City of Alexandria Meeting Minutes Tuesday, September 24, 2024 6:15 PM City Council Legislative Meeting

Present: Mayor Justin M. Wilson, Vice Mayor Amy B. Jackson, Members of Council Canek Aguirre, Sarah R. Bagley, John Taylor Chapman, Alyia Gaskins, and R. Kirk McPike.

Absent:

None.

Also Present: Mr. Parajon, City Manager; Ms. Cordell Ivey, City Attorney; Ms. Brown, Deputy City Attorney; Ms. Baker, Deputy City Manager; Ms. McIlvaine, Director, Office of Housing; Ms. Taylor, Director, Finance; Mr. Lambert, Deputy City Manager; Mr. Saenz, Information Technology Services (ITS); Ms. Garvey, Director, Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS); Ms. Gonsalves, Assistant City Manager; Ms. Posner, Office of Climate Action; Mr., Lassiter, Assistant City Attorney; Mr. Caldwell, Division Chief, DCHS; Mr. Smith, ITS; Ms. Demeke, ITS, and Police Lt. May.

Recorded by:

Gloria Sitton, City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

I. OPENING MATTERS

1. Calling the Roll.

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order and the City Clerk called the roll. All members of Council were present with Councilman Chapman and Councilman McPike arriving during the executive session.

2. Electronic Participation Resolution (if needed).

Not needed.

Closed Session.

Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Aguirre, seconded by Councilmember Bagley and carried 5-0, City Council convened in closed executive session at 6:17 p.m., pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711 (A)(6) to discuss or consider the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the City would be adversely affected. The vote was as follows: In favor,

Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, and Councilwoman Gaskins; Opposed, none; Absent, Councilman Chapman and Councilman McPike.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Aguirre, seconded by Vice Mayor Jackson and carried unanimously, City Council reconvened in open session at 7:06 p.m. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Aguirre, seconded by Councilmember Bagley and carried unanimously by roll-call vote, City Council adopted the resolution regarding the closed executive session that was previously circulated to Council. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 3245

WHEREAS, the Alexandria City Council has this 24th day of September, 2024 recessed into executive session pursuant to a motion made and adopted in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the city council that such executive session was conducted in accordance with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the city council does hereby certify that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters that were identified in the motion by which the executive session was convened, and that are lawfully exempted by the Freedom of Information Act from the Act's open meeting requirements, were heard, discussed or considered by council during the executive session.

4. Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance.

City Council observed a moment of silence and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. PROCLAMATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

5. Presentation of a Proclamation Recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Aguirre, seconded by Vice Mayor Jackson and carried unanimously, City Council endorsed the proclamation. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

6. Presentation of a Proclamation Honoring the 60th Anniversary of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilmember Bagley, seconded by Councilman Aguirre and carried unanimously, City Council endorsed the proclamation. The vote was as

follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

7. Presentation of a Proclamation Honoring the 50th Anniversary of the Commission for Women.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Vice Mayor Jackson, seconded by Councilwoman Gaskins and carried unanimously, City Council endorsed the proclamation. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

III. Oral Reports from Members of Council on Boards, Commissions, and Committees

*Commission on Aging (Councilman Aguirre)

Councilman Aguirre reported that the Commission discussed the new rules for electronic meetings for boards and commissions.

*Council of Governments (COG) Transportation Planning Board (TPB) (Councilman Aguirre)

Councilman Aguirre reported that the Board received a report on the Washington Baltimore Air Passenger regional survey and noted that most respondents picked convenience for airport usage. Councilman Aguirre reported that there was a discussion about the regional electric vehicle implementation strategy and focusing on equity emphasis areas.

*Alexandria Gang Prevention Task Force (Councilman Aguirre and Councilwoman Gaskins)

Councilwoman Gaskins reported that Task Force received partner and task force updates, highlighting Pastor Anthony Oliver's work with the Task Force to create a new junior business academy to provide mentorships and entrepreneurships for young men and women in the community. Councilwoman Gaskins reported that there was an update from the Police Department on their new units and the impact they are having in the community and partnering with ACPS.

