



City of Roanoke, Virginia

CITY COUNCIL

January 20, 2026

2:00 PM

City Council Chamber
215 Church Avenue, SW

AGENDA

The City of Roanoke is a safe, caring and economically vibrant community in which to live, learn, work, play and prosper. A vibrant urban center with strong neighborhoods set amongst the spectacular beauty of Virginia's Blue Ridge.

NOTICE:

City Council meetings will be televised live and replayed on RVTV Channel 3 on Thursdays at 7:00 pm, and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; and video streamed through YouTube Live at youtube.com/RoanokeVa. Council meetings are offered with closed captioning for the deaf or hard of hearing.

1. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL. All present.

The Invocation was delivered by Mayor Joseph L. Cobb.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Mayor Cobb.

Welcome

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

2. PRESENTATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Recognition of Roanoke Public Library Interns.

The City Manager and Amber Lowery, Assistant Director, Roanoke Libraries, recognized the interns from Hollins University and each intern shared her experience working at the libraries.

Presentation of Citizen Centric Reports.

The Office of Communications presented information from the Association of Government Accountants, who hosts an annual contest for college students and recognized each participant.

Mayor Cobb advised that, going forward, the 2:00 pm meeting would begin with the Council Members providing "shout-outs" or announcing community events recently attended. The Council Members made the following announcements:

Council Member Hagen "shouted-out" the grand opening of the Rise Medical

Dispensary and noted the expansion of the business from the City of Salem to the City of Roanoke.

Council Member Sanchez-Jones "shouted-out" the promotions of the Fire-EMS staff from EMS Paramedic to Captain.

Vice-Mayor McGuire thanked the Strong Towns Roanoke group and enjoyed their recent meeting exchanging ideas on how to make Roanoke a better place.

Council Member Nash "shouted-out" the North Carolina A&T Alumni Association, who hosted a fantastic Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration breakfast on Monday, January 19.

Council Member Volosin "shouted-out" the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) for their Martin Luther King, Jr., day celebration and all the celebrations that occurred over the weekend.

Council Member Powers "shouted-out" the Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration luncheon hosted by the SCLC on Saturday, January 17; and the Roanoke Police Department, who on January 9 graduated 6 new officers.

Mayor Cobb commented that it was an honor to serve on committees for both Governor Spanberger and Lt. Governor Hashmi, and he attended the Inauguration on Saturday, January 17, in Richmond, Virginia; and "shouted-out" the Hope and Home Task Force for the work they are doing in the community and announced the launch of the Mayor's Book Club, a partnership with the Roanoke Public Libraries, to come and talk about different subjects and bring your favorite books. He advised that the first meeting would be held at the downtown main library on January 21, at 12:00 pm.

3. HEARING OF CITIZENS UPON PUBLIC MATTERS:

The City Council sets this time as a priority for citizens to be heard. All matters will be referred to the City Manager for response, recommendation or report to the Council, as he may deem appropriate.

Guy Byrd, Jr. appeared before the Council and spoke in opposition to the proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

Lisa Thompson appeared before the Council and spoke in opposition to the proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

Frank McGuire appeared before the Council and spoke in opposition to the proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

Scott Howard appeared before the Council and spoke in opposition to the proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

Jason Martin appeared before the Council and spoke in opposition to the proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

Molly Henry appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the

proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

David Camper appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

Molly Bullington appeared before the Council and spoke with concern about the proposed increase in the special events fees for downtown.

Stephen Niamke appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the pandemic of senseless violence plaguing the community locally and abroad; promoted systemic approaches to encourage peace, justice and nonviolence.

Virginia Sweet appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to reparative justice and the Evans Spring property.

Brenda Hale appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the NAACP and the Evans Spring property.

Richard Fife appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the development plan for the Evans Spring property.

Sherman Bramford appeared before the Council and suggested Council scrap the current development plan for the Evans Spring property and create a new plan.

