



**JOURNAL of the PROCEEDINGS
of the
CITY COUNCIL**

CITY OF CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Regular Meeting – Thursday, January 9, 2025

at 6:00 P.M.

Council Chambers – City Hall – Charleston, West Virginia

OFFICIAL RECORD

Amy Shuler Goodwin
Mayor

Miles C. Cary II
City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER*

The Council met at 6:00 P.M., for the first meeting in the month of January on the 9th day, in the year 2025, and was called to order by the Honorable Mayor, Amy Shuler Goodwin. The invocation was delivered by Councilmember Overstreet, and the Pledge of Allegiance was Councilmember Moore. City Clerk, Miles C. Cary II, called the roll of members and it was found that there were present at the time:

**ANNIE
CEPERLEY
FERRELL
HOOVER
KERNS
MOORE
PHARR
SALANGO
STEELHAMMER**

**BURKA
COOK
GIANOLA
JENKINS
KING
OVERSTREET

TAYLOR**

**BURTON
FAEGRE
HAAS
JONES

PEPPER
RUBIO
SOLOMON
MAYOR GOODWIN**

With twenty-four members being present, the Mayor declared a quorum present.

All absences were excused by the City Clerk per Resolution No. 582-21.

Pending the reading of the Journal of the previous meeting, the reading thereof was dispensed with and the same duly approved.

STATE OF THE CITY

Madam President, Members of Council, members of the administration, to our incredible employees, community leaders, local business owners, and, to the nearly 50,000 residents of our Capital City. Your belief – and tremendous work – have been instrumental in what we have accomplished and the work we will continue to do together. Because of you—Charleston has seen real progress.

As we celebrate the life and legacy of President Jimmy Carter, he said what I know many of us know and feel everyday. “I have learned that our greatest blessings come when we are able to improve the lives of others.” That is our work in municipal government. It’s hard work; it’s every single second of every minute, every day. But it’s important work.

I’m proud to report not only on our work and our success from the past year, but our path forward as we welcome 2025. And what a year it’s been already. Mother Nature gave us an opportunity to show her once again the character of our employees—and their dedication to this City during the storms this past week.

OPENING

Since becoming mayor six years ago, I frequently have the opportunity to engage with mayors from all across the country. It has been a great learning experience to be able to meet up with these mayors, some with cities hosting millions and some with just a few hundred, and, on many occasions, troubleshoot challenges all cities face. Without fail, and because inherently mayors want to open the door so they can brag about their own city, the question they always ask is—tell me about your city. I promise you, the story I told about Charleston, West Virginia six years ago is different from the story I tell about our Capital City today.

Six years ago, it was a place with 600+ dilapidated structures. It was a place with a downtown that had seen better days. It was a city that needed to invest in our riverfront, our roads and recreation. It was a city that needed (1) to prepare for a rainy day, (2) to provide better pay for first responders and city workers and (3) upgrade infrastructure so more families can call Charleston home. I’m proud we’ve tackled these challenges and more.

I believe when you hold a seat in public service your goal—your obligation—is to achieve meaningful progress—to take on initiatives and projects that would not otherwise happen without your leadership and your team. In six years, we have secured more than \$60M in federal grant funding, because of our amazing relationships with our U.S. Senators, and because of their deep commitment to ensuring every city in the Mountain State thrives.

We are transforming our riverfront with the development of the Capital Connector Project. We are going to be a river city that actually uses its riverfront. I'm so proud to have James Yost and the team at GAI here who are our great partners on this project. Would you please stand to be recognized. We are building the new LIFT Center. We are taking the former Kanawha Valley Manufacturing Plant and converting it into a 55,000 square foot multi-use facility for workforce development, renewable and alternative energy production and a commercial food hub. We are working hand in glove with our community partners—the Charleston Area Alliance, Marshall University and Coalfield Development on this project.