Councilman Aguirre reported that the City Services map will be used to connect services for youth with services provided by the City and to link Afghan communities with resources provided.

*Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP) (Councilman Aguirre and Councilmember Bagley)

Councilmember Bagley reported that the new peer advocates were introduced and welcomed at the most recent meeting. Councilmember Bagley reported that the group was awarded the prep grant for the year in the \$710,000 for the next three years. Councilmember Bagley reported that they received a report on the Wrap Up ALX program and the number of

condoms distributed to the community. Councilmember Bagley reported that the student gave a report on the youth conference held over the summer.

*Virginia Railway Express (VRE) (Councilmember Bagley)

Councilmember Bagley reported the improvements at the Alexandria Amtrak and the King and Commonwealth bridge replace were discussed and VRE managing the projects simultaneously. Councilmember Bagley reported that VPRA completed its purchase of the Manassas line from Norfolk Southern and will allow the separation of freight and passenger rail services and allow VRE to expand their services.

*ARHA Redevelopment Work Group (Mayor Wilson and Councilman Chapman)

Mayor Wilson reported that the new CEO, Erik Johnson, attended the work group meeting. Mayor Wilson reported that there was an update on the two conduit bond issuances for Arlandria Housing Alexandria project and the Heritage project. Mayor Wilson also reported that there was an update on the status of Ladrey and the timing of the Samuel Madden redevelopment. Mayor Wilson also noted that there was discussion about the community engagement for the upcoming Cameron Valley redevelopment.

*City/Schools Subcommittee (Mayor Wilson and Councilman Chapman)

Mayor Wilson reported that there was discussion about the high school project and the demolition of the old Minnie Howard building and replacing it athletic fields at the site. Mayor Wilson reported that there was discussion about some of the parking challenges coming from the new school, particularly near North Earley Street, and expanding the parking district to address the issues. Mayor Wilson noted they discussed the upcoming CIP planning and the scheduling of joint worksession with the School Board. Mayor Wilson also reported that there was a conversation about collective bargaining and the manager and superintendent about the next steps. Mayor Wilson also reported that the police department updated the subcommittee on the speed cameras that have been installed near schools and school zones.

IV. Oral Report from the City Manager.

City Manager Parajon introduced the new CEO for the Alexandria Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Erik Johnson, and welcomed him to the City.

City Manager Parajon reported that Community Lodgings received a competitive award for state housing opportunities for tax credits at the Elbert Avenue project to allow the project to move forward. Mr. Parajon also noted that Virginia Housing also awarded \$1.25 million in Amazon Impact Reach funds to the project facilitate deeper affordability. Mr. Parajon reported that the City has received approximately \$28 million of the \$75 million from Virginia commitment for the Amazon project.

City Manager Parajon reported that both of the rating agencies have affirmed that the City's general obligation rating is AAA and stable.

V. ACTION DOCKET

Regular Consent Calendar (8-10)

8. Consideration of Receipt of Fiscal Year 2024 Fourth Quarter Capital Projects Status Report Related to City Council Approved Capital Projects.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 8; 09/24/24, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

9. Consideration of a Grant Application to the FY 2025 Combatting Hate Crimes Grant Program through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice (DCJS).

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 9; 09/24/24, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

10. Consideration of a Request to Release FY 2025 Contingent Reserve Funds of \$150,000 Allocated for the Alexandria Sheriff's Office to Continue a Hiring Bonus Program.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 10; 09/24/24, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Chapman, seconded by Councilmember Bagley and carried unanimously, City Council approved the consent calendar. The City Manager's recommendations were as follows:

- 8. City Council received as information the FY 2024 Fourth Quarter Capital Projects Status.
- 9. City Council: (1) approved the submission of an application to the Department of Criminal Justice (DCJS) Grant Program for up to \$150,000; and (2) authorized the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents that may be required.
- 10. City Council approved the release of contingent funds allocated in the FY25 budget process for extending the hiring bonus program for certified deputies working in the jail.

