



City Council
 WORK SESSION
 January 8, 2026
 5:00 p.m.

Council Members present: Mayor Edwards, Vice Mayor Arrowood, and Councilors Campbell, Overholtzer, Park, Shepherd, and Woods.

Mayor Edwards called the meeting to order: Mayor Edwards called this meeting of Staunton City Council to order.

Councilor Woods moved to approve John Blair as Acting City Clerk.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Overholtzer and carried as follows:

Ms. Park	aye	Mr. Shepherd	aye
Mr. Overholtzer	aye	Vice Mayor Arrowood	aye
Ms. Woods	aye	Mayor Edwards	aye
Mr. Campbell	aye		

1. Consideration of Work Session and Regular Meeting Agendas

Consistent with Procedural Memorandum No. 3, the agendas were presented for Council consideration.

Councilor Woods moved to approve the work session and regular meeting agendas as presented.

The motion was seconded by Vice-Mayor Arrowood and carried as follows:

Ms. Park	aye	Mr. Shepherd	aye
Mr. Overholtzer	aye	Vice Mayor Arrowood	aye
Ms. Woods	aye	Mayor Edwards	aye
Mr. Campbell	aye		

2. Presentation by Shenandoah Community Capital Fund

Ryan Hall, Executive Director of the Shenandoah Community Capital Fund, provided the following update to Council: Since its founding in 2008, the Shenandoah Community Capital Fund (SCCF), formerly known as the Staunton Creative Community Fund, has been dedicated to helping entrepreneurs start, sustain, and grow businesses in the Shenandoah Valley. The organization serves as a regional hub for entrepreneurial innovation, connecting talent, creativity, information, capital, and technical resources to support a vibrant regional economy.

The Fund’s mission is to build a more accessible and equitable ecosystem for entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout the Shenandoah Valley. Recognizing that starting or expanding a business can be challenging, the organization helps individuals navigate the complexities, risks, and opportunities of entrepreneurship. Through flexible capital, technical assistance, and relationship-based support, the Fund provides an alternative to traditional, high-interest financing and serves as a trusted resource for emerging and growing businesses.

Headquartered in Staunton, the Shenandoah Community Capital Fund now serves the entire Central Shenandoah Valley, including Augusta, Rockingham, Rockbridge, Highland, Bath, Albemarle, and Nelson counties, as well as the cities of Staunton, Harrisonburg, Waynesboro, Lexington, and Buena Vista.

He highlighted the Fund’s Small Business Intensive (SBI) Program and noted that eight Staunton-based businesses participated in the initial cohort.

He also noted the Fund’s assistance to the Staunton Black Business Collective. The Fund provided financial support to the Collective’s Profiles of Success booklet.

Councilor Overholtzer asked if the Fund had provided any capital for economic development authority projects within its footprint. Mr. Hall noted that the Fund had financially assisted the Highland County EDA in its development of a Highland County Community Center.

Councilor Woods asked if the Fund still ran the business boot camp. Mr. Hall stated that the Fund did not have a business boot camp in 2025, but it expected to conduct one in 2026 in an in-person format.

Councilor Park noted that her business in Staunton received assistance from the Fund and thanked Mr. Hall for the assistance. She also noted that her business is now in its 13th year of operation.

3. Presentation of HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) Intersections along Beverley Street

Susan Wilson, Transportation Planner, stated the following: In February 2022, VDOT completed the final report of a study of ten downtown intersections that analyzed their traffic, safety, pedestrian and bicyclist, and geometric conditions as having Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI). The report was completed through the Strategically Targeted and Affordable Roadway

Solutions (STARS) program and provided safety improvement options for the short-, intermediate-, and long-term. The ten analyzed intersections were primarily downtown, along Johnson Street and Beverley Street, while also including three intersections along West Beverley Street west of downtown.

Following the STARS Study, the city applied for and received a total of \$2,184,534 in funding during two VDOT HSIP (Highway Safety Improvement Program) grant applications cycles (2022 and 2023) for pedestrian improvements at a total of nine intersections (Attachment 1). Six of these intersections were part of the STARS Study, while the three other intersections included in the HSIP applications are along Beverley Street, so that all the Beverley Street intersections between Lewis and Coalter Streets will be improved.

The City's Public Works staff applied for the HSIP funding to upgrade or install pedestrian signal heads with countdown signals and install high visibility crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety within downtown. Projects funded with federal funding, which is the original funding source for HSIP, are required to ensure that pedestrian facilities within the project area, specifically curb ramps, are ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant.

