.
Shenandoah Valley Indie Bookstore Tourism	**Awarded**	Leaf & Lore and about 12 independent bookstores, with regional Main Streets and tourism offices from Buena Vista to Winchester. A regional book crawl encouraging overnight stays, dining, and shopping. (Leaf & Lore award, not an MSBV grant.)
Regional Main Street tourism grant	**In development**	Buena Vista is eligible due to highway proximity. Promotes Valley Main Streets as easy stops for travelers already passing through.
Community Investment Training, Richmond Fed	**Submitted**	Application in for the 2027 cohort (former Bank of America and Carpet buildings).

ALSO HAPPENING

- **LOVEwork.** Applying to join Virginia Tourism's statewide LOVEwork trail.
- **Student discount program.** Eight downtown businesses offering year-round discounts to students

from Parry McCluer, SVU, Mountain Gateway, W&L, and VMI.
- **Holiday Tree Lighting.** Planning underway.
- SVU Interns. Working on setting up help, because I am only one person:)
- **Ongoing downtown activity.** Straw's Friday Nights, Monday line dancing at American Legion Post 126, Maury River Senior Services programming, and art classes at Art on Magnolia.

HOW COUNCIL CAN HELP

1. **Finalize the City and MSBV Memorandum of Understanding by January 1, 2027.** Our Virginia Main Street MOU expires December 31. Maintaining our Advancing Virginia Main Street designation and working toward national accreditation requires professional leadership, reporting, training, and implementation. MSBV is fully committed to this work. At our current funding level, though, it is becoming unrealistic to keep delivering the programming, business support, grant development, events, and administration we deliver today. Being resourceful does not eliminate the need for adequate resources. We will need more funding from the city to sustain this high level of impact.

MSBV will work with City Manager on a draft multi-year MOU and funding agreement before December 31.

2. **Come to Spooktacular on October 31,** and bring your family and friends.
3. **Keep stopping in at downtown businesses.** Introducing yourself goes further than most programs we could fund.

Thank you, Council. It has been a tremendously full few weeks and a full year. I love this community, and I am proud of what we are building together. I hope we can keep that momentum going in a way that is both ambitious and sustainable.