

City Council Meeting MINUTES

Monday, January 22, 2024, 6:30 PM

Work Session 6:00 P.M. Parlor A, Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard,
Salem, Virginia 24153

WORK SESSION

1. Call to Order

A work session of the Council of the City of Salem, Virginia, was held in Parlor A, Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, Salem, Virginia, on January 22, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., there being present the following members of said Council to wit: Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor; James W. Wallace, III, Vice- Mayor; Council members: Byron Randolph Foley, William D. Jones, and H. Hunter Holliday; with Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor, presiding together with Chris Dorsey, City Manager; Rob Light, Assistant City Manager and Clerk of Council; Rosemarie B. Jordan, Director of Finance; Crystal Williams, Assistant to the City Manager; Laura Lea Harris, Deputy Clerk of Council; and Jeremy Holmes, Executive Director, Roanoke Valley - Alleghany Regional Commission; and the following business was transacted; Mayor Turk reported that this date, place, and time had been set in order for the Council to hold a work session.

2. New Business

A. Discussion Items

Roanoke Valley - Alleghany Regional Commission Update - Jeremy Holmes, Executive Director

Jeremy Holmes, Executive Director of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, presented an update for Council. He shared that the Commission convenes the member localities to address issues of regional significance such as transportation, community development, housing, and economic development. He noted that every \$1 invested by the localities brings in \$11 of state, federal, and other funding sources. Mr. Holmes also congratulated Mayor Turk on her position as Vice Chair of the Transportation Planning Organization and Vice Mayor Wallace on his position as Chair of the Regional Commission. Highlights were shared of projects between the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission and the Commonwealth Transportation Board. Also noted was that the Commission has worked closely with the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority during their first grant cycle and had helped to secure over \$700,000 in funding. Project highlights on

regional housing, The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and other federal grant writing support, and additional general technical support and data analytics were also shared. Mr. Holmes indicated that growing relations with federal agencies is a priority.

Council discussed the possibility of holding an informative joint work session with the Planning Commission and Hope Tree Administration on the rezoning request that has been continued by the Planning Commission to their February meeting. Discussion was held and four dates were selected as possible options. Staff will coordinate setting up this work session.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Turk adjourned the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Council of the City of Salem, Virginia, was called to order at 6:35 p.m., there being present the following members to wit: Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor; James W. Wallace, III, Vice-Mayor; Councilmembers: Byron Randolph Foley, William D. Jones, and H. Hunter Holliday; with Renée Ferris Turk, Mayor, presiding together with Chris Dorsey, City Manager; Rob Light, Assistant City Manager and Clerk of Council; Rosemarie B. Jordan, Director of Finance; Chuck Van Allman, Director of Community Development; Clark Ruhland, Communications Specialist; and Jim Guynn, City Attorney.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Bid Openings, Awards, Recognitions

Mayor Turk apologized to the citizens for a late start to the meeting and explained that the Work Session had run over by a few minutes. She expressed appreciation for their attendance and their patience.

Mayor Turk recognized Senior Officer J. K. Watkins from the Salem Police Department and new officers Officer Rylee Young, Officer Trevon McGhee, and Officer Kevin Sass, which are about to finish field training at the beginning of March. Council expressed appreciation to the officers for their commitment to deliver the highest quality level of service to the citizens of Salem to protect the life, liberty, and property of everyone within the City.

4. Consent Agenda

A. Citizen Comments

Comments from the public, limited to five minutes, on matters not already having a public hearing at the same meeting.

John Breen, 142 Bogey Lane, was the first citizen to address Council. He shared some pictures for Council's review. He expressed concern about Code enforcement in relation to blight, dilapidated structures, illegal/abandoned signs, and existing zoning or building violations. Council was requested to: (1) implement the current Comprehensive Plan with time certain mandates; (2) hire at least one additional Code enforcement person, who with existing personnel, is directed by the City Manager to strictly enforce Code; (3) require that city staff present Zoning Code applications or significant administrative requests via PowerPoint or similar for both the Planning Commission and Council review. In addition, that the presentation must include a staff report of potential and immediate impacts to the surrounding area with an emphasis on Comprehensive Plan conformity, potential negative outcomes, and neighborhood concerns; (4) adopt architectural standards for development and redevelopment; (5) restrain the use of Special Exceptions.

