



COUNCIL

Communicates

Highlights from City Council Meetings

November 18, 2025

Petersburg Public Library

City Council Members

Ward 1

Marlow Jones

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Ward 2

Darrin Hill

Vice Mayor

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Ward 3

Samuel Parham

Mayor

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Ward 4

Charles Cuthbert

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Ward 5

W. Howard Myers

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Ward 6

Anette Smith-Lee

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Ward 7

Arnold Westbrook

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Please Note:

These are not the official minutes of the City Council meeting.

The official minutes and agendas can be accessed on the city website:

www.petersburg-va.org

Please note that the official minutes are not posted until approved by City Council.

Closed Session

3:00 pm

1. Roll Call

Councilors Cuthbert and Jones were absent on roll call.

2. Closed Session

The purpose of this meeting is to convene in the closed session pursuant to:

- a. §2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion or Consideration of the Acquisition of Real Property for a Public Purpose and the Disposition of Publicly Held Real Property Where Discussion in an Open meeting Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Public Body, Specifically Including But Not Limited to the Acquisition and Disposition of Real Property; and
- b. §2.2-3711(A)(7) and (8) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Receiving Legal Advice and Status Update from the City Attorney and Legal Consultation Regarding the Subject of Actual or Probable Litigation and Specific Legal Matters Requiring the Provision of Legal Advice by the City Attorney, Specifically Including But Not Limited to Discussion Regarding the Legal Requirements 15.2-953 of the Code of Virginia; Petersburg Circuit Court Case No.: CL25000409-00; and Other Probable Litigation and Legal Matters Requiring the Advice of the City Attorney; and
- c. §2.2-3711(A)(6) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion or Consideration of the Subject Matter of 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; and

d. §2.2-3711(A)(29) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion Regarding the Subject of Award of a Public Contract Involving the Expenditure of Public Funds, and Discussion of the Terms or Scope of Such Contract, Where Discussion in an Open Session Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Public Body; and

e. §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion Pertaining to Performance, Assignment, and Appointment of Specific Public Employees of the City of Petersburg, Specifically Including But Not Limited to Discussion of the Performance, Assignment, and Appointment of Specific Public Officers of the City of Petersburg

3. Adjournment

Motion approved for the first reading for funds for the new Courthouse project and to direct Clerk of Council to advertise.

Motion approved to direct the City Manager to execute a purchase agreement to purchase tax parcel ID No: 054-320007, a 3-acre parcel in the rear of 314 South Blvd, owned by Temple Brith Achim, Trustees.

Regular Council Meeting

5:00 pm

1. Roll Call
All present.
2. Prayer
Led by Vice Mayor Hill.
3. Pledge of Allegiance
Led by Mayor Parham.
4. Determination of the Presence of a Quorum
Quorum present.
5. Proclamations/Recognitions/Presentation of Ceremonial Proclamations
 - a. Recognition of 2025 UNCF Keeper of the Flame Award Honoree Wayne Crocker, Director of Library Services, Petersburg Public Library
6. Presentations
 - a. Overview of Crater District Area Agency on Aging Services — Renata Sharnick, Chief Executive Officer
7. Responses to Previous Public Information Posted
Council Communicates.

8. Approval of Consent Agenda (to include minutes of previous meetings):
 - a. Minutes of Previous Meetings:
 - November 5, 2025 Closed Session
 - November 5, 2025 City Council Work Session
 - b. Adoption of the 2026 Petersburg City Council Meeting Calendar
 - c. Adoption of the FY 2027 Budget Calendar
 - d. First Read and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg for the Purpose of Clarifying and Updating Regulations on Recreational Substance Retail Uses by Defining Vape Shop and Cigar Lounge Uses and Specifying Their Allowance in the City
 - e. First Read and to Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Grants Fund
 - f. First Read and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve a Request by Rudalma Mata, on behalf Ruth Investments, LLC, to Rezone Property at 318 Irving Street, Parcel ID 006050012 from the M-2, Heavy Industrial District to the R-3, Two-Family Residence District
 - g. First Read and to Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and I AM POWER to Purchase the City-Owned Properties at 35 and 17 Bank Street, Located in Petersburg, VA
 - h. First Read & To Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 General Fund
 - i. Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Lease Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and Mama's House Too, LLC for Property Located at 595 Old Wagner Road, Suites C & D (Tax Parcel 083-010805) - Removed.
Approved.

9. Official Public Hearings
 - a. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Grants Fund
No public comments.
Approved.

 - b. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Petersburg City Public Schools Budget
No public comments.
Approved.

 - c. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend and Re-Adopt Chapter 106 of the City Code to Include Article XIII - Local Disposable Plastic Bag Tax
Public Hearing
Dr. Kenneth Lewis
Dr. Lewis voiced concerns about the operational benefits and the allocation of the tax revenue. He urged the Council to postpone the decision.

Julian Green

Mr. Green stated that grocery prices are already too high, and adding the tax would negatively impact senior citizens.