Barbara Duerk appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to 2026 being the best year ever and encouraged all to participate in the Mayor's Bike Ride event.

Sylvia King appeared before the Council on behalf of B.R.A.A.G. to announce their Transit Equally event on February 4, 2026, at Melrose Plaza honoring Margie Jumper.

Jane Gabrielle appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the nature art exhibit on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building and the beauty of the Evans Spring property.

Emily Casey appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the decrease in funding to Roanoke City Public Schools.

4. CONSENT AGENDA: (APPROVED, 7-0)

- C-1.** Minutes of the regular meetings of Roanoke City Council held on Monday, December 1, 2025, and Monday, December 15, 2025; recessed until Monday, December 22, 2025; and Monday, January 5, 2026.
- RECOMMENDED ACTION:** **Dispensed with the reading of the minutes and approved as recorded.**
- C-2.** A communication from Mayor Joseph L. Cobb requesting that City Council convene in a closed meeting to discuss the selection of a City Attorney for a

term beginning March 1, 2026, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1), Code of Virginia, (1950), as amended.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: **Concurred in the request.**

- C-3.** Report of qualification of Nancy Dye as a member of the Mill Mountain Advisory Board to fill the unexpired term of office of James Davis ending June 30, 2028.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: **Received and filed.**

REGULAR AGENDA:

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

6. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS: None.

7. REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS AND THE CITY MANAGER:

1. City Manager:

BRIEFINGS:

FY27 OAA Applications to be Submitted to the State and Mid-Year Update - 15 minutes.

Updates to Handling of Traffic Controls for Special Events - 15 minutes.

FY2026-2027 Budget Briefing — 20 minutes.

PARK Roanoke and City-owned Parking Facilities Update - 15 minutes.

ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR ACTION:

- a.** Acceptance and Appropriation of Additional Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Revenue Sharing Funding for Downtown – 1st Street SW Drainage Improvement Project.
Adopted Ordinance No. 43335-012026. (7-0)
- b.** Acceptance and appropriation of the 2026-2028 Operation Ceasefire Grant.
Adopted Ordinance No. 43336-012026. (7-0)
- c.** Acquisition of Real Property Rights Needed to Continue the Mass Grading Plan for Tract 8.
Adopted Ordinance No. 43337-012026. (7-0)
- d.** Adoption of the Seventh Amended School Funding Policy.
Adopted Resolution No. 43338-012026. (4-1, Vice-Mayor McGuire and Council Member Sanchez-Jones abstained from the vote. Council Member Hagen voted no)
- e.** Re-appropriation of FY25 true-up funds and capital fund balance for Roanoke City Public Schools.
Adopted Budget Ordinance No. 43339-012026. (5-0, Vice-Mayor McGuire and Council Member Sanchez-Jones abstained from the vote)
- f.** Execution of an agreement with the Virginia Department of Health for continued operation of the Roanoke Health Department.
Adopted Resolution No. 43340-012026. (6-0, Council Member Sanchez-Jones was not present when the vote was recorded.)

COMMENTS OF THE CITY MANAGER.

The City Manager offered the following comments:

We are getting ready to hold a ribbon cutting for the long-awaited Wasena Stake Park and Pump Track. The Ribbon Cutting will be held on Friday, January 30th at 2:00 pm.

The play area at Williamson Road Library in Esperanza Plaza will officially open with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, February 6, at 10:00 a.m. The opening will highlight community connectivity and introduce a safe gathering space for families. As a reminder, this project was made possible through the Safer Communities Grant.

Roanoke Parks & Recreation and City Emergency Management Services have collaborated to acquire a Perry Weather Station for Elmwood Park. The on-site weather station monitors real-time conditions and triggers custom alerts to sirens and mobile devices, including automatic all-clear notifications, enhancing safety for teams and ensuring smooth operations during events. Staff from both departments recently met with Facilities Maintenance to determine the optimal location for installation, which is scheduled to occur in the coming weeks. The weather station will be connected to direct power and will not include a solar panel. In addition, Emergency Management has submitted a grant application for a second Perry Weather Station at River's Edge Park. The addition of this station will further improve safety for all events and athletic activities at the park.

