

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
Monday, April 20, 2020
Council Chamber
6:30 p.m.

The Charlottesville City Council held a virtual meeting for its regular session on April 20, 2020, in an effort to comply with social distancing requirements surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Walker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following members in attendance: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Sena Magill, Ms. Heather Hill, Mr. Michael Payne and Mr. Lloyd Snook.

Ms. Hill moved to amend the agenda, adding an agenda item at the end of the regular agenda to discuss the City's response to COVID-19. By unanimous consent, Council approved the addition to the agenda.

On motion by Ms. Hill, seconded by Mr. Snook, Council unanimously approved the meeting agenda as amended.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Hill announced the new City website being launched on April 27 with website address "Charlottesville.gov", and the Cville360 broadcasts being conducted via Zoom webinar and viewable through City of Charlottesville social media streaming as well as TV Channel 10.

Ms. Walker announced that COVID-19 testing for residents of public housing is being discussed.

Mr. Payne advised of "supportcville.com" as a local resource regarding ways to help and to find help during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilors took turns making remarks about COVID-19 and the local response.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas read the following Consent Agenda items into the record:

- a. MINUTES: March 12 Budget Work session, March 16 Special and Regular meetings, March 25 Special meeting**
- b. APPROPRIATION: Domestic Violence Services Coordinator Grant - \$49,336 (carried)**

c. APPROPRIATION: Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) Supplemental Appropriation of FY 2020 Transit Grants - \$2,021,606 (carried)

d. RESOLUTION: Service Authorities quarterly update

Ms. Walker opened the floor to the public for comment on the consent agenda.

Mr. Sean Tubbs, Piedmont Environmental Council, spoke about the CAT appropriations document reference to the possibility of public comment at the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) level and advised that of the need to look at the item deeper.

With no further comments, Ms. Walker closed public comment.

On motion by Ms. Hill, seconded by Mr. Snook, Council by the following recorded vote APPROVED the consent agenda: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker; Noes: none).

CITY MANAGER RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY MATTERS:

City Manager Tarron Richardson advised that he wants to convey as much information as possible to the public. He advised of future updates to the public, and shared information about the Cville360 show which provides regular updates.

COMMUNITY MATTERS

Ms. Walker opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Nancy Carpenter spoke about those adversely affected by the housing and health crisis. She asked the City to look at ways to provide grants to landlords, and looking at tenant preservation initiatives.

Mr. Brandon Collins, City resident, representing the Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR), and Charlottesville Low-Income Housing Coalition (CLIHC), spoke about the public housing crisis further perpetuated by COVID-19.

Ms. Tanesha Hudson spoke about City efforts to alleviate some financial stressors for citizens related to housing and taxes.

Mr. Rory Stolzenberg commended the City for moving to a new website and asked what would happen to the old website.

- Mr. Brian Wheeler, Director for Communications, gave an update on the new City website and advised that the information from the previous website will be maintained by the City.

Ms. Walker closed the public comment period.

RESOLUTION*: Resolution establishing June 30, 2020 as the City’s Fiscal Year 2021 budget adoption deadline

Dr. Richardson introduced the item and shared background for the resolution.

On motion by Ms. Hill, seconded by Mr. Snook, Council by the following recorded vote APPROVED the following resolution: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker; Noes: none).

**RESOLUTION
ESTABLISHING JUNE 30, 2020 AS THE DEADLINE FOR CITY COUNCIL TO
ADOPT A BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021**

WHEREAS, the Charlottesville City Council adopted a Resolution on March 12, 2020, authorizing the Charlottesville City Manager to declare an emergency due to the potential spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Charlottesville City Council adopted an emergency ordinance on March 25, 2020 pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-1413 which waived statutorily-mandated timeframes created by local laws; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 emergency prevented the Council from conducting work sessions and its April 6, 2020 regularly scheduled meeting at which business related to the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget was scheduled to be discussed; and

WHEREAS, Charlottesville City Code Section 11-2 states that the fiscal year budget shall be adopted by April 15th of each calendar year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that pursuant to the emergency ordinance adopted on March 25, 2020, the City will adopt the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget by June 30, 2020 and the provisions of Charlottesville City Charter Section 19 are waived for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

RESOLUTION*: Resolution establishing Calendar Year 2020 tax rates

City Attorney John Blair introduced the item and shared background of the Ordinance currently in place. For purposes of transparency, the following resolution was shared and voted upon.

On motion by Ms. Hill, seconded by Ms. Magill, Council by the following recorded vote APPROVED the following resolution: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker; Noes: none).

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING TAX RATES

WHEREAS, on April 8, 2019, the Charlottesville City Council adopted an ordinance (hereinafter “the ordinance”) establishing the annual tax levy on various classes of property, a copy of which is attached to this Resolution as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the ordinance was effective for the year beginning January 1, 2019 and ending December 31, 2019 and each year thereafter; and

WHEREAS, the Council does not desire to alter any of the tax rates established by the ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that the tax rates established by the ordinance shall remain in effect for the year beginning January 1, 2020 and ending December 31, 2020.

RESOLUTION*: Resolution establishing June 19, 2020 as deadline for real estate, tangible personal property, and machinery and tools tax payments

Dr. Richardson presented the item. He encouraged the public to contact the City Treasurer's Office should there be a financial hardship, and noted that the Treasurer's Office would work with individuals on a case-by-case basis.

On motion by Ms. Hill, seconded by Mr. Payne, Council by the following recorded vote APPROVED the resolution: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker; Noes: none).

