



City Council
WORK SESSION
 Rita S. Wilson City Council Chambers
 March 12, 2026
 5:15 p.m.

Council Members present: Mayor Edwards, Vice Mayor Arrowood, and Councilors Campbell, Overholtzer, Park (Remote Participant starting at 5:25 p.m.), and Woods.

Councilor Shepherd arrived at 5:18 p.m.

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

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 Councilor Campbell and carried as follows:

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

2. Discussion of the City of Staunton Cable Commission

Kurt Plowman, Chief Technology Officer, presented the following information:

In 1988, City Council established the Staunton Cable Television Commission to serve as a liaison between the City of Staunton and cable providers operating under franchise agreements within the City. The Commission was charged with evaluating the quality and adequacy of cable television service, assisting with franchise negotiations, and serving as a forum for citizen concerns related to cable service.

The Commission has played a meaningful role in negotiating franchise agreements with providers including Comcast, nTelos, and GloFiber. The Commission has also provided a venue for residents to raise service concerns and has facilitated communication between franchise holders and the City.

Over the past decade, however, the cable television landscape has changed significantly. The growth of streaming services and alternative content delivery platforms has reduced reliance on traditional cable service. Additionally, franchise agreements have become increasingly standardized, with limited opportunity for substantive local negotiation due to state and federal regulatory frameworks.

As a result, the scope of responsibilities originally envisioned for the Commission has diminished, and many of its functions are now administrative in nature and can be effectively managed by City staff. Therefore, City staff recommends that the Cable Commission be permanently dissolved.

Virginia Code Section 15.2-1411 authorizes the City Council to establish advisory commissions. The Attorney General of Virginia has repeatedly opined that, “It is well-settled in Virginia that a public body having the power to create a public office has the implied power to abolish it, absent an express provision of law to the contrary.” Therefore, City Council has the legal authority to dissolve the Cable Commission.

Vice-Mayor Arrowood asked when was the last time the Cable Commission met. Mr. Plowman replied that he didn’t know the exact date, but he believed it was during the COVID timeframe.

Councilor Campbell asked about the Commission’s involvement in the GloFiber franchise. Mr. Plowman stated that it was minimal. The franchise agreement between GloFiber and the City was a standardized form agreement.

Councilor Overholtzer asked if abolishing the Cable Commission will affect the public’s ability to air grievances. Mr. Plowman said that all cable bills within the City of Staunton would still have his number printed on them. He would continue to work with cable companies and customers to resolve disputes.

At approximately 5:25 p.m. Councilor Park’s remote connection was established with the Work Session.

Councilor Woods moved to permit Councilor Park to remotely participate in the work session and regular meeting. Councilor Overholtzer seconded the motion which carried as follows:

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

Councilor Park stated that personal matter that prohibited her attendance was attendance at an academic conference at Montpelier.

She stated that the address of her remote participation was 1130 Constitution Highway, Montpelier Station, Virginia.

Mayor Edwards confirmed that other Councilors and audience members could hear Councilor Park.

3. Presentation of the Conceptual Site Plan for Remainder of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Site

Rodney Rhodes, Community Development Director, presented the following information:

The development of a Master Plan for the entire Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courthouse site was included in the scope of services with Moseley Architects as they developed plans for the new courthouse. The plan would provide a vision of what the entire Chestnut Hills site could look like and funding for the plan was secured through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). However, due to the time constraints placed on constructing the new courthouse, the development of the Master Plan was not undertaken.

While the new Courts Complex was under construction, the city became aware of an opportunity to have a high-level Conceptual Plan developed for the site through the existing Brownfields Assessment Grant. Staff directed the Brownfields' consultant, TRC, to include the following elements in the concept plan:

- pocket park/greenspace
- landscaping
- stormwater elements
- pedestrian access from Beverley St.
- BRITE stop (public bus service)
- utilities for lighting/water features
- parking availability, including for adjacent restaurant
- future expansion of district court/circuit court – building, parking needs, etc.

Furthermore, it was noted that the Green Neighborhoods section of the West End Revitalization Strategy Plan specifically recommends the following:

- “Create a Public Square at the J&DR Site” action item;
- “Incorporate Beautification” strategy; and
- “Improve Stormwater through Natural Features”

The existing ARPA funds for the Master Plan need to be spent by December 2026.

Mayor Edwards asked if there as a pull-in in front of the green space fronting on West Beverley. Mr. Rhodes confirmed that it was a pull-in.

Councilor Campbell apologized in advance, but said that he had some complaints about the concept plan. He pointed out that there were numerous city services that could use the space in question, and he did not believe the trail presented was the highest and best use of the property. He urged that interim solutions not become throw away work.