The consultant team developing designs for the outdoor community stage at Gainsboro Library has advanced the initial concept. In coordination with library staff, a public meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 28, at 6:00 p.m. at Gainsboro Library. Community members will have the opportunity to review renderings of the initial concept and provide feedback to guide further design development.

HAT is actively preparing for the Winter Point-in-Time Count. An electronic survey format will be used again this year, with revisions made to improve efficiency and ensure consistent collection of key data reported to HUD. Registration for survey volunteers is now open. A training session for student volunteers from Radford University–Carilion was held on Wednesday, January 14. HAT staff are conducting site scouting to update location lists for each of the eight street count teams. The Winter Point-in-Time Count will take place on the night of Wednesday, January 28, with street teams conducting the unsheltered count early the following morning, January 29.

PUBLIC MATTERS FOLLOW-UP

Kathryn Hedrick, Inclusive Services Manager, reported on the following matters from the December 15 and January 5 City Council Meetings:

Greenway Access Follow-Up

Garrett Robinson spoke at the November 17 Council meeting about maintaining greenway access during the construction of the Wiley Drive low water bridge. Mr. Campbell shared the following statement, which has been sent to another resident, as well. "Thank you for reaching out and for your commitment to the Roanoke River Greenway. We agree that this bridge is an important connection, and we understand why maintaining access during construction is a major concern. After a detailed engineering review, we want to be clear: there is no safe or feasible way to keep the Greenway open at this location while the bridge is being replaced. The existing structure must be removed all at once, and the limited right-of-way leaves no room for a temporary path. Environmental regulations also require the contractor to work within a cofferdam and keep at least half the river open at all times, which further restricts available space. Any attempt to keep a pedestrian corridor open would put users directly beside heavy construction activity and unstable bridge components. Because of these constraints, we must choose between keeping the current bridge area open or replacing it. Unfortunately, we cannot safely do both.

During the anticipated nine-month closure, a signed detour will direct Greenway users to cross the Wasena Bridge, travel through Highland Park, connect with Franklin Rd at Walnut, and cross at Reserve to reconnect with the Roanoke River Greenway in Rivers Edge Park. We recognize the importance of transparency. Public review of the design and construction plan will occur in February, once required easements are secured. At that time, the community will be able to see the plans, ask questions, and share feedback. We appreciate your advocacy for the Greenway and look forward to working with the community to deliver a safer, more reliable bridge as efficiently as possible."

Zoning Text Amendment Updates

Anthony Stavola and Owen McGuire requested an update on the study of the adopted zoning reforms. Mr. Hagen submitted this as a Council Member Initiative.

Report Back:

Ms. O'Brien gave an update to City Council during the 2:00 pm session on December 15, and the following information comes from her report.

Three Council Member Initiatives have been grouped together to streamline the process for the Planning Department, making efficient use of both staff time and community engagement opportunities. Community meetings at libraries starting January 21. Research and drafting have already begun and will continue through the end of this month. A period of public engagement and stakeholder input is underway with a series of community meetings scheduled during the last two weeks of January. The research and input will be collected and staff will deliver briefings to City Council and the Planning Commission during February and March.

The proposed date for City Council adoption is April 20, 2026, after which staff will work toward full implementation and communication with residents.

More information about the community meetings can be found on the City's webpage and residents are invited to learn more and provide feedback at www.roanokeva.gov/projects.

Mayor Cobb inquired about the projection of the opening of the Roanoke River Greenway during the construction of the Wiley Drive low bridge.