Diane Ribble, 2446 Tyler Way, posed questions in relation to the financial relationship between Roanoke College and the use of City of Salem sports facilities. She requested that financial statements be clearly stated and put out in full disclosure regarding this relationship for current and future allocation of funds. She welcomed the new City Manager to Salem.

Lisa Chappell Miller, 405 Apperson Drive, continued comments from the December 11, 2023, Council meeting. She spoke on housing needs in Salem and the development of the new Comprehensive Plan. She expressed the need for Council to explore updating the Code to allow for alternative styles of housing that she found buyers to be looking for where appropriate. Ms. Miller referred to a recent Comprehensive Planning meeting and noted that the consultant expressed the view that the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan was to be the foundation upon which Zoning was built. She expressed the understanding that the Hope Tree property is private property and that they have the right to build single-family homes on it as currently zoned. She shared the concern that the Hope Tree rezoning request not be finalized prior to the completion of the new Comprehensive Plan due to many potential issues that had been shared by citizens as well as the need for the development plan to fit with the Comprehensive Plan once it is finalized. She voiced that this Planned Unit Development (PUD) type of unit may not be appropriate in this location.

B. Minutes

Consider acceptance of the January 8, 2024, Work Session and Regular Meeting minutes.

The minutes were approved as written.

C. Financial Reports

Consider acceptance of the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for the six months ending December 2023.

Vice Mayor Wallace questioned the following items: for six months through the budget year, it appears that the revenues are off by 12%, expenses are up 3% for the General Fund, in the Electric Fund we are about 9% short on projected revenues and down 5% on expenses, and in the Water Fund we are off 10% on revenues and we are up for this time of year on expenses. He asked Ms. Jordan if there are any concerns in relation to these numbers.

Ms. Jordan responded that in looking at the General Fund where we are down 12% that we have to take into account the timing of when some of those taxes are collected. As all of the taxes will not have been collected until June, you will not see this money reflected at six months. There are the business licenses, Personal Property Tax, and the second half of Real Estate Tax which is due in June, so at this point she is not concerned about where we stand in the General Fund Revenues.

Vice Mayor Wallace asked Ms. Jordan if she was concerned about the Water or Electric Funds.

Ms. Jordan noted that a concern with the Electric Fund was addressed at the previous Council meeting. There was a concern that the projections were not reflective of the actual figures for six months. Action was taken by Council to bring an adjustment and raise the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) as of February 1, to ensure that the revenues will cover the cost. This adjustment will help with what is being seen in the Electric Fund. She indicated that she needed to look further into the details of the Water fund to see if this is related to the timing of some purchases. She noted that they were aware that some of the revenues were down and that she would like to look more closely and see if there was something else that was accounting for that. She shared that she was not terribly concerned at this point because when she studies the six months data we are still in a good position bottom line. When she compares this with the previous year's data, the City is \$1.3 million better off than we were at this point last year. She noted that she would look at the details and provide more information at the next meeting.

The Financial Reports were received.

5. Old Business

A. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Consider adoption of ordinance on second reading for the request of E2ST John, LLC, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 68 St. John

Road (Tax Map # 155-2-2.1) from HBD Highway Business District to HM Heavy Manufacturing District. (Approved on first reading at the January 8, 2024, meeting.)

Mayor Turk requested that Mr. Van Allman share information for the benefit of those in attendance.

Mr. Van Allman noted that this site is located just north of the former GE property on the Mason's Creek side. He shared that the buildings going in there were more amenable to Heavy Manufacturing because they were more in tune with parts, storage, and things of that nature. He indicated that this was a better fit for what was going up there and noted that there were two other parcels that have either been through or will be coming before Council requesting a change to that. He noted again that this was more reflective of what was going on in that area.

William Jones motioned to adopt ordinance on second reading for the request of E2ST John, LLC, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 68 St. John Road (Tax Map # 155-2-2.1) from HBD Highway Business District to HM Heavy Manufacturing District. H Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

B. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Consider adoption of ordinance on second reading for the request of Poindexter SW Florida, LLC, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 2105– 2121 Apperson Drive (Tax Map # 281-1-2.2) from BCD Business Commerce District to HBD Highway Business District. (Approved on first reading at the January 8, 2024, meeting.)

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Van Allman to comment for the benefit of the public.