Our new President of the Charleston Area Alliance, Mara Boggs is here tonight and Drew Dunlap who is helping us spearhead the efforts on the LIFT Center joins her. Please stand so we may thank you! Every day, we are making progress toward creating a sports center to take advantage of a now \$52B industry in sports tourism. We just recently purchased the future home of the new public safety center for our police officers. This was a promise kept—that was long overdue—to the men and women who serve and protect us. We are renovating and rebuilding our firehouses, our community centers, and we continue to invest in our equipment and technology so we can keep offering top-quality city services.

Will all first responders with us tonight please stand and allow us to thank you for your service to our city. Yes, we have so many great things going on in the city...so many wonderful projects we are working on. As Taylor Swift would say, we've got a lot going on at the moment. We work every day to make this city a place where industries and companies want to invest. We are welcoming TC Energy to its new location downtown, bringing 450 employees and a new \$60M building.

Over the past two years, WVU Medicine Thomas Hospitals and CAMC have invested significantly in their infrastructure and their people. And, the University of Charleston and West Virginia State University have expanded their footprint downtown so they can attract and keep students engaged and involved in our city. We took the national spotlight this year—and will for the next four years—as we hosted the USA Cycling Pro Road National Championships. We brought in 435 athletes from 46 states and secured \$4.6M in economic impact for our hotels, restaurants and businesses.

And just recently we hosted—for the first time in nearly 30 years—the State High School Boys Football Championship. We brought back, again, the State Cheerleading Championship and we continue to call the State Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball and Track Championships signature Charleston events. I would put our team at the CVB up against anyone in the country. Tim Brady, please stand while we recognize you and your team's efforts. Whether its healthcare, higher education, music, arts, sports, entertainment, food, or iconic festivals and events like the Charleston Sternwheel Regatta and Holly Jolly Brawley—we are ALL seeing the success of the contributions of so many in our community. These are the things that make up part of the story

I now tell—it's our amazing new story.

CLRA/BUILDING HOUSING

Moving forward, we will continue to increase and add tremendous value to the quality of life for our residents—and to the neighborhoods we are growing. Since 2019, more than 625 unsafe structures have been removed from our neighborhoods. While that work is critical, like most cities, to grow our population, we need more housing. In 2023, in my State of the City address, I said within the next four years my goal would be to build 25 new single-family homes throughout our city. I'm proud to say that goal will be accomplished in half the time.

Developers are building new homes on the West Side, in Kanawha City, downtown and on Oak Ridge Drive. The new construction incentive program we began leveraged 1.1M ARPA dollars to build 25 new houses—so far, we have seen a \$4M investment. Our CLRA's side lot program sold 14 lots and leased three to adjacent property owners to increase the size of their property.

We didn't stop there—we also partnered with non-profits on projects.

We helped Keep Your Faith Corporation open Miss Ruby's Corner Market, a community grocery store offering fresh and healthy foods. Durell Miller, and Alicia Allen are the brains behind the operation and they are joining us tonight. We worked with the Appalachia Service Project to fully renovate a house.

We collaborated with Habitat for Humanity to build a new house on Grant Street. Andy Blackwood, the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity is here with us tonight. We pushed forward with the Religious Coalition for Community Renewal (RCCR) to build a new house in North Charleston. Kevin Jones. Because of the success and the progress, we have made, we need to continue to invest and place another \$600,000 into the CLRA for the next two years so it can continue to foster the revitalization of our neighborhoods.

Will our CLRA Chair, Chris Campbell, members Marilyn McGowen, and Clifton Clark and council members and administration officials who serve on the CLRA along with John Butterworth and Khrista Messinger please stand so we can recognize your accomplishments these past two years. Our team in the Mayor's Office of Economic and Community Development is also working hard to get and keep folks in their homes. During Fiscal Year 2024, we helped 17 families and individuals buy homes using our Home Blend loans program. This is the highest number on record (at least within the past 20 years). And we completed 17 owner-occupied rehabilitation projects.

Through all of this hard work, we are seeing more single-family homes built within the city of Charleston than we have in decades. Investing in our places and spaces our residents call home is not only great for our new families looking for their first home—but also for those in our neighborhoods who will benefit from having more homeowners on their street.