The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

VI. ACTION MATTERS

Recommendations from the City Manager

11. Receipt and referral of bids for a Franchise to use certain public property to design, install, own, operate, maintain, repair, upgrade, and remove electric vehicle supply equipment for the use and benefit of the public, including incidental design, construction, and modifications to City infrastructure to further and accommodate such use.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 11; 09/24/24, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Vice Mayor Jackson, seconded by Councilmember Bagley and carried unanimously, City Council received the submitted proposals and referred to the City Manager for evaluation, review and consideration in the manner prescribed by law, including the selection of and the negotiation of a franchise agreement or agreements with one or more of the responsive bidders and directed the City Manager to recommend to City Council, as soon as feasible, a firm to be awarded a public electric vehicle supply equipment franchise by City Council. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

12. Acceptance of the Virginia General Assembly funding through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to the Alexandria Community Services Board (ACSB) in the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) for the use of on-going dollars for staff attraction, training and development and for the creation of a Peer Support Specialist position for the Marcus Alert program.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 12; 09/24/24, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilmember Bagley, seconded by Councilman Chapman and carried unanimously, City Council: (1) authorized the acceptance of funding to Alexandria Community Services Board (ACSB) in the amount of \$213,060.33 for the duration of this current fiscal year (FY2025) with no match required, to provide staff training and development. The funding will be used to support the following activities in the department: provide stipends to pay for student interns, support educational trainings for current staff, and funding one-time referral incentives for staff referring peers to current vacancies. These dollars will be on-going, based budgeted dollars from the State's general fund; (2) authorized the acceptance of funding the ACSB in the amount of \$121, 715 for the Marcus Alert program, to support on full-time Peer Support Specialist position; (3) approved the addition of one full-time Peer Support Specialist position that will be fully supported by the award from Department of Behavioral Health and Department Services (DBHDS), to include benefits costs; and (4) authorized the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

- 13. Oral Reports and Oral Presentations from Members of City Council
- Approval of a Resolution Declaring the City of Alexandria a Safe Haven for the LGBTQ+ Community.[ROLL-CALL VOTE]

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman McPike, seconded by Councilwoman Gaskins and carried unanimously by roll-call vote, City Council adopted a resolution declaring

the City of Alexandria a Safe Haven for the LGBTQ+ community. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 3246

WHEREAS, the City of Alexandria recognizes the human right to bodily autonomy and the right to exercise individual autonomy and self-determination in exercising gender-affirming and reproductive healthcare; and

WHEREAS, in *Bostock v. Clayton County Georgia*, the United States Supreme Court, in an opinion authored by Justice Gorsuch, held that discrimination against an individual for their sexual orientation or gender identity constitutes unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex; and

WHEREAS, in *Grimm v. Gloucester County School Board*, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals held that discrimination on the basis of gender identity constitutes unlawful and unconstitutional discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as specifically holding that transgender students must be permitted to use restrooms on the basis of their gender, even if their gender differed from their biological sex; and

WHEREAS, since Bostock, the United States Supreme Court has repeatedly declined to hear challenges to lower court rulings upholding LGBTQ+ protections; and

WHEREAS, the City of Alexandria recognizes the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion when it comes to being a competitive employer, building a strong local economy, and enriching the community to be better than the sum of its parts, as well as recognizing LGBTQ+ people have long contributed to the rich history and social fabric of Alexandria and this country; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has declared its desire to ensure Alexandria is a city that is open and affirming to all, including LGBTQ+ individuals and families; and

WHEREAS, as a city that strives to respect and celebrate its diversity, the City Council affirms that being LGBTQ+ is not a disorder, disease, illness, deficiency or shortcoming and commits to finding ways to improve social outcomes for LGBTQ+ Alexandrians; and