Traffic volumes and turn movements at the intersections were analyzed as part of the STARS Study's data collection that informed its recommendations. Two of the intersections included in the Study were recommended to be converted from signalized to all-way-stop-controlled, as traffic signals are unnecessary due to low volumes on the side streets. The HSIP designs include removing the traffic signals at Beverley Street and Central Avenue and Beverley Street and New Street. Additionally, the Study's design alternatives included recommendations to reduce the number of travel lanes on Beverley Street from two lanes to a single lane between Lewis Street and Market Street. The low traffic volumes on Beverley Street would accommodate design changes that the STARS Study discusses as benefitting pedestrians and are proven countermeasures for vehicle and pedestrian crashes.

The highest traffic volumes along Beverley Street within the downtown are on the blocks between Lewis Street and New Street with average daily volumes of 1,800 vehicles. Between New Street and Coalter Street, the volume dips to 1,400 vehicles. Comparatively, on Beverley Street between Jefferson Street and Lewis Street, the average volume is 2,300 vehicles, and in the West End where West Beverley Street is a two-lane street, the highest volumes are 7,600 vehicles. Additional context shows that Johnson Street, which already has only one lane in each direction, currently carries up to 10,000 vehicles daily between Augusta Street and the Commerce/ Coalter/ Greenville intersection. These volumes, from 2024, are consistent with past traffic volumes that VDOT collects annually, showing no notable increase or decrease along Beverley Street. Anecdotally, the right lane along Beverley Street is often used for loading and unloading by delivery trucks and vans, which often block the lane from vehicle travel for extended periods.

Beverley Street within downtown does not serve as a primary route for drivers connecting to other parts of the city. Instead, it serves more as a destination: City Hall and locally-owned shops, restaurants, and businesses. It is a place of pedestrian activity but lacking in ample pedestrian space on most blocks. The sidewalk width varies from six feet up to nine feet in places, measuring from the back of curb to the face of the building; it narrows to less than four feet in other places between

light poles and store entrances. Exterior decorations, trash cans, sandwich board signs, and shy distances from both the roadway and building faces also narrow useable space of the sidewalk.

The HSIP projects are currently being designed and are expected to be advertised for construction April 2027, once the tunnel/street repairs are completed. These projects provide the city the opportunity to revisit the recommendations of the STARS Study, especially for the Beverley Street corridor—and implement them as funding allows. The alternatives identified in the study for Beverley Street all recommend intersection modifications that would improve pedestrian safety and accommodations, including bulb outs (also called curb extensions) that reduce pedestrian crossing distances, improve their visibility to drivers, and provide a larger pedestrian waiting area for crossing, along with higher visibility crosswalks and pedestrian signals. The STARS Study takes the improvements for Beverley Street one step further than just improving the intersections; it recommends reducing the number of travel lanes from two to one—referred to in the study as the Single Travel Lane concept—and repurposing the gained space for other uses. This lane reduction recommendation was included in the study because it provides safety benefits to drivers and pedestrians and operational benefits to the corridor.

Once the HSIP project improvements are completed, the city will have the flexibility to leave Beverley Street as-is or incrementally continue to improve it, as funding allows. The Single Travel Lane concept presented in the STARS Study recommended repurposing the reclaimed travel lane for on-street parking and delivery vehicle loading/unloading. Staff is interested in exploring options that would enhance the pedestrian space along Beverley Street, rather than add more space for cars. The improvements being considered would provide more space for pedestrians and pedestrian-level amenities, including additional seating and street trees while still providing space for delivery vehicles. The existing on-street parking and one travel lane would be maintained, but the right-side travel lane could be repurposed for pedestrian amenities that provide shade, create opportunities for lingering, and give more space for strolling.

Vibrant and welcoming downtowns are a mix of great businesses as well as public spaces that invite people to stay and also explore.

Mayor Edwards asked what a bulb out is. Ms. Wilson explained that it is an extension of the sidewalk into the roadway.

Vice-Mayor Arrowood asked Ms. Wilson to clarify about the two to one lane transition and stressed that he did not want to create a game of chicken as lanes narrowed at cross throughs. Ms. Wilson clarified that HSIP would be focused on funding pedestrian improvements at cross throughs such as signaling and bulb outs. She also stated that there would merge arrows and signage at mid-block to indicate the narrowing to one lane at the cross throughs.

Councilor Overholtzer noted that the Staunton Plan is presenting a holistic vision for downtown including making Beverley Street a one lane road and potentially extending the Shop and Dine Out program permanently. He wanted to make sure that the HSIP program would not lead to duplicative spending. Ms. Wilson noted that the HSIP improvements could be “one and done”, but that they could also be furthered such as making Beverley Street one lane. However, she noted

that the configuration of downtown still required vehicular traffic and stressed balance rather than a pedestrian mall situation. Vice-Mayor Arrowood noted the lack of alleys for deliveries as well.

Mayor Edwardds concluded the presentation by noting that this is the first part of the process and that there would be many more opportunities for public and Council input. She also noted that she enjoyed the AI rendering presented in Ms. Wilson's presentation.