Johnny Seku

Mr. Seku expressed concern about how the plastic bag tax would be implemented with self-checkout.

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph urged the Council to postpone the issue until citizens receive more information. She expressed support for addressing the environmental concerns related to plastic bags.

Wendy Austin

Ms. Austin noted that reducing plastic bag usage would be beneficial and highlighted that many communities have already implemented similar measures.

Kyle Haskett

Mr. Haskett stated that no plastic should be used.

Sharon Johnson

Ms. Johnson expressed support for charging for plastic bags and recommended that shoppers consider purchasing reusable bags.

Dr. Roselia Roy

Dr. Roy voiced concerns about introducing another tax, citing already high food prices and property taxes. She emphasized the high poverty rate in Petersburg and the struggles people face to make ends meet. However, she acknowledged the importance of taking steps to protect the environment.

Hadley Katzenbach

Mr. Katzenbach stated that taxing plastic bags would encourage people to bring their own reusable bags. He believes this would not place a burden on individuals.

Motion to table approved.

d. A Public Hearing for Carol Williams to Appeal a Decision Made by the Architectural Review Board that an Unapproved Shed in the Front Yard of 214 South Adams Street in the Poplar Lawn Historic District Should Be Removed Until Its Permanent Location is Reviewed and Approved

Public Hearing

Joe Battison

Mr. Battison explained that the ARB would have requested the shed be placed at the back of the house, but no plat was provided. He noted that the shed is easy to relocate since it is not on a foundation. The ARB is rejecting the current location of the shed, not the shed itself.

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph pointed out that this situation is similar to a 2024 case involving a fence in a historic neighborhood. She believes ARB decisions should be upheld rather than making exceptions for individuals.

Hadley Katzenbach

Mr. Katzenbach stated that there was no clarity regarding the shed's location at the ARB meeting.

Motion to table approved.

e. A Public Hearing for Carol Williams to Appeal a Decision Made by the Architectural Review Board to Deny the Construction of Stairs and a Walkway for a Subterranean Entrance at 214 S Adams Street in the Poplar Lawn Historic District

Public Hearing

Michelle Murrills

Ms. Murrills, a member of the ARB, noted that many older homes are being purchased and flipped, with new owners often unaware that the properties are located in a historic district.

Joe Battison

Mr. Battison explained that a project of this nature would require permits from the City. He noted that individuals can reapply but must provide the necessary information. He urged the Council to uphold the ARB's decision.

Motion to deny the appeal approved.

f. A Public Hearing to Consider Amendment to Ordinance Sections 106-8 and 106-10 Personal Property Tax to Change Due Dates, and Section 110-115 Change the Due Date for Vehicle License Fee

Public Hearing

Dr. Kenneth Lewis

Dr. Lewis acknowledged that his statement is driven by emotion, expressing concern about imposing another tax during the holiday season. He suggested implementing it in April or October, as it might be less burdensome.

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph noted that the newly proposed timing would result in many obligations being due in December. However, she acknowledged that the Commissioner of the Revenue has citizens' best interests in mind and expressed her support for the new dates.

Motion to adopt the amendment as proposed for the next billing cycle, not the current cycle, was approved.

g. A Public Hearing to Vacate an Alley Between 223 and 227 Kentucky Avenue
No public comments.

Approved.

h. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Purchase Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and Zebrina Meade for the Development of 746 Mount Airy Street; K&K Beginnings LLC for the Development of 110 Spruce Street; Entrusted Visions LLC and Fetko Properties LLC for the Development of 126 Kentucky Avenue, 704 and 706 Wesley Street; Skye is the Limit Residential Services LLC for the Development of 137 Franklin Street; Anthony Jackson for the Development of 724 Harding Street; and New Town Station LLC for the Development of 321 Witten Street

No public comments.

Approved.

10. Public Information Period

A public information period, limited in time to 30 minutes, shall be part of an Order of Business at each regular council meeting. Each speaker shall be a resident or business owner of the City and shall be limited to three minutes. No speaker will be permitted to speak on any item scheduled for consideration on the regular docket of the meeting at which the speaker is to speak. The order of speakers, limited by the 30-minute time period, shall be determined as follows:

- a. First, in chronological order of the notice, persons who have notified the Clerk no later than 12:00 noon of the day of the meeting,
- b. Second, in chronological order of their sign up, persons who have signed a sign-up sheet placed by the Clerk in the rear of the meeting room prior to the meeting removed from consent agenda

Julian Green

Mr. Green informed the Council that PALDC will participate in discussions during the Public Information Session at all Council meetings. He described the Peabody complex as "good trouble" and emphasized its significance as a historic landmark for Black schools in America.

Dr. Kenneth Lewis

Dr. Lewis informed the Council that the horse carriage company recently dumped horse manure at Cook School. He also requested that the Fire Department cease training at the Peabody building and called for full transparency regarding the Timmons environmental report. Additionally, he expressed his desire to repurpose the Peabody building.

