



COUNCIL

Communicates

Highlights from City Council Meetings

January 6, 2026

Petersburg Public Library

City Council Members

Ward 1

Marlow Jones

mjones@petersburg-va.org

Ward 2

Darrin Hill

Vice Mayor

dhill@petersburg-va.org

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
All present on rollcall except Councilors Jones and Cuthbert.
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 of Chapter 19 of Title 15.2 (Sections 15.2-1900-15.2-907.1) and Other Probable Litigation and Legal Matters Requiring the Advice of the City Attorney; and
 - c. §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion Pertaining to Performance, Assignment, Salaries, and Appointment of Specific Public Officers, Employees, and Appointees of the City of Petersburg, Specifically Including But Not Limited to Discussion of the Performance, Assignment, Salaries and Appointment of Specific Public Officers, Employees, and Appointees of the City of Petersburg
3. Adjournment

Work Session

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. Public Comments
Cory Harris
Mr. Harris presented his business portfolio to the Mayor and Vice Mayor, highlighting his experience managing several international companies. He expressed concern about the challenges faced by Black men in Petersburg and emphasized their importance as role models for the City's rebuilding efforts with youth. He also addressed the impact of negative social media posts.

Joe Battison

Mr. Battison proposed constructing a parking deck on Monroe Street, emphasizing the parking shortage on Sycamore Street and its impact on attracting investors to Petersburg. He pointed out that the City leased parking spaces to a select few businesses, neglecting the needs of others. After meeting with business owners between Tabb and Franklin Streets, he noted unanimous agreement that parking is the top concern. He also presented petitions from these business owners advocating for the construction of a parking deck.

Ajani Sekou

Mr. Sekou agreed on the need for additional parking, emphasizing that Sycamore Street extends beyond just Old Towne. He highlighted his and others' efforts to create a gateway to downtown Petersburg along Sycamore Street between Wythe and Washington Streets. He expressed frustration with the City's lack of assistance during last year's flooding but reaffirmed his commitment to Petersburg. He also voiced concerns about the potential impact of the casino, stressing that small business owners are the driving force behind the City's success.

Vernelle Gannaway

Mr. Gannaway emphasized that the casino is not the solution to the City's challenges, urging Council to remember the people who have been here and contributed to building Petersburg. He pointed out that Council's work remains unfinished, sharing his frustration over waiting 11 years for a streetlight. He called for unity and collaboration to move the City forward.

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph expressed her hope for improved transparency and communication in 2026. She emphasized the need for better communication among individuals and between the City and its businesses. She also voiced concern about the City Council meeting starting over an hour late and suggested that more discussions take place in open sessions rather than in closed meetings.

6. Approval of Consent Agenda (to include minutes of previous meetings):
 - a. Minutes of Previous Meetings:
 - Closed Session Minutes of the December 9, 2025 Meeting
 - City Council Minutes of the December 9, 2025 Meeting
 - b. First Read and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Petersburg City Public Schools Budget
 - c. First Read and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY26 Grants Fund
 - d. First Read and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Authorize the Execution of a Deed of Easement at 3101 Johnson Road
 - e. First Read and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing the Intention of the Petersburg City Council to Authorize the Issuance of Not to Exceed \$21,462,462 Principal Amount of General Obligation Water and Sewer Revenue Bonds for the Purpose of Financing Improvements to the City's Public Sewer Systems Facilities

Approved.

7. Special Reports

- a. Presentation by Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Petersburg Area Transit

No action taken. Funding for Petersburg Transit: Federal 64%, State 22%, City 4%.

- b. FY27 Real Estate Reassessment

Mary Williams, Petersburg City Assessor, stated that there is approximately a 14% increase in assessed values.

No action taken.

8. Monthly Reports

None.

9. Finance and Budget Report
 - a. Department of Finance Monthly Update
City spending for the year is on track. No action taken.
10. Capital Projects Update
 - a. Poor Creek Update
No action taken.
11. Utilities
None.
12. Streets
None.
13. Facilities
None.
14. Economic Development
None.
15. City Manager's Agenda
Public Works received praise for the impressive improvement in work.
16. Business or reports from the Clerk
The Clerk reminded everyone about the upcoming Ward meetings, the City's food distribution event on January 21, and the need for volunteers to assist with the distribution.
17. Business or reports from the City Attorney
None.
18. Adjournment