INVEST IN PARKS

Just as good and affordable housing is necessary to a community, the space for our families to play and grow is vital. For many of our families, our parks are the only place for their kiddos to play. For others, it's an extension of a backyard. And for some, it's a place to listen, to learn, and find their very first friend. This past year, we celebrated the opening of The Herbert & Gloria Jones Woodlands Trails in South Hills—and it has been an unbelievably beautiful new place of connection for our families.

We built a multi purpose field at the North Charleston Community Center. And we fully renovated and reopened Riverview Park in October—reenergizing the entire neighborhood on Wertz Avenue. And, while there were so many people who helped us make this project a reality—there is one community member who stands out. Jim Harris—will you please rise so we can properly thank you for all the hard work and, most important, love you have put into this new place for our kiddos and families.

We will continue to upgrade our parks with amenities our residents want—and have been asking for. That includes upgrading the parking, and equipment along with adding bathrooms at Danner Meadow Park in Fort Hill. We host hundreds of kiddos there every week and we should provide them--and their parents-- the facilities they need during their visits.

INVEST IN MAJOR ASSETS/CHAS. COLISEUM & CONVENTION CENTER

We know what works, and we need to invest in what works and what has shown to give us the greatest return on our money. There is no question our investment in City Center at Slack Plaza has had significant return on investment and has helped revitalize our downtown. Yes, a lot of our success is because of the wonderful investment we made in the infrastructure, but without consistent and robust programming this center of the city could become stagnant.

Fortunately, we've had a supportive community and the amazing team at Arts Amplified help us with programming throughout the past couple of years making this vibrant space even more dynamic all year long. This is why we need to continue to invest in this type of robust programming for our city center and I will ask the council to help fund these amazing community programming projects over the next two years. I'm proud to have Bryan Cooper from Arts Amplified with us tonight and recognize his talents.

Our investment in the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center has also shown us a significant return on our investment. It has become a driving force in our city's success as a destination for sports, music and entertainment. 2024 was an outstanding year—with 400+ events set, 300,000 tickets scanned, and 22,000 pepperoni rolls eaten! The Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center team and several board members are with us tonight. Please stand so we may celebrate your hard work.

Because of our success, we must invest in new seating in the Coliseum and Convention Center. This is the area of the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center we use the most, and it hasn't been upgraded in 40+ years. Improvements are needed so we may safely host our citizens and the hundreds of thousands of others who come to spend money in our city. It's why we also need to repair the parking garages at the Charleston Coliseum & Convention Center.

In fact, it's why we need to make essential repairs to all our parking structures. We will make these repairs to our city parking structures with the funds we have saved in our parking maintenance fund. Our savings, along with a comprehensive construction plan, will help us—over the next five years make the critical infrastructure improvements needed to continue to not only host large scale events but also to keep up with the influx in business and residential growth. As we continue to plan and improve our infrastructure across the City, the Municipal Auditorium needs our attention.

Just as we did preparing and planning for our new public safety center, I will ask City Council to set aside \$1M of unassigned fund balance to be held in a special Municipal Auditorium fund. With these decided funds, we will be able to move forward quickly when the structural assessment is complete so we can take the next steps toward reimagining what this Auditorium can and should be for our community.

CHARLESTON WALKS

Back in 2017 I started going door to door to speak to residents and businesses about their ideas, and concerns, and learn about what they felt was most important to our community. I absolutely loved it. So much so, that when I would be out of sorts—not in a good mood—my husband would gently say: “Go door to door”. He knew connecting with folks is what I like to do—it's why I decided to run for mayor. I have knocked on thousands and thousands of doors, and I have learned so much about our city and her people.

But, most importantly, I saw first hand—what sidewalks were cracked, what street lights were out, and where the paint was chipping away on playground equipment. When I became mayor in 2019-I continued my door to door program, and modified it when COVID hit changing our door to door to hundreds of weekly calls with residents. We started and have continued a yearly “Here to Serve” program where we take every single Director on the road in every part of the city and make ourselves available to all residents.