Mr. Van Allman shared that this area is near Salem's jurisdictional boundary with Roanoke City and is on Apperson Drive, located behind the Wendy's. This is a strip building with a three to five tenants. There are other restaurants in that area; however, with current zoning, a small restaurant or fast-food place cannot be located in that building with current zoning. This would allow small eating places, which he feels would be an excellent addition to the area with the additional increase in retail.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt ordinance on second reading for the request of Poindexter SW Florida, LLC, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 2105– 2121 Apperson Drive (Tax Map # 281-1-2.2) from BCD Business Commerce District to HBD Highway Business District. William Jones seconded

the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

6. New Business

A. **Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance**

Hold public hearing and consider ordinance on first reading for the request of T J Real Properties, LLC, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 1236 West Main Street, (Tax Map # 141-1-4) from HBD Highway Business District to CBD Community Business District. (Advertised in the January 11 and January 18, 2024, issues of the *Salem Times-Register*.) (Recommend approval, see page 3 of Planning Commission minutes.) **STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Van Allman shared that this location was on West Main Street almost across from McDonald's. This used to be a yellow building that appeared as a single-family house and Engineering used to be located behind this area. He noted that in the past this had been a hair salon, a bike shop, etc. He shared that they would like to be able to allow some tenant use on the second floor which requires this change of zoning.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

Randy Foley motioned to adopt ordinance on first reading for the request of T J Real Properties, LLC, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 1236 West Main Street, (Tax Map # 141-1-4) from HBD Highway Business District to CBD Community Business District. H Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

B. **Special Exception Permit**

Hold public hearing to consider the request of Helm Building Enterprises, LTD, property owner, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a two family dwelling on the property located at 301 Carey Avenue, (Tax Map # 74-2-6.1). (Advertised in the January 11 and January 18, 2024, issues of the *Salem Times-Register*.) (Recommend approval, 4 to 1 vote; see page 4 of Planning Commission minutes.) **STAFF REPORT**

Mayor Turk noted that discussion was held at the Planning Commission meeting

that was not pertinent to zoning. She shared that Council did have all of the comments by citizens from that meeting, had reviewed them, and that they were aware of other issues that citizens had in that area.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

Chelsea Dyer, representing Helm Building, 1491 Southside Drive, requested that Council approve for them to build a two-family dwelling on this property which is currently zoned for single-family dwelling. She noted that a commercial lot is to the left of this building and that the street is not all residential and that a two-family dwelling would provide a buffer between the commercial lot and residential. She indicated that Council had the plans, and the plan was to build a single-level structure that would be fitting with the neighborhood. Ms. Dyer expressed that the pushback at the Planning Commission was very much unexpected and that the concerns were of speeding, traffic, and truck traffic on that street, water run-off, stormwater, and concern of the presence of renters. She noted that none of those concerns were applicable to whether this was a single-family or those concerns.

Mr. Jones asked if the size of the structure would be the same whether it was a single-family or two-family dwelling.

Ms. Dyer responded affirmatively. She added that this would be a 2500-foot structure that would be divided into two units, approximately 56 by 44 feet and that this was in tune with a normal single-family home.

Mayor Turk shared that she had seen the drawings and that it looked like this would fit nicely in the neighborhood.

Ms. Dyer indicated that this met all of the setback requirements and that everything would need to be submitted for approval through the Engineering and Building Departments, including any stormwater concerns that would have to be submitted and addressed as well. She also commented on the concern related to driveways that was brought up at the Planning Commission. She indicated that the current plan as submitted has two driveways but that they would have no problem if required to do a single-entrance driveway.

Dynasty McNeill, 118 Carey Avenue, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to voice her concerns this evening. She raised concerns of setting a precedent for multi-family for other properties that were currently vacant, traffic, speed, and safety. Pictures of the hill were shared for Council to clearly see the consideration of safety for people walking and children playing in the neighborhood due to the poor visibility on the hill leading up to 301 Carey Avenue. She asked that Council take into consideration these issues.

Dennis Dessureau, 108 Carey Avenue, asked if Council had received the petition that was signed by the residents.

Council responded affirmatively.

Mr. Dessureau noted that other problems can be created by allowing zoning changes. He indicated that Ms. McNeill had brought up concerns that he planned to mention, and he requested that Council table this, go do a site check, and consider the issues voiced by the residents of this neighborhood. He voiced concerns about having rental properties in a residential neighborhood such as this.