WHEREAS, there exist global historical records dating back to antiquity recognizing the existence of LGBTQ+ individuals and identities and thus the existence of LGBTQ+ identities is not a recent invention; and

WHEREAS, gender-affirming healthcare has been proven to be evidence-based, medically necessary, and lifesaving by the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Academy of Pediatricians, the Endocrine Society, the American Psychiatric Association, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, amongst other institutions; and

WHEREAS, multiple healthcare institutions across the country, have scaled back or have considered scaling back gender-affirming healthcare services in response to legal challenges, perception of legal risk, harassment, or threats of violence; and

WHEREAS, there have been more than five hundred anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced nationwide in 2024, of which there were eleven anti-LGBTQ+ bills introduced in the Virginia General Assembly 2024 Session, and an additional twelve introduced in the 2023 Session, many of which specifically targeted members of the transgender community; and

WHEREAS Governor Youngkin vetoed HB 536 which would have expanded the definition of bullying to include bullying on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression; and

WHEREAS, under Governor Youngkin, the Virginia Department of Education revealed its 2022 Model Policies on the Privacy, Dignity, and Respect for All Students and Parents in Virginia's Public Schools. This guidance specifically curtailed LGBTQ+ students' rights to express themselves and their identity, including policies explicitly prohibiting children from utilizing their pronouns or names of choice. Further, the 2022 Model Policies express a default requirement that transgender children shall use the bathroom corresponding with their biological sex, while simultaneously acknowledging this default rule is unconstitutional and holds no effect due to the *Grimm* decision.

WHEREAS, under Governor Youngkin, the Virginia Department of Health removed resources aimed at assisting LGBTQ+ minors from their website; and

WHEREAS, incidents of violence perpetrated against the LGBTQ+ community are increasing, from bullying in schools, hate crimes, and plotted or committed acts of terror at community events and spaces, such as the mass shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida that killed 49 people, and the mass shooting at Club Q in Colorado Springs, Colorado that killed five; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Alexandria desires to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all people in our community, especially the physical and psychological well-being of minors, including LGBTQ+ youth; and

WHEREAS, on December 14, 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 5258, amending Chapter 4 (Human Rights) of the Code of the City of Alexandria to include specific mention of gender identity and transgender status. This ordinance explicitly empowered the Alexandria Human Rights Office to enforce Chapter 4 (Human Rights)'s nondiscrimination provisions pertaining to discrimination on the basis of gender identity and transgender status, enshrining nondiscrimination protections in the matters of housing, real estate, employment, City contracts, health and social service practices, public accommodations, credit, and education; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown access to gender-affirming healthcare improves the overall wellbeing of transgender people and that access to gender-affirming healthcare for youth is associated with better mental health outcomes and lower risks of suicide; and

WHEREAS, more than 94% of LGBTQ+ youth surveyed by the Trevor Project in late 2021 said recent politics have negatively impacted their mental health, and 93% of

transgender and non-binary youth surveyed by the Trevor Project in 2022 said they have worried about transgender people being denied access to gender affirming medical care due to state or local laws; and

WHEREAS, social acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQ+ people leads to better mental health outcomes and enables those individuals and their families to enrich the cultural and social fabric of their community they live in; and

WHEREAS; the City Council of the City of Alexandria recognizes that creating a safe haven for LGBTQ+ individuals and families would encourage LGBTQ+ residents seeking shelter from other hostile environments to find safety and put down roots in our City; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council hereby desire to declare the City of Alexandria a safe haven for the LGBTQ+ community, their families, business establishments and rights to free speech and expression.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA, THAT:

