



MEMORANDUM

June 22, 2020

TO: Mayor and Members of City Council
Douglas L. Guynn, City Attorney
Management Team
Mid-Managers

FROM: Steven L. Rosenberg, City Manager
Leslie Beauregard, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Activity Report

Community Development

Key Construction Project Updates

The Villages at Staunton – Building 26 Renovation

Building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing/gas rough in inspections were scheduled. Hood suppression permit has been issued.

High School Addition and Renovations

Sprinkler and fire alarm rough in inspections were scheduled as well as partial framing, electrical, mechanical and plumbing rough-in inspections. Wheelchair lift and refrigeration permits have been issued.

Staunton Innovation Hub

Insulation inspections were scheduled at the 11, 15, 17 North Central Avenue (Former News Leader) building as an addition to the Staunton Innovation Hub.

Marino's Restaurant

Footer inspections have been scheduled for the existing Marino's Restaurant located at 901 North Augusta Street will have interior renovations and upgrades to increase seating and workflow area.

Staunton Mini Storage

Slab and framing inspections were scheduled for 15 buildings located at 107 Lacy B King Way.

Staunton Apartments Building 3

Final inspections have been completed for Phase III of a new 11-unit; 2-story apartment building located at 1008 Seth Drive.

Gas Station/Convenience Store

A building permit has been issued and footer inspection scheduled for a new 4,687 square foot gas station/convenience store to be located at 101 Crossing Way.

Gypsy Hill Cellular Tower

Footer and foundation inspections have been completed for a 180-foot monopole cellular tower located at 2330 Morris Mill Road and waiting for final site inspection.

Central Avenue Streetscape Project

The project was advertised for construction bids. Bids are scheduled to be opened on June 25. The project includes the replacement of the existing concrete sidewalks with brick and historic lamp posts, and install pedestrian safety improvements.

FY20 Water Line

Bids were opened, and the low bid was under budget. Work is expected to begin in the summer to replace aging water lines on Mountain View Drive and Mason and Tyler streets.

Reports

Historic Planning Commission

Staff started working with the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to draft revisions to the Historic Preservation District regulations in the Zoning Code. The goal is to help clarify when Certificates of Appropriateness are required and to provide a few additional opportunities for reviews to be handled administratively. The first draft was considered by the HPC at their May meeting. Once the draft is prepared, it will be scheduled for public hearing before the Planning Commission and City Council.

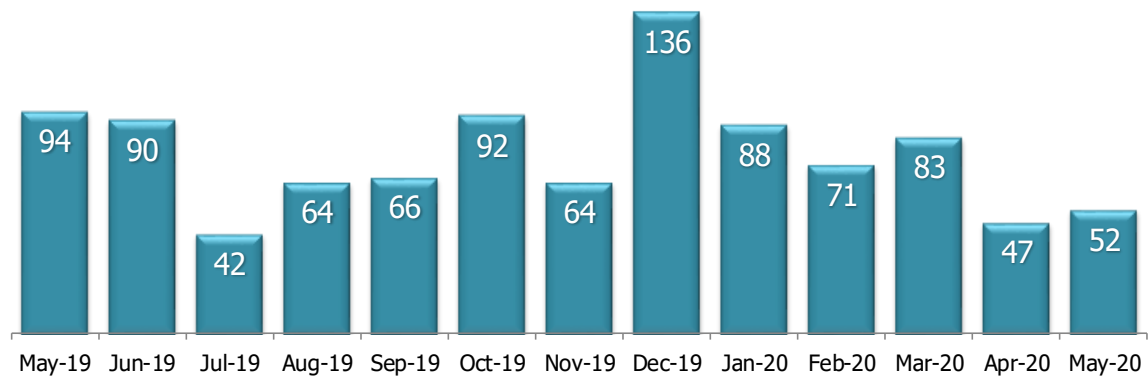
Staunton Greenways Plan

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has completed a draft Greenways Plan for the City's consideration. Staff provided a summary of the Greenways Plan to the Planning Commission at their February meeting. The Planning Commission directed staff to schedule and advertise a public hearing on the matter. An update on the draft plan was provided to City Council at their March 26 meeting and the document has been highlighted on the City's website to provide additional public review. The public hearing on the Greenways Plan originally planned for the June 18 meeting had to be postponed due to an already full agenda.