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph requested that Dr. Lewis present on the history of Peabody. She expressed frustration over the fragmented information citizens receive about ongoing projects, citing the Animal Shelter as one example. She asked for a straightforward guidebook outlining the direction of projects, noting that funding sources appear to be moving targets.

Kimberly Booker

Ms. Booker, representing workforce and jobs for the casino, shared that 800 employees are needed by the casino's opening in January. She urged the Council to spread the word about the Casino Recruitment Center. She also noted that approximately 27% of applicants are being hired. Having worked on three casino projects, she expressed concern that the people of Petersburg may not fully grasp the opportunities and benefits casino employment brings to the City.

11. Business or reports from the Mayor or other Members of City Council
Councilman Cuthbert

He discussed the recent police chase in Petersburg.

Councilman Jones

He acknowledged that he speaks loudly but emphasized that it is not his intention to disrespect anyone. He noted that the City is progressing better than it has in the past and shared that he has taken the time to understand his fellow Council members working alongside him. He also expressed gratitude to the police and fire departments for their excellent work.

Councilman Westbrook

He encouraged residents to support Petersburg High's football and basketball teams. He highlighted the upcoming speech and debate tournament on December 13, which will take place at the high school and Vernon Johns, calling it a "sport of the mind." He expressed concerns about speeding on Dupuy Road, noting that although stop signs are posted, drivers often ignore them, and he suggested adding speed bumps. Addressing misinformation about the animal shelter, he clarified that it is required by the state. He voiced frustration with claims that the City prioritizes animals over people, urging residents to engage in constructive dialogue rather than criticism. He mentioned that leaf pickup has started and recommended the City explore better ways to use AI across departments. He also reminded everyone to look out for seniors during the colder months. He shared his frustration with negativity on Facebook, reminiscing about the days when public forums were the main place for discussions.

Councilman Myers

He thanked everyone for their condolences on his father's passing.

Councilwoman Smith-Lee

Ward 6 will hold a joint meeting with Ward 7 at the library on January 13. A special shoutout was given to the high school's ROTC program, and gratitude was expressed to Pat Hines for the men's shelter.

Vice Mayor Hill

A business roundtable is scheduled for December 1, and all businesses are encouraged to attend. Holiday events were also discussed, along with a special shoutout to the Petersburg football team. Everyone was urged to stay positive, noting the growing buzz about Petersburg nationwide.

Mayor Parham

He wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and thanked the Communications team for the holiday newsletter. He also expressed gratitude to Marquis Allen for Legends Park. Additionally, he shared details about a car crash involving a Tesla, where firefighters spent four hours extinguishing the fire, only for it to reignite.

12. Items removed from Consent Agenda
None.
13. Finance and Budget Report
 - a. Department of Finance Monthly Update
No action taken.
14. Unfinished Business
 - a. Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve a Request by Chris Winslow of Winslow, McCurry & MacCormac, PLLC, on Behalf of SP-Thirteen Properties, LLC, for a Special Use Permit to Operate an Assisted Living Facility at 36 West Fillmore Street, Parcel ID 022360001, in the R-B Office-Apartment Zoning District
Motion to deny approved.
 - b. Consideration of an Ordinance to Approve an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg for the Purpose of Updating and Clarifying Sign and Advertising Regulations to Address Ongoing Complaints and Issues Pertaining to Certain Advertising Devices Throughout the City
This item was removed from the agenda.

c. Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Development Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and Stepping Stones Properties LLC for Development of 10 N. Foley Street and 340 Mistletoe Street; Square Acre Property for the Development of 201 Virginia Avenue; Nuwave for the Development of 851 E. Bank Street, 1420 Ferndale Avenue, 1162 Hinton Street, 417 S. Jefferson Street, 921 Priam Street, 1150 Rome Street, and 201 Terrace Avenue; Anthony Jackson for the Development of 723 Harding Street; Underhill Row LLC for the Development of a portion of 117 Lafayette Street; Daniel Smith Real Estate LLC for the Development of 4, 6, 9, 12 Ross Court; and Acuna Properties LLC for the Development of 436 Byrne Street

Approved.

d. Consideration and Adoption of Resolution Appointing and Reappointing Members to Boards and Commissions - Crater Youth Care Commission - Petersburg Redevelopment Housing Authority - Petersburg Arts Council - Community Development Block Grant Advisory Board - Architectural Review Board - Greater Reach Community Services Board

Margo Hardy appointed to Crater Youth Care Commission.

All current members reappointed to the Petersburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Veronica Davidson and Wendell Jones were appointed to the Petersburg Arts Council.

Marcus Squires, Leonard Curry, Geniveve Lohr, Tonya Brown, Cory Wesson, and Bernard Harper were appointed to the CDBG Board.

All current members of the ARB were reappointed.

The same members were reappointed to the Greater Reach Community Services Board.

15. New Business

None.

16. City Manager's Report and Special Reports

a. 2026 Legislative Agenda

Moved to the December meeting.

17. Business or reports from the Clerk

None.

18. Business or reports from the City Attorney

None.

19. Adjournment