John Breen, 142 Bogey Lane, appeared before Council and noted that rezoning by Special Exception, or Spot Zoning is detrimental to surrounding neighborhoods. He expressed the feeling that this property should remain single-family at least until the Comprehensive Plan is completed. He asked that Council not grant this Special Exception.

Philip Beland, 312 Carey Avenue, noted that the property he owns is at the Northern end of Carey Avenue at the corner of Carey Avenue and Harrison Avenue. He repeated that this was a very steep hill with a sharp left-hand turn. This is a through street from Harrison and he indicated that there was a tremendous amount of traffic on this street. He expressed safety concerns due to visibility and speed and stated that you cannot see the proposed driveway until you are quite close because you are right at the crest of the hill and the driveway is down the other side. Mr. Beland spoke of the difficulty of entering and exiting this driveway. He requested that Council postpone a decision, visit the neighborhood, and watch what goes on. He noted that they were in no way opposed to a single-family dwelling and that the previous owners had proposed a single-family dwelling. He expressed concerns about the impact on the neighborhood if it was allowed to become a multi-family dwelling.

Kenneth Griggs, 145 Carey Avenue, voiced concerns about parking at a potential multi-family dwelling. He requested that Council keep this as a single-family dwelling.

Will McNeill, 113 Carey Avenue, expressed a love for Salem and thanked Council for all they do to make it what it is. He acknowledged the difficulty of providing decent and affordable housing. He asked that Council not rush a decision at the risk of safety. He spoke of a difficult experience their family had gone through due to a renter in their backyard in the past. He repeated the issue of visibility on the hill and corner. Mr. McNeill requested to keep the street as it was designed as single-family.

Chris Sain, 311 Carey Avenue, asserted that property is purchased as an investment and he expressed concern that, if this property were allowed to be multi-family, the

property values would decrease. He also noted concerns of water and drainage. He requested that this property remain single-family.

Chelsea Dyer approached Council and was informed that the guidelines did not allow a citizen to address Council a second time in the same public hearing.

Fawn Robbins, 311 Carey Avenue, indicated that she was not opposed to a single-family dwelling but conveyed concerns of a negative impact on property values as well as potential negative impacts on the neighborhood. She stated that she felt the best choice was for this to remain single-family.

Lynn Irby, of Quality Homes of Roanoke, spoke on behalf of herself and business partner Taylor Stone, previous owners of the property in question. She shared that they had subdivided the property being discussed and had every intention of keeping this a single-family street. They sold the property but spoke this evening on behalf of the residents of this street and requested that Council would do as the citizens were requesting and drive up and down on this road to see the situation. She noted concerns with multi-family as already voiced. Ms. Irby specifically noted the burden of more cars and safety due to blind curves and visibility. She requested that Council hear and consider the comments of the citizens.

Teddy Dyer, of Helm Building, 1491 Southside Drive, conveyed that the intent is not to look at the problems that the rest of the street is facing. He noted that whether this was a single-family versus multi-family dwelling does not guarantee that there will be more or less cars on the street. It is their feeling that this is a valuable property to turn into a dual-family residence because it would be a buffer between a commercial property. They would be keeping the same square footage as if this were a single-family dwelling and the water runoff would be the same. He asked that they trust the Building Department in Community Development because this would be built within the same standards they require and would go through all of the proper channels if this Special Exception was permitted. He stated that there was no guarantee of how many cars would be around any dwelling. He did share the concern about tractor-trailer trucks using that street. He expressed that this fit well as a buffer between businesses and single-family dwelling.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

Mayor Turk asked Mr. Van Allman to comment about sight lines. He noted two main concerns with this area as it relates to engineering: stormwater and traffic. He noted that Carey was an old street. The number of driveway entrances is an issue, and this would be required to have one entrance, if passed. This is not a dense subdivision. Zoning determines certain size lots for Residential Single-Family Zoning. That is how density is determined. He also noted that there is an issue with stormwater caused by the hills. It is difficult getting the water out. He has brought

this to the attention of the Public Works Committee and also let the Planning Commission know that this is an issue that may need to be looked at to see if there is any possibility of alleviating any stormwater issues. He feels that the traffic issue is more of an enforcement issue.

Mr. Foley noted that he did not feel that whether this was single-or multi-family affected any of these issues. He did express appreciation for the fact that this was a single-family neighborhood, and he has opposed most instances of spot zoning during his time on Council. Although he does appreciate this business and their business in Salem, he did not feel that this was the appropriate thing to do in this neighborhood.

