

May 27, 2020, 2019 Budget Work Session

A special meeting of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia, was held on May 27, 2020, in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 6:00PM, to conduct a budget work session with Mayor Kathy Lawson presiding. Council Members present included Mayor Lawson, Vice Mayor Chad Martin, Council Member Jim Woods, Council Member Jennifer Bowles and Council Member Danny Turner. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, City Attorney Eric Monday, Assistant Finance Director Mandy McGhee, and Finance Director Linda Conover

Mayor Lawson opened the Council meeting.

School Superintendent Dr. Zeb Talley shared his goals for the school system over the next year including a 6-year plan. Dr. Talley said the schools had seen a 10% increase in family participation. Total enrollment for the upcoming school year is 1,935. The schools hope to provide a 2% pay raise for teachers. They would also like to see a raise for bus drivers and STEP increases for employees. Travis Clemmons, Executive Director of Administrative Services detailed the proposed budget for the school system and answered Council questions. Council Member Turner asked about the decrease in students enrolled in City schools. The COVID Cares Act funds City schools are receiving are not built into the proposed budget. Talley explained that they hope to save those funds until next year to be used on sanitation upgrades, technology, coordination for long-term closure, mental health efforts, summer learning, etc. Citywide internet to student homes was discussed. Donna Dillard explained that the School Board has reviewed the budget and pleased with the proposal. Dillard stated that discipline occurrences have gone down by 10%. Mayor Lawson explained that Council would deliberate on the Schools proposal for their budget. Council member Turner requested information on the number of City residents attending County schools, and also the number of County residents attending City schools. Council member Bowles requested information on the CARES funding the schools are receiving and how those funds can be used.

Next for Council's review was outside agencies and from the Health Department, Penny Hall, Chief Operations Officer and William Rodgers, Business Manager were in attendance. Ms. Hall provided a brief overview of the Health Department's budget and answered several questions. No other representatives from outside agencies were in attendance, and it was noted Social Services representatives would be attending a later work session. City Manager Towarnicki then reviewed the list of other outside agency funding in the proposed budget, noting two additions – funding for weekend services at the Anchor House, and new/one-time funding for the Southern Virginia Recreation Facilities Authority. Finance Director Linda Conover read prepared comments from Anchor House Director Ricky Walker, noting the increase to allow weekend services could reduce the City's cost related to W. W. Moore Detention Center. Towarnicki noted the request from the SVRFA in the amount of \$8000 will be matched with the County's amount of \$16,000, coupled with a \$16,000 reduction in Sports

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Authority spending, all to close a \$40,000 reduction in Harvest grant funding for the organization. It was noted this is expected to be a one-time contribution and not an expectation for ongoing funding.

There being no further questions or discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8 pm.

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

Kathy Lawson, Mayor