And, we established a citizen request management system, QAlert, so we can track constituents' calls and emails along with the progress of their requests—thus holding ourselves accountable. To date, we have fielded and addressed over 55,000 inquiries. Yes, the programs and technology we have put into place have surely helped our customer service role in the community.

There is absolutely no substitute for face-to-face connection. That's why I'm expanding our door-to-door outreach to include not only our Mayor's team, but all of our city directors and leadership within our police and fire departments. Our goal is to connect and work with residents individually and within their neighborhoods. Many of us know the name of our postal carriers—but do you know the name of the person who patrols your neighborhood? You should.

And, that will be our goal. We will identify the issues, together, and come up with solutions with you, for you, and for your neighborhood. Charleston is so incredibly blessed to have so many engaged and involved community members. Neighbors look out for one another. These folks are the heart of our neighborhoods.

Because of our work with so many amazing people throughout our city, I'm announcing a new initiative I'm starting called the Hearts of Our Neighborhoods. This will be a city-wide initiative aimed at identifying, revitalizing, and celebrating the places that serve as vital gathering hubs for our city's diverse neighborhoods. These spaces will include locations that bring people together for recreation, education, celebration, and support.

Hearts of Our Neighborhoods will help fund neighborhood projects and will encourage partnerships between local businesses, nonprofits, and government—fostering collaboration, and the pooling of resources to achieve shared goals. I have asked several council members to join me in this effort, as we not only celebrate the great ideas from our community members but also to bring to life their vision for what they want to see in their neighborhoods.

Just as important as the connections we make with our residents in our neighborhoods, working hand in glove with our small businesses is essential to the vitality of our city. Tim Hogans Carpet opened in Kanawha City over 35 years ago but recently has been reinvented, and renewed. Chris and Tracie have reimagined their new space with a sense of vitality and luxury all while staying true to the original Tim Hogans brand. Chris and Tracie, thank you for your passion and for your devotion to revitalizing a beloved business in Kanawha City. Please stand so we may thank you!

Being in a community – whether working 1:1 with a new business owner or attending community meetings – is how we learn about the specific needs and challenges facing residents and local businesses. In Kanawha City, we know firsthand the impacts of the state construction work on MacCorkle Avenue. Our Kanawha City businesses need our help to get back customers they lost and we need to look at new ways to attract new visitors and new business to the area.

We will work with Charleston Urban Works to help them expand their footprint and services into Kanawha City over the next year to gain traction and chart a course for sustainable growth

in an area of the city that has seen tremendous investment over the past year. Ric Cavender from Urban Works is here with us tonight—Ric we are looking forward to working with you on this most important project.

THINGS YOU DON'T SEE

This administration believes that good government is about making systems and processes work better—for our citizens and our businesses. Every year we set goals in every department and we challenge ourselves to find a way to make our systems and processes better. For example: We purchased a new backhoe dedicated to refuse only and created a strategic strike team to locate and pick up larger debris piles in between a normal trash pick up run. We began an in-house CDL training to provide opportunities for our employees who want to advance their career with no cost to them.

This year we will continue to improve our customer services for our citizens and residents. And soon we will go live with the first of three phases of our new Enterprise Resource Planning System—the ERP as we call it around these parts. It's exciting because, when fully implemented, it will allow citizens and businesses to take advantage of the convenience of managing payments and permits online.

And, one of the most important efforts we made this past year was combining the planning and building departments into one Development Services Department. This combined department has made our team more effective and efficient in their mission. This new department has limited duplication of efforts, created a one stop shop for customers, and significantly helped increase coordination and flexibility for our employees while providing better oversight and increased focus on code enforcement, helping us establish a safer and cleaner city. In summary, it means we can call Dan Vriendt whenever we have any problem. Much of what we have implemented, folks may not see—or even hear about—but they do matter—and they do make a difference.