Mr. Wallace commented that looking at the map, it appeared that Council had heard from more than half of the neighbors on that street. Those residents had an expectation of zoning when they purchased their lot, and he did not feel that it was fair to disrupt their neighborhood even though this was a quality developer.

Mr. Foley noted that a vacant single-family dwelling could still have renters, but he still felt this was best for this neighborhood.

Mr. Holliday noted that he agreed with all of the comments that had been made. He indicated that he would want his neighborhood to remain residential, and he understood their concerns.

Randy Foley motioned to deny the request of Helm Building Enterprises, LTD, property owner, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a two-family dwelling on the property located at 301 Carey Avenue, (Tax Map # 74-2-6.1. H Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

C. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Hold public hearing and consider ordinance on first reading for the request of Helm Building Enterprises, LTD, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 416 Electric Road (Tax Map # 150-3-1) from HBD Highway Business District to HM Heavy Manufacturing District. (Advertised in the January 11 and January 18, 2024, issues of the *Salem Times-Register*.) (Recommend approval, see page 9 of Planning Commission minutes.) **STAFF REPORT**

Mr. Van Allman noted that this was the same area as the earlier rezoning that was heard earlier this evening for a second hearing. This is just north of the GE plant in that area and is being requested for the same reasons.

Mayor Turk opened the public hearing.

Barney Horrell, Brushy Mountain Engineering, 3553 Carvins Cove Road, on behalf of Helm Building, noted that this was another lot in the St. Johns development area. The Heavy Manufacturing Zoning better suits the needs of the future development for the property. At this time, there is no proposed building for this property. After this property becomes HM there is one other parcel that is still zoned Highway Business District (HBD); the last parcel that adjoins the GE property and the GE property is zoned HM. He noted that in the last week he has submitted the rezoning application for that property. They are taking that entire development and over time it has changed from HBD to HM to better suit the tenants. This is a continuation of that process.

Mayor Turk closed the public hearing.

William Jones motioned to adopt ordinance on first reading for the request of Helm Building Enterprises, LTD, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 416 Electric Road (Tax Map # 150-3-1) from HBD Highway Business District to HM Heavy Manufacturing District. Randy Foley seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

D. Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance

Hold public hearing to consider the request of Virginia Baptist Children's Home (dba HopeTree Family Services), property owner, for rezoning the properties located at 1000 block Red Ln and a portion of 860 Mount Vernon Lane (Tax Map #'s 41-1-1, 41-1-2, 41-1-3, 41-1-4, 41-1-5, 41-1-6, and a portion of 44-3-10) from RSF Residential Single Family to PUD Planned Unit District. **Petitioners have requested a continuance until the February 14, 2024, meeting.** (Continued until the February 14, 2024, meeting. See page 3 of Planning Commission minutes.) **STAFF REPORT**

Mayor Turk noted that at this point Council will need to continue the public hearing to another date. It is possible that consideration of this item will be a March date for Council. They want to allow ample time for Council's examination of the proposal and there remains information that the Planning Commission is waiting on. Council is hoping to meet with the Planning Commission on this as well. Mayor Turk noted that Council would keep the citizens informed.

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Mr. Light clarified that March 11th is the date under consideration for the Public Hearing to be continued to and that in order to continue this a specific date must be named in order to take action on this item.

Councilman Foley noted that the item could then be continued again from that date if appropriate.

Randy Foley motioned to continue to the March 11, 2024, Council meeting, and follow procedurally if needed to move from that date, the Public Hearing for the request of Virginia Baptist Children's Home (dba HopeTree Family Services), property owner, for rezoning the properties located at 1000 block Red Ln and a portion of 860 Mount Vernon Lane (Tax Map #'s 41-1-1, 41-1-2, 41-1-3, 41-1-4, 41-1-5, 41-1-6, and a portion of 44-3-10) from RSF Residential Single Family to PUD Planned Unit District. William Jones seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

E. Graham White Manufacturing Company Performance Agreement

Consider a request of approval and authorizing the City Manager to finalize and execute a Performance Agreement between the City of Salem, Graham White Manufacturing Company, a subsidiary of Wabtec, and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Salem.