**RESOLUTION
ESTABLISHING JUNE 19, 2020 AS DEADLINE FOR REAL ESTATE, TANGIBLE
PERSONAL PROPERTY, AND MACHINERY AND TOOLS TAX PAYMENTS**

WHEREAS, the Charlottesville City Council authorized the Charlottesville City Manager to declare the spread of COVID-19 an emergency on March 12, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Charlottesville City Code Section 30-161 establishes June fifth as the deadline for taxpayers to remit payment for half of their assessed real estate, tangible personal property, and machinery and tools tax payments; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Code Section 58.1-3916 provides that the Charlottesville City Council may extend the due date for taxes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that the deadline for taxpayers to remit payment for half of their assessed real estate, tangible personal property, and machinery and tools tax payments is extended to June 19, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that taxpayers shall not incur the penalties prescribed in Charlottesville City Code Section 30-164 until June 19, 2020.

Ms. Walker recessed the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:00 p.m.

Upon reconvening, Mr. Blair read a resolution into the record related to establishing the personal property tax relief rate, which is required in order to print personal property bills.

On motion by Ms. Hill, seconded by Mr. Payne, Council by the following recorded vote APPROVED the following resolution: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker; Noes: none).

RESOLUTION
Establishing 2020 Tax Year Tax Relief Percentage

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia that the personal property tax relief percentage on up to \$20,000 value for vehicles valued over \$1,000 is set at 42% for tax year 2020.

RESOLUTION*: Resolution establishing a plan for adopting the budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 and establishing a budget public hearing date

Dr. Richardson introduced the item, reviewing the Fiscal Year 2020 budget and expected impacts from the Coronavirus pandemic for the remainder of FY2020 and moving into FY2021. He advised that the expectation is to maintain services to the public. Dr. Richardson reviewed FY20 and FY21 General Fund revenue reductions, and advised that FY21 expenditures have been updated to reflect the amounts from the FY20 adopted budget. He emphasized the City's efforts to maintain relationships with community partners such as the University of Virginia, the County of Albemarle, and others involved in emergency management in order to meet the needs of citizens and specifically vulnerable community members.

Dr. Richardson advised that he will begin budget discussions with School Administration and City department heads about the budget planning process going forward and the impact of the reduced expenditures for FY2021.

Ms. Walker asked about requirements for budget public hearings. Mr. Blair advised that one public hearing is required and there is a related time frame for budget approval. He also advised that should revenues exceed 1 percent of the General Fund, a public hearing would be required to expend the funds.

Ms. Walker expressed a desire for pairs of Councilors to meet with the City Manager, department directors and the School Superintendent to discuss their budget priorities. She also shared information about the Vibrant Community Fund and shifting priorities, advising that the needs of the community are shifting and no decisions have been made about how to distribute the funds.

In response to questions from Ms. Hill and Ms. Walker, Ms. Krisy Hammill, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, explained the status of the City's Capital Improvement Projects budget.

Councilors shared thoughts on their priorities, which included community focus, retaining employment for City staff, Schools funding, housing, medical care, safety and food needs of the most vulnerable residents.

On motion by Ms. Hill, seconded by Ms. Magill, Council by the following vote APPROVED the following resolution: 5-0 (Ayes: Hill, Magill, Payne, Snook, Walker; Noes: none).

**RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING PLAN FOR CITY COUNCIL TO
ADOPT THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021**

WHEREAS, the Charlottesville City Council adopted a Resolution on March 12, 2020 authorizing the Charlottesville City Manager to declare an emergency due to the potential spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the Charlottesville City Council adopted an emergency ordinance on March 25, 2020 pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-1413 which waived statutorily-mandated timeframes created by local laws; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 emergency has and will have significant impacts on the City's revenues thus making the previously FY 2021 Proposed Budget presented to Council on March 16, 2020 no longer viable; and

WHEREAS, Charlottesville City Code Section 11-2 states that the fiscal year budget shall be adopted by April 15th of each calendar year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that Council will hereby authorize a vote to move forward with the revised budgetary figures provided herein and authorize a public hearing to be held on May 18, 2020.

REPORT: Discussion of the City's Response to COVID-19 – ADDED to Agenda upon agenda approval

Ms. Hill expressed a desire to establish a regular report from staff regarding COVID-19. Dr. Richardson advised of his plans to provide a brief report at City Council meetings as well as continue the use of other outreach avenues such as Cville360 broadcasts with question and answer opportunities.

Ms. Hill asked for clarification on land use decisions. Mr. Blair advised that land use decisions are a discretionary legislative act and therefore do not fall within the emergency nature of the City Manager's Emergency Declaration.

Councilors thanked City staff, teachers and members of the public for their work during the Coronavirus pandemic.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Todd Divers, Commissioner of the Revenue, clarified information about taxes.

Ms. Hill asked about the ability for boards and commissions to meet during the emergency declaration. Mr. Blair advised that normal requirements would need to be met such as a meeting notice to the public, and discussion would need to be related to the City Manager's Emergency Declaration.

MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

Ms. Walker opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Walt Heinecke spoke about meetings of advisory committees, and advised that the Housing Advisory Committee is a place where the public can have input.

Ms. Tanesha Hudson spoke about the possible waiver of tax late fees and about a deferment program for citizens who are out of work.

Ms. Nancy Carpenter spoke about the use of CDBG funds for vulnerable residents and advised that the incarcerated community should be included in that group. She asked Council to strengthen the Human Rights Commission. She also spoke about addressing ancillary services with the Vibrant Community Fund.

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council