He asked if there has been any coordination with Stella Mia. Mr. Rhodes said there has not.

Councilor Campbell pointed out that a trail on the Stella Mia side of the property would be more accessible for those with ADA needs. He also pointed out that the plan creates an earth ramp which limits the developability of the property.

Councilor Overholtzer complimented the bioretention features, but added that he would like to be more aggressive in limiting the number of parking spaces.

Councilor Campbell pointed out that the City had a number of space needs including for the police and fire departments as well as for recreation and community centers. He said he wanted to maximize the investment of taxpayer dollars.

Councilor Woods and Councilor Campbell then inquired about the use of the existing concrete pads on the site. The City Manager said that she didn't think that the police or fire needs would be met, but she didn't know about library needs or a community or recreation center.

Councilor Campbell clarified that he was not necessarily looking at preserving the concrete pads as much as he was looking at preserving developable space.

4. Review of Water, Sewer and Environmental Funds, Rates, and Capital Projects

Jessie Moyers, Chief Financial Officer, presented a review of the water, sewer, and environmental funds, including a rate analysis, operating expenditures review, and planned capital improvements for each fund.

She stated that the current water fund balance is approximately \$13M, but the future five years of capital needs are estimated to cost approximately \$22M.

She stated that the sewer fund balance is approximately \$9M, but the future five years of capital needs are estimated to cost approximately \$13.5M.

She stated that the environmental fund balance is approximately \$550,000, but the future five years of capital needs including the landfill needs is equivalent to \$6.5M when truck replacements are included.

She stated the upcoming budget will propose a 5.4% increase in the water rate, a 7.1% increase in the sewer rate, and a 14.5% increase in the refuse rate.

Ms. Moyers also stated that she hopes to conduct a utility rate study in the coming year. She mentioned that the best practice is to conduct a utility rate study every three to five years.

Councilor Campbell asked how much \$1.8M in new revenue would cover truck replacements. Ms. Moyers said two new trucks for Fiscal Year 2027 and one each year after that.

Councilor Campbell asked if the \$4.8M in proposed new refuse funding would cover the new cell and new weigh station at the landfill. Ms. Moyers stated that it would cover those expenses, but there are additional upcoming expenses as the landfill in future fiscal years.

Mayor Edwards asked if the Public Works Department has an adequate number of functioning refuse trucks. She said she hated to think about the City not having enough functioning trucks.

Ms. Moyers asked the Director of Public Works to answer the question. David Irvin, the Director of Public Works, said that a good example is that a few weeks ago, the department had three refuse trucks offline and one of the repairs cost \$9,000. He stated that a typical truck costs \$300,000 to \$350,000. Ms. Moyers added that it takes about one year for a truck to be delivered after the order is placed.

Councilor Overholtzer asked if the costs displayed on the slides includes both the opening of a new cell and the closure of an existing cell at the landfill. Ms. Moyers stated that the opening of the new cell is included, but the closing of the old cell, which is part of phase five, is not included in the proposed costs.

Councilor Overholtzer asked how much the rate study would cost. Ms. Moyers stated that she anticipated it to cost \$35,000 to \$45,000.

Councilor Campbell pointed out that businesses don't fail to connect its charges, and that the first slide of the presentation made a good point that the utilities should be operated like a business.

Councilor Campbell asked if it was possible to transfer funds from the general fund or the capital improvement fund to one of the utilities funds. Ms. Moyers said the Council could. She pointed to a past transfer of \$1M in carryover funds to the environmental fund.

Councilor Overholtzer reminded residents that Staunton's landfill costs are proportional to Staunton residents' landfill usage. He suggested that the City could perhaps incentivize residents to use the landfill less by potentially differentiating between large and small cans. Ms. Moyers said that it would be a possibility, but that Public Works employees would need to keep track of it.

Councilor Campbell asked why other localities have a base rate for utilities. Ms. Moyers stated she was not sure, but she thought the rate study might provide some insight into that question.

5. Closed Meeting for the Provision of Legal Advice

Councilor Woods moved to enter a closed meeting for (i) consultation with legal counsel, the Staunton City Attorney, regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice

concerning the Historic Preservation Commission’s authority pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8).

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		

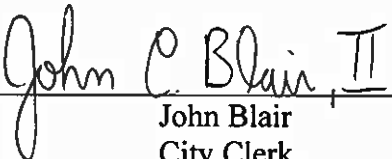
The Council reconvened after the closed meeting.

Councilor Woods 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 Park 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 March 12, 2026 Staunton City Council Work Session adjourned at 7:01 p.m.



John Blair
City Clerk