Mr. Light noted that Graham White was a long-time manufacturing company in the City of Salem that was run by Wabtec. They have the opportunity to bring some business to Salem and are working with the Economic Development Authority (EDA), the Economic Development Office, and the State of Virginia. The Performance Agreement being presented has already been approved by the EDA. They will bring a minimum of \$2 million in investments in the new facility and thirty-eight new jobs. The City, through the EDA, will provide a grant of \$25,000 in two successive years for a total of \$50,000 for Machinery and Tools tax payments.

Randy Foley motioned to approve and authorize the City Manager to finalize and execute a Performance Agreement between Graham White Manufacturing Company, a subsidiary of Wabtec, the City of Salem, and the Economic Development Authority of the City of Salem. William Jones seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

F. Railroad Crossings

Consider authorizing the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Norfolk

Southern related to the removal of railroad track crossings at three locations in the City for a line that is no longer in service.

Mr. Light shared that there are three crossings included in the line that is no longer in service. These are East Main Street at the intersection of Kessler Mill Road, Texas Street, and Roanoke Boulevard. The Railroad does not deem that line as active, so they are willing to remove the tracks and the City will repave it. If it were ever financially sustainable in the future that this section be put back into service by the Railroad, the City would mill the pavement and Norfolk and Southern would be responsible for reinstalling the tracks. Removing the tracks at these crossings will improve the condition of the streets for motorists.

Randy Foley motioned to authorize the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Norfolk Southern related to the removal of railroad track crossings at three locations in the City for a line that is no longer in service. William Jones seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

G. Memorandum of Understanding - McAfee Knob Trailhead Shuttle

Consider authorizing the City Manager or his designee to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Roanoke County to provide transportation services to citizens and visitors in Salem to utilize the McAfee Knob Trailhead Shuttle.

Mr. Lights explained that Roanoke County operates the trailhead shuttle at the Park & Ride at Exit 140. In communicating with them, City staff saw an opportunity to provide access for the City of Salem as people come to eat, shop, and make use of recreational amenities. There is no cost to the City. This will be an on-demand service with pickup locations at Longwood Park and South Broad Street.

Randy Foley motioned to authorize the City Manager or his designee to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Roanoke County to provide transportation services to citizens and visitors in Salem to utilize the McAfee Knob Trailhead Shuttle. H Hunter Holliday seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday , Jones, Turk, Wallace

H. Boards and Commissions

Consider appointments to various boards and commissions.

Randy Foley motioned to appoint Denise King to replace Ann Tripp for the remainder of a three-year term ending December 31, 2024 to the Blue Ridge

Behavioral Healthcare Board, to re-appoint Daniel Hart for a three-year term ending February 14, 2027, to the Real Estate Tax Relief Review Board, and to appoint Chris Dorsey to replace H. Robert Light as a full member for a four-year term ending February 3, 2028, and appoint H. Robert Light as an alternate for a four-year term ending February 3, 2028 to the Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority. William Jones seconded the motion.

Ayes: Foley, Holliday, Jones, Turk, Wallace

7. Adjournment

Mayor Turk shared for the benefit of the citizens that there are several positions that are currently available. She encouraged them to go online and see if any of these appealed to them.

Vice-Mayor Wallace noted that recently property tax evaluations were sent out to citizens, and many had increased by 10%. He indicated that this was cumulative over the past three years for an increase of 30%. He asked Council to be thinking so they could give consideration to lowering the real estate tax rate to offset some of these increases for the citizens. He asked that they think about considering this and taking action over the next couple of months. He did not wish to take action this evening.

Mr. Foley agreed that he thought this was a great consideration.

Mayor Turk commented that this was the trend across the Nation because there was less supply and a great demand for housing, causing prices to skyrocket. She expressed that Council understood and would look at this to see if anything could be done. She asked that citizens bear in mind that everything had gone up and that adjustments were being made.

Mayor Turk announced that on February 5th at 6:00 p.m. at East Salem Elementary School a Comprehensive Plan Study would be held at which citizens could give input on what was going on in the City as it is determined how we will move ahead in the future.

Mayor Turk was asked if this would include discussion on Hope Tree or zoning regulations.

Mr. Van Allman responded that these meetings were generally more structured and that specific projects were not discussed but that general trends were discussed. He shared that zoning discussion would be more general as well so the specific details were not the point of that meeting.

Councilman Foley added that the consultant was leading this session was not involved with Hope Tree or that potential project. His focus was on the Comprehensive Plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.