CLOSING

Charleston's story is still evolving.

Our focus should be on the future.

How will our children and grandchildren talk about their city?

How will they answer the question I most often get?

What can you tell me about Charleston, West Virginia?

I hope they talk of a place they feel joy, where they have deep connections, where they found someone or something special, and where they have created a life.

I'm proud to have been a small part of our progress over these past six years and I am looking forward to the next.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS

None

CLAIMS

1. A claim of Tiana Stockton, Charleston, WV; alleges damage to property.

PROCLAMATIONS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

NOMINATION OF VACANT COUNCIL SEAT WARD 15

The Mayor declared the floor open for nominations to fill the vacancy for the unexpired Ward 15 seat. Councilmember Ceperley made a motion to nominate Harper Gardner

With members present recorded thereon as voting unanimously in the affirmative, the Mayor declared Harper Gardner Councilmember for Ward 15.

Harper Gardner came forward and took the oath of office given by Miles C. Cary II, City Clerk.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Councilmember Jenkins, Chair of the Council Committee on Finance, submitted the following reports:

1. Your committee on Finance has had under consideration the following resolution, and reports the same to Council with the recommendation that Resolution No. 25-001 be adopted.

Resolution No. 25-001 - Authorizing the Mayor or City Manager to purchase a Ford Expedition SUV for the CARE Office from Matheny Ford in the amount of \$59,872.00 pursuant to a competitively sourced state contract.

Be it Resolved by the Council of the City of Charleston, West Virginia:

That the Mayor or City Manager is authorized to purchase a Ford Expedition SUV for the CARE Office from Matheny Ford in the amount of \$59, 872.00 pursuant to a competitively sourced state contract.

Councilmember Jenkins added that the purchase will be funded through grants.

Councilmember Jenkins moved to approve the resolution. Councilmember Ceperley seconded the motion. With members present recorded thereon as voting unanimously in the affirmative, the Mayor declared Resolution No. 25-001.

2. Your committee on Finance has had under consideration the following resolution, and reports the same to Council with the recommendation that Resolution No. 25-003 be adopted.

Resolution No. 25-003 - Authorizing the Mayor or City Manager to enter into a contract with WDP and Associates for architectural and engineering services related to the investigation, assessment, and evaluation of the Municipal Auditorium cast-in-place concrete building façade, in an amount not to exceed \$132,041.00, where the price was determined through a request for expressions of interest and a competitive interview and scoring process.

Be it Resolved by the Council of the City of Charleston, West Virginia:

That the Mayor or City Manager is authorized to enter into a contract with WDP and Associates for architectural and engineering services related to the investigation, assessment, and evaluation of the Municipal Auditorium cast-in-place concrete building façade, in an amount not to exceed \$132,041.00, where the price was determined through a request for expressions of interest and a competitive interview and scoring process.

Councilmember Jenkins added that the façade of the Municipal Auditorium is the major historic part of the building. The study will determine if saving the façade is feasible.

Councilmember Jenkins moved to approve the resolution. Councilmember Ceperley seconded the motion. With members present recorded thereon as voting unanimously in the affirmative, the Mayor declared Resolution No. 25-003.

3. Your committee on Finance has had under consideration the following resolution, and reports the same to Council with the recommendation that Resolution No. 25-004 be adopted.

Resolution No. 25-004 - Authorizing the Mayor or City Manager to enter into a contract with Irwin Seating Company for the design, purchase, and installation of new seating at the Charleston Coliseum, including the fixed seats and the telescopic seating system, in an amount not to exceed \$5,443,625.58, where the price was determined through a competitive bidding process.

Be it Resolved by the Council of the City of Charleston, West Virginia:

That the Mayor or City Manager is authorized to enter into a contract with Irwin Seating Company for the design, purchase, and installation of new seating at the Charleston Coliseum, including the fixed seats and the telescopic seating system, in an amount not to exceed \$5,443,625.58, where the price was determined through a competitive bidding process.