4. Discussion of Proposal for Marketing Support of Businesses During Downtown Tunnel and Street Repairs Project

Jessica Blythe, Assistant Director of Economic Development, presented the following information: The Wharf District and New Street Business Marketing Support Program provides direct financial assistance to help businesses maintain customer awareness and drive traffic during the 15-month Downtown Tunnel Repairs project that will be adjacent to the Wharf District and on New Street. This marketing-focused grant program enables businesses to communicate their continued operations, promote access routes, and sustain customer relationships during extended construction disruptions.

Ms. Blythe highlighted how the grant program can address the three threats posed by Wharf construction: lack of parking, access confusion, and reduced visibility.

Councilor Overholtzer noted that he applauded the proactive approach. He asked if staff had looked at the "Big Dig" in Staunton or other local projects when it developed the proposed grant program.

Ms. Blythe stated that staff did. She noted that she and Amanda DiMeo, the Director of Economic Development, spoke with Albemarle County officials about a similar program instituted when the Route 29 improvements project was being constructed. Albemarle County officials stressed the importance of being proactive and the importance of marketing. She stated that Albemarle had 15 businesses take part in its grant program and only one of the businesses closed during the program's timeframe. That closure was unrelated to the construction. She also noted that the Albemarle businesses that participated in the program saw little to no revenue reduction.

Mayor Edwards asked if this information had been presented to the Wharf stakeholder group. Ms. Blythe replied that it had and that it received positive feedback.

5. Discussion of FY 2025 End of Year General Fund Financial Overview and Fund Analysis and FY 2026 Adopted Capital Improvement Program

Jessie Moyers, the city's Chief Financial Officer, presented the following information: The FY2025 year-end process has been completed. Recommendations for the use of the unassigned fund balance will be introduced at the February 26, 2026 council meeting as part of fiscal year 2026 budget amendment #2. The unassigned general fund balance as of June 30, 2025 is \$5,646,988, of which \$250,000 is a contingency reserve that is not available to be spent and \$50,000 is for the city council contingency from FY2025. The FY2025 general fund capital plan

is \$3,628,050 and includes one change from the adopted plan. The \$100,000 for the Gypsy Hill Park lighting will be directed to the CAD/RMS upgrade.

Recommended uses:

- \$3,628,050 - FY2026 General Fund Capital Plan
- \$811,730 - Infrastructure Improvements CIP – Tunnel Repairs
- \$100,000 - City Hall Improvements (accessible doors and wayfinding signage)
- \$200,000 - Wharf District and New Street Business Marketing Support & Signage/Wayfinding/Placemaking During Downtown Tunnel Repairs

Other considerations for discussion:

- Undesignated CIP
- Leave any remaining in the fund balance

Vice-Mayor Arrowood stated that he hoped the city could use the funds and not put them into the fund balance given the needs of public facilities in the city.

Ms. Moyers suggested that placing the funds in the Undesignated CIP fund would allow those funds to be transferred to a specific project with just one vote. She also stated that she does not anticipate an FY26 surplus, so next year’s capital improvement budget may not be fully funded.

The City Manager stated that the final decision will be made at the Council’s February 26 meeting.

6. Closed Meeting for Consultation with Legal Counsel Concerning a Public Contract as Well as Matters Related to Title 18 of the Staunton City Code

Councilor Overholtzer moved to enter a closed meeting for (i) consultation with legal counsel, the Staunton City Attorney, for specific legal matters related to Title 18 of the Staunton City Code regarding the Historic Preservation District requiring the provision of legal advice pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8); and (ii) discussion of a prospective candidate for the position of Clerk of Council pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1).

The motion was seconded by Councilor Woods and carried as follows:

Ms. Park	aye	Mr. Shepherd	aye
Mr. Overholtzer	aye	Vice Mayor Arrowood	aye
Ms. Woods	aye	Mayor Edwards	aye
Mr. Campbell	aye		

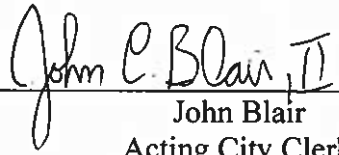
The Council reconvened after the closed meeting.

Councilor Campbell moved that Council reconvene in an open meeting and certify to the best of each member’s knowledge that only lawfully exempted public business matters were discussed and that only public business matters as identified in the closed meeting motion were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Woods and carried as follows:

Ms. Park	aye	Mr. Shepherd	aye
Mr. Overholtzer	aye	Vice Mayor Arrowood	aye
Ms. Woods	aye	Mayor Edwards	aye
Mr. Campbell	aye		

The January 8, 2026 Staunton City Council Work Session adjourned at 7:01 p.m.



John Blair
Acting City Clerk