



City Council
WORK SESSION
Caucus Room
April 9, 2026
5:15 p.m.

Council Members present: Mayor Edwards, Vice Mayor Arrowood, and Councilors Campbell, Overholtzer (Remote), Park, Shepherd, and Woods.

Note: Councilor Campbell arrived at 5:21 p.m.

Mayor Edwards called this meeting of Staunton City Council to order.

Mayor Edwards stated that she received a request from Councilor Overholtzer to remotely participate in today's work session and regular meeting due to a personal reason. She then asked Councilor Overholtzer to state the personal reason.

Councilor Overholtzer stated that the personal reason was that he is on vacation.

Councilor Woods then made the following motion: Pursuant to Staunton City Council Procedural Memorandum Number Three, I move to allow Councilor Overholtzer to remotely participate in the April 9, 2026 Staunton City Council meeting due to a personal matter.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Park and carried as follows:

Ms. Park	aye	Mr. Shepherd	aye
Mr. Overholtzer	N/A	Vice Mayor Arrowood	aye
Ms. Woods	aye	Mayor Edwards	aye
Mr. Campbell	Absent		

Mayor Edwards then asked Councilor Overholtzer to state the location he was participating from.

Councilor Overholtzer stated that he was located at Nags Head, North Carolina.

Mayor Edwards then asked the audience and Council assembled if they could hear Councilor Overholtzer. The audience and Council affirmed that they could hear Councilor Overholtzer.

1. Consideration of Work Session and Regular Meeting Agendas

Consistent with Procedural Memorandum No. 3, the agendas were presented for Council consideration.

Councilor Woods moved to approve the work session and regular meeting agendas as presented.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Park and carried as follows:

Ms. Park	aye	Mr. Shepherd	aye
Mr. Overholtzer	aye	Vice Mayor Arrowood	aye
Ms. Woods	aye	Mayor Edwards	aye
Mr. Campbell	Absent		

2. Joint Work Session with the Staunton City School Board

Kristin Siegel, the Staunton School Board Chair, called the School Board's meeting to order.

Jessie Moyers, the City of Staunton's Chief Financial Officer offered a presentation on the City of Staunton's proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget.

The School Board did not have any questions about Ms. Moyer's presentation.

Dr. Eric Irizarry, the Staunton Superintendent of Schools, and Catina Claytor-Frye, the Staunton City Schools Finance Director, offered a presentation on the Staunton City Schools budget development process as well as highlights of the School Division's Fiscal Year 2027 budget. The overall School Division proposed budget is \$55 million dollars for Fiscal Year 2027.

Mayor Edwards asked if there is a specific disability that is increasing the School Division's need to provide more special education and other specialized services. Dr. Irizarry responded that there isn't a specific disability that is rapidly increasing. He said there is an across-the-board increase in students needing specialized services, however he did note that autism services is the fastest growing specialized education need.

Councilor Shepherd asked if redistricting might assist the capacity challenges the School Division is facing. Dr. Irizarry stated that in the future, the School Division might need to redistrict, but that it was more of a band-aid than a viable long term strategy to address capacity challenges.

With no further questions, Chair Siegel adjourned the School Board meeting and Mayor Edwards asked the Council to move to Council Chambers for the remainder of the Council's Work Session.

Note: At the conclusion of the Joint Work Session with the Staunton City School Board, the Council moved the remainder of the Work Session to the Rita S. Wilson Council Chambers

3. Update and Discussion on Staunton Crossing Business Plan

In 2019, City Council approved the Staunton Crossing Business Plan, establishing a framework for site development, marketing, and infrastructure readiness. Since that time, several tasks identified in the plan have been completed, while others remain outstanding. Market conditions, industry trends, and site considerations have also evolved, prompting the need to reassess priorities and next steps related to the plan.

In February, the Economic Development Authority (EDA) received a presentation from the Timmons Group outlining the status of the 2019 plan and the need for an updated version. The EDA unanimously supported moving forward with this update.

Tim Davey, who led development of the original plan, provided a presentation to the Council concerning the potential plan update as well as a discussion of target industries for Staunton Crossing and what additional policy or planning actions may be necessary to ensure the site is fully prepared.

Councilor Park stated that she thought marketing the Staunton Crossing site for data centers is inefficient. She stated that the City's constituents will not support a data center use at the site. She also mentioned that the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) has claw back regulations regarding data center siting, and she mentioned data center water usage in light of the current drought conditions in Staunton.

Mr. Davey stated that data center developers are happy to pay the claw back payments on behalf of the locality to VEDP. He also stated that newer data centers are not using as much water due to closed loop features. Finally, he stated that localities could market to data center end users such as Microsoft rather than to data center land developers.

Vice-Mayor Arrowood asked if Staunton Crossing's rail hub is advantageous for the site. Mr. Davey stated that he started his career working for a railroad and that he is a big rail advocate. However he said that the development for Staunton Crossing should not wait for a client that **wishes** to use rail services. He said there is an advantage for certain potential businesses that need rail, but the City should not cater its approach solely to rail users when marketing the site.

Councilor Shepherd said it is important to understand the size and magnitude of different types of data centers. He also asked Mr. Davey about whether data center developers disfavor locations near rail and interstates.

Mr. Davey responded that he has been working with Dominion Energy for years concerning criteria for data center sites. He stated that Dominion used to have lists of 15 criteria for data center sites, but those lists have been whittled down to just two criteria.

Councilor Campbell asked if it was wise to update the Staunton Crossing master plan considering the use of artificial intelligence by site selectors. He stated that he wanted to maintain flexibility with the site. Mr. Davey acknowledged that site selection is a down selection process and the use of artificial intelligence could cause the master plan to appear rigid in its requirements.

Councilor Campbell followed up by stating that the master plan is a tool and it is not a mandate of what will happen with the site. Mr. Davey agreed with Councilor Campbell.

Mayor Edwards pointed out that the original master plan contained office and retail uses. She asked if market conditions have changed for those two uses since adoption of the master plan. Mr. Davey said that market conditions have changed for those uses since the original master plan adoption and stated that experiential retail is now a desirable use. However, he said that he did not think the market would be conducive to placing experiential retail next to an interstate.

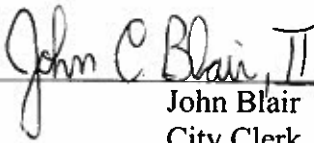
Councilor Overholtzer said he appreciated Mr. Davey's fact-based approach and asked if a good first step would be to engage the community in discussions about target industries. Mr. Davey said that it would.

Councilor Overholtzer asked about a timeline. Mr. Davey said such a process could be finished in 90 days based on the 2019 community engagement discussions he lead concerning Staunton Crossing.

Councilor Shepherd stated that he liked the idea of a pharmaceutical plant at the site based on similar developments in Rockingham County. Mr. Davey said that the pharmaceutical industry doesn't use site selectors. Therefore, he and Staunton's staff would need to work closely with VEDP and the Shenandoah Valley Partnership in pursuit of that type of industry.

Councilor Shepherd asked if a pharmaceutical plant would be considered an anchor tenant for the Staunton Crossing site. Mr. Davey said it would be considered an anchor tenant.

The April 9, 2026 Staunton City Council Work Session adjourned at 6:32 p.m.



John Blair
City Clerk