Councilmember Jenkins added that funds have been earmarked to replace the seating in the Coliseum, which is badly needed.

Councilmember Jenkins moved to approve the resolution. Councilmember Ceperley seconded the motion. With members present recorded thereon as voting unanimously in the affirmative, the Mayor declared Resolution No. 25-004.

4. Your committee on Finance has had under consideration the following resolution, and reports the same to Council with the recommendation that Resolution No. 25-005 be adopted.

Resolution No. 25-005 - Authorizing approval of Amendment No. 4 of the FY 2024-2025 General Fund Budget as indicated on the attached list of accounts.

Be it Resolved by the Council of the City of Charleston, West Virginia:

That Amendment No. 4 of the FY 2024-2025 General Fund Budget as indicated on the attached list of accounts is approved.

Councilmember Jenkins added that the amendment moves \$850,000 from the Unassigned Fund to the CCCC Capital Projects Fund for the purchase of the previously mentioned new seating.

Councilmember Jenkins motioned to approve the resolution. Councilmember Ceperley seconded the motion.

A roll call was taken:

YEAS: Annie, Burka, Burton, Ceperley, Cook, Faegre, Ferrell, Gardner, Gianola, Haas, Hoover, Jenkins, Jones, Kerns, King, Moore, Overstreet, Pepper, Pharr, Rubio, Salango, Solomon, Steelhammer, Taylor, Mayor Goodwin

NAYS:

ABSENT: Robinson, Snodgrass

With members present recorded thereon as voting unanimously in the affirmative, Mayor Goodwin declared Resolution No. 25-005 as adopted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

1. Municipal Court Report to City Council Month Ending December 2024.
2. Report of the City of Charleston Payroll Variance Analysis; December 2024.

NEW BILLS

Introduced by Councilmember Michael Ferrell

January 6, 2025:

Bill No. 8049 – A Bill closing, abandoning and discontinuing as a public right-of-way, an alley across Block 21 of the JB Walker Addition

Refer to Municipal Planning Commission and Planning, Streets and Traffic Committee, and Finance Committee, Please

MISCELLANEOUS/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

REMARKS BY MEMBERS

1. Councilmember Taylor stated that Director Dan Vriendt quickly and efficiently addressed questions about a problem that were sent to him.
2. Councilmember Gianola agreed that Dan Vriendt was a true asset to the City.
3. Councilmember Steelhammer stated that it was estimated that there were 335 individuals experiencing homelessness in the City. She requested that the operating days of the warming shelters be increased.
4. Councilmember Kerns stated that the water company has not been held accountable for the promises that they have made and have been mandated.
5. Councilmember Annie thanked Brent Webster and the Public Works Department for quickly helping a neighborhood who had lost power due to a fallen tree.
6. Councilmember Faegre thanked Chief of Staff Matt Sutton for working to fix the fire hydrant problem. She thanked Refuse Director Jered Lanham and his staff for their hard work and responsiveness. Councilmember Faegre thanked Rodeny Loftis II as a community member who goes above and beyond.
7. Councilmember Overstreet thanked Mayor Goodwin for always being willing to meet and for her openness.
8. Councilmember Gardner stated his appreciated for Dan Vriendt as a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals. He stated his gratitude to former Councilmember Sam Minardi.

ADJOURNMENT

City Clerk, Miles C. Cary II, called the closing roll call:

YEAS: Annie, Burka, Burton, Ceperley, Cook, Faegre, Ferrell, Gardner, Gianola, Haas, Hoover, Jenkins, Jones, Kerns, King, Moore, Overstreet, Pepper, Pharr, Rubio, Salango, Solomon, Steelhammer, Taylor, Mayor Goodwin

NAYS:

ABSENT: Robinson, Snodgrass

At 7:03 p.m., by a motion from Councilmember Ceperley, Council adjourned until Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 7:00 p.m., in Council Chambers at City Hall.

Amy Shuler Goodwin, Honorable Mayor

Miles C. Cary II, City Clerk