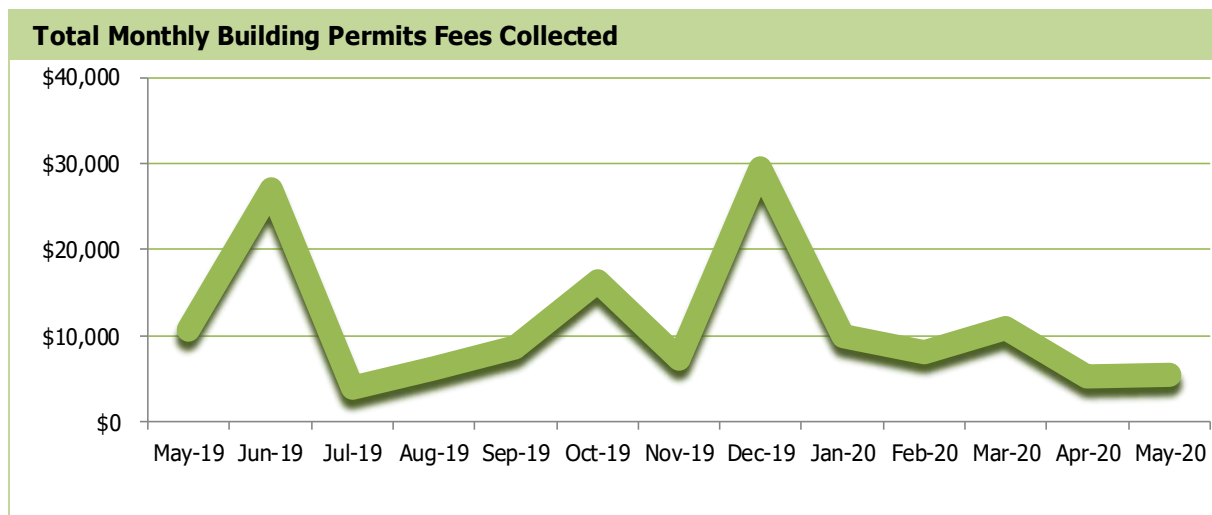
Building Construction and Related Activity

Permits Issued	May-20	May-19	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	1	3	-2	-66.7%
Residential Renovations	7	16	-9	-56.3%
Electrical Permits	23	27	-4	-14.8%
Mechanical Permits	6	10	-4	-40.0%
Plumbing Permits	8	22	-14	-63.6%
Commercial New-Renovations	3	4	-1	-25.0%
Miscellaneous	4	12	-8	-66.7%
Total	52	94	-42	-44.7%

Total Monthly Building Permits Issued



Permit Fees Collected	May-20	May-19	# Chg	% Chg
New Residential	\$291	\$2,026	-\$1,735	-85.6%
Residential Renovations	\$943	\$2,397	-\$1,454	-60.6%
Electrical Permits	\$2,127	\$2,507	-\$380	-15.2%
Mechanical Permits	\$551	\$887	-\$337	-37.9%
Plumbing Permits	\$862	\$1,907	-\$1,046	-54.8%
Commercial New-Renovations	\$594	\$367	\$226	61.6%
Miscellaneous	\$150	\$657	-\$507	-77.2%
Total	\$5,517	\$10,748	-\$5,231	-48.7%



Economic Development

Staunton Crossing

Staff continues to work with interested parties on term sheet negotiations regarding sale of portions of property at Staunton Crossing.

On May 22, staff, along with Senior Planner Rodney Rhodes, met with Chris Runion of Eddie Edwards Signs, Inc. to discuss the City's sign ordinance review.

Discussion continues with a representative of the Central Shenandoah Valley Planning District Commission on possible grant to help with site preparation as Staunton Crossing is viewed as one of the top sites in the state.