2. CITY ATTORNEY:

- a. Amendment of Article II, Real Estate Taxes Generally, Chapter 32, Taxation, Code of the City of Roanoke, by the addition of new Division 5D, Partial Exemption of Certain Real Property Located in Redevelopment or Conservation Areas or Rehabilitation Districts Zoned Urban Center.
Adopted Ordinance No. 43341-012026. (7-0)

3. DIRECTOR OF REAL ESTATE VALUATION: None.

8. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

1. A report of the Roanoke City School Board requesting appropriation of funds for various educational programs; and a report of the City Manager recommending that City Council concur in the request.
Adopted Ordinance No. 43342-012026. (5-0, Vice-Mayor McGuire and Council Member Sanchez-Jones abstained from the vote.)
2. Comments on certain Authorities, Boards, Committees and Commissions in which City Council serve as liaisons or appointees.
Council Member Nash commented that the Gun Violence Prevention Commission shared information on gun violence incidents which totaled 35 in 2024 and 27 in 2025, so progress was being made.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

10. INTRODUCTION AND CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

1. **Adopted Resolution No. 43343-012026, approving and affirming the action taken by the Greater Roanoke Transit company (GRTC) d/b/a Valley Metro to implement Fare Free Transit Equity Day Service for Wednesday, February 4, 2026; and authorizing the City Manager to take any necessary action to accomplish such fare. (7-0)**

11. MOTIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

1. Inquiries and/or comments by the Mayor and Members of City Council. **None.**
2. Vacancies on certain authorities, boards, commissions and committees appointed by Council. **None.**

12. RECESSED - 6:04 PM

The City Council Meeting will stand in recess; and thereafter reconvene at 7:00 pm, in the City Council Chamber, Room 450, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building.



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CITY COUNCIL

7:00 pm
City Council Chamber
215 Church Avenue, SW

13. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL. All present.

The Invocation was delivered by The Reverend Catina Martin, Pastor, Belmont Christian Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Mayor Joseph L. Cobb.

Welcome

Certification of Closed Meeting. (7-0)

14. PRESENTATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Recognition of the Fall Football winners.

Mayor Cobb recognized the 10U and 12U Tackle Football Teams and Milton Hardy, Athletics Coordinator, presented trophies to each team coach.

Recognition of the Student of the Year.

Cindy McFall, Director, Parks and Recreation, recognized and presented a certificate to Andre Chapman, 2025 Student of the Year.

15. PUBLIC HEARINGS: None.

16. HEARING OF CITIZENS UPON PUBLIC MATTERS:

The City Council sets this time as a priority for citizens to be heard. If deemed appropriate, matters will be referred to the City Manager for response, recommendation or report to the City Council.

Rosemary St. Jacques appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the Evans Spring property.

Misty Dawn Vickers appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the decrease in school funding.

Chris Carter appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to changes and challenges that the federal government has created.

Dr. Jack Leff appeared before the Council and spoke in opposition to the decrease in school funding from 40 to 34 percent.

Jordan Coleman appeared before the Council and spoke on behalf of teachers and employees of Roanoke City Public Schools.

Casey Carlson appeared before the Council and spoke on behalf of teachers and students directly impacted by the decrease in school funding.

Michelle Brooks appeared before the Council and expressed disappointment about the increase in funding for the schools.

Jill King appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the teachers and students directly impacted by the decrease in school funding.

Matthew Placido appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the decrease in school funding.

Karen Musgrove appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the decrease in school funding.

Stephen Niamke appeared before the Council and suggested Council construct a new development plan for the Evans Spring property.

Richard Fife appeared before the Council and spoke in support of preserving the Evans Spring property.

Joanne Hayden appeared before the Council and spoke in support of preserving the Evans Spring property.

Debra Carter appeared before the Council and spoke with regard to the incident and tragic death at a Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority housing complex, which was not addressed until several days following the incident.

Theresa Gill-Walker appeared before the Council and spoke in support of preserving the Evans Spring property and expressed the data center in Botetourt may cause an ozone problem.

ADJOURNED - 8:14 PM