- 1) We reaffirm our commitment to equal protection and freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex, including our commitment to ensuring LGBTQ+ individuals are free from discrimination, whether by individuals, businesses, or government actors;
- 2) We call upon the other elected leaders of Alexandria to use the legislative and administrative authority available to them to take such actions as may be necessary to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination on the basis of sex due to their sexual orientation or gender identity and to enshrine such protections into law;
- 3) We ask the City Attorney to actively seek participation, as plaintiff or amicus curiae, in ongoing or future litigation to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
- 4) We ask the City Manager to ensure all departments of the City of Alexandria, in consultation with the City Attorney, take no action to violate the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution's Equal Protection Clause, including how equal protection pertains to LGBTQ+ individuals. In the event a local, state, or federal law might result in the reduction of an LGBTQ+ individual's rights, we ask the City Manager to ensure all departments of the City confer with the City Attorney for a determination of whether compliance with such local, state, or federal law would be consistent with the Fourteenth Amendment. If such local, state, or federal law would be inconsistent with the Fourteenth Amendment, we ask the City Attorney to take any legally appropriate action to ensure the City of Alexandria does not take any action inconsistent with the United States Constitution.
- 5) We ask that the City Manager consider budgetary proposals for the FY 2026 budget to ensure resources, information, and services are made available to LGBTQ+ Alexandria residents.
- (b) Councilwoman Bagley reported there will be a community meeting on the City Hall renovation at the Minnie Howard Campus.
- (c) Councilwoman Bagley requested that staff revisit the e-bike program development.

- (d) Councilman McPike reported that there will be an electric vehicle fair held in the City on Saturday, September 28.
- (e) Councilman Aguirre reported that he attended the Champions Breakfast.
- (f) Councilman Aguirre reported that he and other members of Council attended the Constitution Day event hosted by Mayor Wilson.
- (g) Councilman Aguirre welcomed the Genesis/Hyundai dealer to their renovated facility on Mount Vernon Avenue.
- (h) Councilman Aguirre reported that he attended the field day for employees hosted by Human Resources.
- (i) Councilman Aguirre reported that DASH recently held a celebration recognizing its 5.3. million riders on the system.
- (j) Councilman Aguirre reported that he and Vice Mayor Jackson attended an art installation kicking off Art on the Avenue at the Hilton Mark Center.
- (k) Councilman Aguirre reported that he attended Northern Virginia Aging Network Breakfast, where they discussed their legislative agenda which helps the City's Commission on Aging form their legislative agenda requests.
- (I) Councilman Aguirre reported that he attended the recent Tons of Trucks event.
- (m) Councilman Aguirre reported that he attended the Seaport Foundation's Wine on the Water event.
- (n) Councilman Aguirre reported that Tenants and Workers United recently held their annual Membership meeting.
- (o) Councilman Aguirre reported that the City recently held a parade and celebration in honor of Noah Lyles, Olympic gold medalist, upon his return to his hometown, Alexandria.
- (p) Councilman Aguirre reported that the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra has started their new season and he encouraged residences to attend their concerts.
- (q) Vice Mayor Jackson reported that the City held an Emergency Preparedness Fair on Market Square for the community.
- (r) Vice Mayor Jackson reported that she attended a Tech on Tap event at the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus recently.
- (s) Vice Mayor Jackson also highlighted the event held at the Hilton Mark Center in conjunction with Del Ray's Art on the Ave.
- 14. Consideration of City Council Schedule.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 14; 09/24/24, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilwoman Gaskins, seconded by Councilmember Bagley and carried unanimously, City Council: (1) received the updated City Council Look Ahead Schedule which includes: the Potomac Yard North Park Opening Ceremony, scheduled for 8:30 a.m., on Saturday, October 19, 2024; and (2) approved the City Council Calendar from 2024 to July 2025. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

Closed Session (if needed).

Not needed.

VIII. ADJOURN.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED, upon motion by Councilmember Bagley, seconded by Councilman Chapman and carried unanimously, City Council adjourned the regular legislative meeting of September 24, 2024, at 8:34 p.m. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Jackson, Councilman Aguirre, Councilmember Bagley, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Gaskins, and Councilman McPike; Opposed, none.

APPROVED BY:

JUSTIN M. WILSON MAYOR

ATTEST:

Gløria A. Sitton CMC City Clerk

Adopted: October 8, 2024