Shenandoah Valley Partnership

The Shenandoah Valley Partnership marketing subcommittee meetings were attended via Zoom by Amanda DiMeo on May 6. The group discussed details for the upcoming virtual round table site tour being held on June 3 for consultants as COVID-19 has prevented many consultants from traveling.

On May 29, staff attended the monthly Lead Generation Committee meeting via Zoom. The Shenandoah Valley Airport was the featured presentation. Greg Campbell discussed how COVID-19 has affected the airport business and new marketing ideas they are implementing with help from local partners.

Staunton Creative Community Fund

On May 13, staff attended the Staunton Creative Community Fund regular board meeting via Zoom. The executive director reviewed the efforts of the organization in the wake of COVID-19 with how many local businesses are being assisted. The GoVA Accelerator Program, aimed at assisting entrepreneurs, has received positive feedback in the first rounds of review. It is scheduled to go before the state Board on June 23.

Economic Development Authority

The Economic Development Authority (EDA) meeting was held via Zoom on May 28. Robin Miller, developer of the Villages, presented his request for revisions to the Villages Development Agreement with the EDA related to the reverter and deed of trust provisions of the agreement. Staff presented an update on the Staunton Crossing demolition, and VDOT's plans to construct the Crossing Way extension at Staunton Crossing.

HUD CDBG COVID-19 Funding

The City has received additional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19). This funding allocation was authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), to respond to the growing effects of this public health crisis. The city's allocation is \$207,590.

To utilize these funds, the City developed a strategy that prioritizes the needs of low- and moderate-income persons, and created partnerships between government, private businesses, and the not-for-profit sector.

Staff requested and received responses from non-profits regarding their organization's efforts to utilize CDBG COVID-19 funds to help achieve the above referenced purposes. While moving through the evaluation process, staff coordinated with a multitude of organizations, and local health authorities to ensure support of state or local pandemic response, and to prevent the duplication of benefits.

The original deadline for responses was May 6, however, as a result of the limited number of responses the deadline was extended to May 13. The draft strategy was published on May 28, with a public hearing scheduled for June 9. City Council is scheduled to consider the plan at its June 11 meeting.

HUD has also granted waivers and the redirection of funds already approved in the City's FY19 Annual Action Plan (AAP). The waiver allows the City to expedite and facilitate the use of funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. Organizations already approved for HUD CDBG funding in the FY19 AAP, have an opportunity to make a case for repurposing those funds.

Knowing that some organizations that received the invitation would not request COVID-19 funding, the intent is to include them to ensure awareness of this process, and to help prevent the duplication of efforts.

Staunton Augusta Waynesboro Recovery Task Force

Using CARES Act funding, the localities were able to partner with The United Way and Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge to assemble and provide PPE kits to local businesses. Included in the kits were sanitizer, gloves, masks, hospital grade disinfectant and various signage.

Virginia Economic Development Association

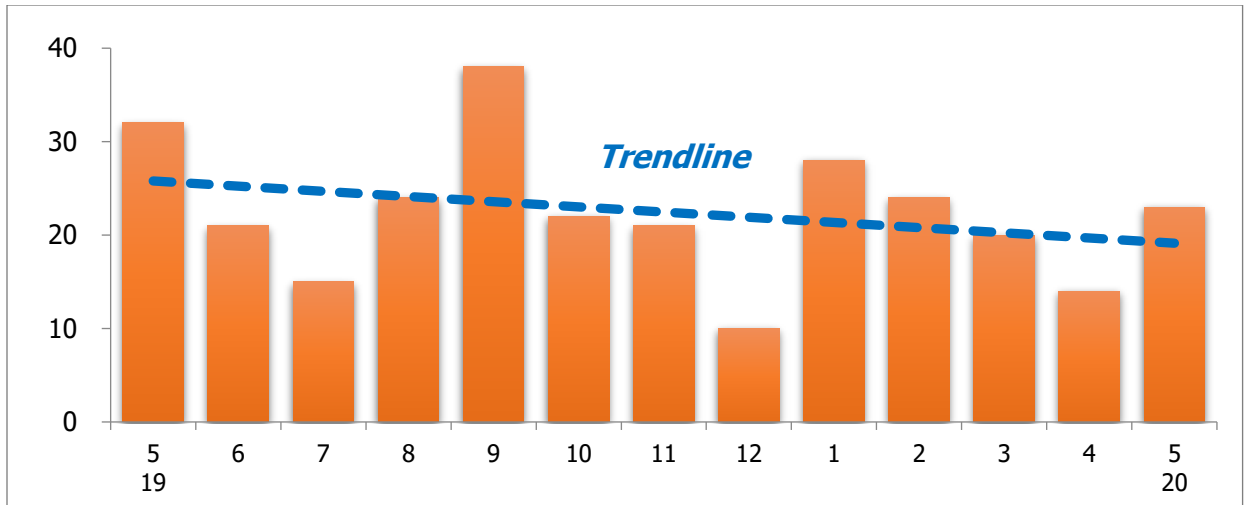
Staff participated on the weekly Zoom meetings hosted every Monday by the Virginia Economic Development Association. During each meeting a statewide economic impact analysis update is given by Stephen Moret followed by featured speakers such as the Secretary of Finance Aubrey Layne discussing CARES Act funding and Stephen Versen with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Science.

Staunton Downtown Development Association

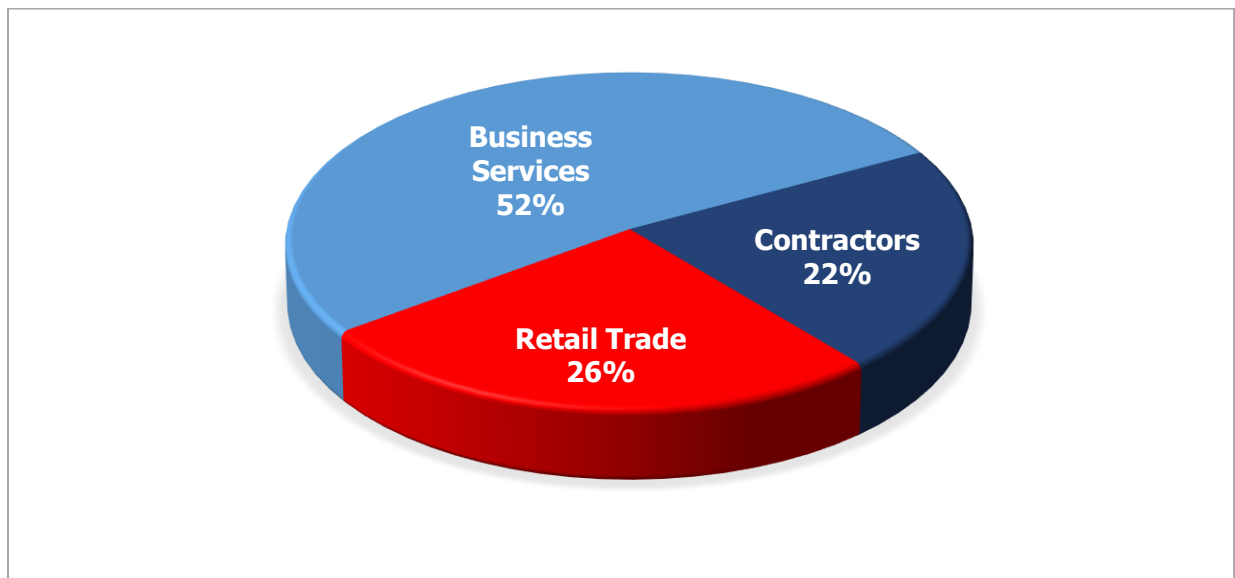
Staff has been participating in efforts with the Staunton Downtown Development Association and the Tourism office to assist businesses with reopening. Multiple stakeholder meetings were conducted via Zoom for the businesses to make suggestions and or raise concerns with reopening to the public.

Business License Activity

During the month of May, the Commissioner of Revenue's office issued 23 business licenses compared to 14 the previous month, representing a 64.3% increase. This month a year ago, 32 business licenses were issued. The following bar chart provides a monthly comparison for the total number of business licenses issued for the past year.

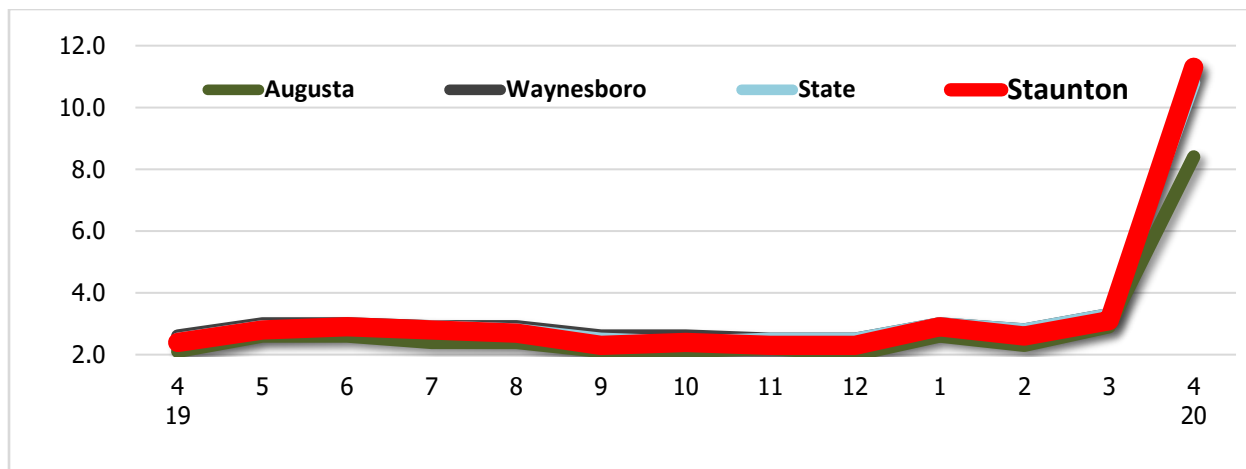


As seen in the following pie chart, the business services sector accounted for nearly three-quarters of the total licenses issued in May.



Area Unemployment Rates

During April, Staunton's unemployment rate of 11.3% was 9.2 points higher than previous month's rate. As seen in the graph below, Staunton's rate was higher than Augusta County, Waynesboro, and the state. Augusta County had a lowest rate at 8.4%.



With a labor force of 12,750 people, 11,314 were employed and 1,436 were unemployed in Staunton in April. The following table provides a comparison by locality of labor force data changes from the prior month to the current month.

Area	Month	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Staunton	Apr-20	12,750	11,314	1,436	11.3%
	Mar-20	12,329	11,949	380	3.1%
	Change	421	-635	1,056	8.2%
Augusta County	Apr-20	37,857	34,682	3,175	8.8%
	Mar-20	37,462	36,383	1,079	2.9%
	Change	395	-1,701	2,096	5.9%
Waynesboro	Apr-20	11,118	9,872	1,246	11.2%
	Mar-20	10,791	10,438	353	3.3%
	Change	327	-566	893	7.9%
State	Apr-20	4,306,921	3,841,033	465,888	10.8%
	Mar-20	4,440,727	4,294,322	146,405	3.3%
	Change	-133,806	-453,289	319,483	7.5%

The May report, containing the most current unemployment data by the Virginia Employment Commission, was unavailable at the publishing of this report.

Virginia Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims

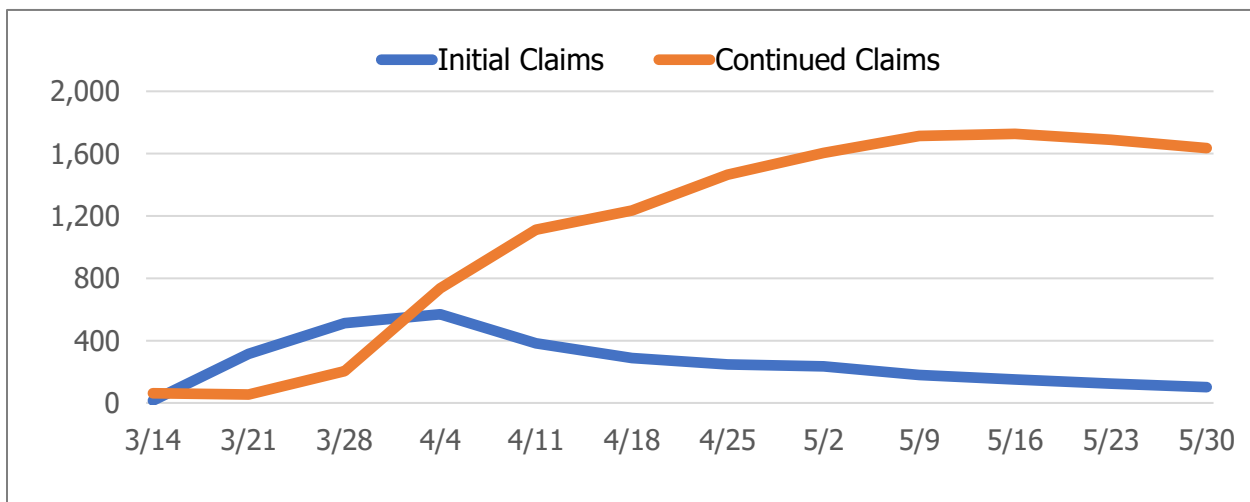
Seasonally unadjusted weekly initial unemployment insurance claims dropped to their lowest number since March during the latest filing week. In figures released on June 4,

the Virginia Employment Commission announced that the effects of the pandemic continue to impact the number of initial and continued claims for unemployment insurance. Attached is the official press release.

Staunton Unemployment Insurance Weekly Claims

The following table and chart provide a breakdown number of initial and continued claims for unemployment insurance.

Week OF	3/14	3/21	3/28	4/4	4/11	4/18	4/25	5/2	5/9	5/16	5/23	5/30
Initial Claims	15	315	512	569	383	289	247	235	180	150	124	102
Continued Claims	63	54	204	735	1111	1234	1464	1604	1714	1727	1689	1636



Finance

- The Finance Department issued 6,533 utility bills and general bills totaling \$892,971 during May.
- Collection activities in May resulted in recovery of \$2,228.99 in delinquent utility invoices.
- The Utility Payment Office processed 3,358 receipts in the amount of \$653,315 during May.
- The FY2021 budget has been approved and adopted.
- The department, on behalf of the Public Works Department, awarded the RFQ for elevator inspections. The city accepted 10 bids for the FY 2020 water line improvements project. An invitation to bid was issued for the Central Avenue streetscape project.

- The department in partnership with IT and the Treasurer's office continues work on implementing the in-person credit card payment process.
- Several members of the finance team attended Tyler Technologies training sessions relating to utility billing and payments.
- The FY20 audit process started with external auditors working remotely May 11-13. The process will end mid-November with the issuance of the CAFR (comprehensive annual financial report).

Fire and Rescue

- Staunton Fire and Rescue responded to 241 incidents in May, totaling 1,514 emergency incident responses for 2020. The average response time for May was 5 minutes and 00 seconds. The average response time for 2020 is 4 minutes and 54 seconds.
 - Fire Station No. 1 responded to 165 incidents in May.
 - Fire Station No. 2 responded to 76 incidents in May.
- Staff received over 507 hours of training in May. Personnel totaled 2,927 training hours for 2020, averaging 18 hours per person every month.
- Staff conducted 23 business fire safety inspections and eight re-inspections in May. Routine fire inspections were discontinued due to COVID-19.

Human Resources

Employee Actions

The following employee actions were processed:

Terminated:

Full Time—2

Hired:

Part Time—7

Activities

Human Resources staff members took part in the following activities in May:

Recruitment:

- Initiated recruitment for the following positions:
 - