



City Council
WORK SESSION
Betsy Bell Mountain and
Rita S. Wilson City Council Chambers
May 14, 2026
5:15 p.m.

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

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

1. Visit to Betsy Bell Mountain

The deed conveying Betsy Bell Mountain to the City of Staunton for use as a city park requires that a majority of the elected members of Council shall “go in a body to the top of the mountain at some time each spring,” and that each such visit shall be noted in the minutes. The following Councilors participated in the excursion to the top of Betsy Bell Mountain: Mayor Edwards, Vice-Mayor Arrowood, Councilor Campbell, Councilor Overholtzer, Councilor Park, and Councilor Shepherd.

2. Consideration of Work Session and Regular Meeting Agendas-The Council reconvened at the Rita S. Wilson Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

The motion was seconded by Councilor Overholtzer 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	aye		

3. Update on Public Arts Initiatives

Deputy City Manager and Economic Development Director Amanda DiMeo and Environmental Programs Administrator Willow Hughes presented the following information to Council:

In 2023, the City Manager, through an Executive Order, established a Public Art Policy to enhance public spaces, celebrate local culture and creativity, and strengthen community identity through the thoughtful integration of art into the built environment. The Executive Order authorizes the City to partner with local arts organizations to facilitate the placement of approved artworks on City owned properties, infrastructure, and within the public right of way. And, adopted in City Council's 2026-2028 Staunton Plan under A Healthy Community goal area, the following objective is stated: Explore initiatives and partnership opportunities to establish a public arts program.

The Staunton–Augusta Art Center (SAAC) has been an active partner in advancing the goals of this program and has submitted requests for the installation of several sculpture pieces at two City locations, as well as a painted mural on a city storm drain. All proposed projects would be fully funded and maintained by the Art Center at no cost to the City.

Staff has reviewed the three proposals in the context of the 2023 Executive Order and the Staunton Plan, and finds them to be consistent with the goals and intent of the City's Public Art Program. The following points are noted:

- All proposed locations are public-facing and accessible, aligning with the program's objective of integrating art into everyday civic spaces.
- The storm drain mural on Lewis Street will be coordinated with the Environmental Programs Administrator and Public Works staff to ensure compliance with stormwater management standards and right-of-way requirements prior to installation.
- The two sculpture installations were reviewed by relevant City staff for site suitability, and will be coordinated with the Parks and Recreation department.
- Staff does not identify any significant concerns with the proposals at this time and anticipates that both installations can proceed through the standard administrative review process under the Executive Order.

Ms. DiMeo asked Angus Carter with SAAC to address the Council.

Mr. Carter thanked the Council and staff for their support of the arts community. He stated that both Council and staff have been nothing but supportive of the arts.

Vice-Mayor Arrowood asked how artists were contacted about these opportunities. Mr. Carter stated that sculptors approached SAAC and Mr. Carter surveyed the City for potential sites.

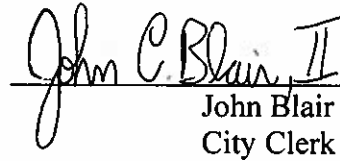
Mayor Edwards asked if these opportunities would be only open to local artists. Mr. Carter stated that the program should not be restricted to local artists, but he would like for local artists' works to receive deference.

Mayor Edwards asked if the installations were permanent. Mr. Carter stated that these initial installations are displayed for a one-year trial basis.

Councilor Woods noted that the current program was being administered with no cost to the City. She asked if that will remain the case in the future. Mr. Carter stated that SAAC planned to maintain the current projects. However, in the future, there may be a request for City assistance on a case-by-case basis.

Councilor Overholtzer stated that he appreciated the thought and care that went into the process. He also stated that the stormwater project will bring awareness to an important issue. He stated that public art beautifies and informs the community.

The May 14, 2026 Staunton City Council Work Session adjourned at 6:13 p.m.



John Blair
City Clerk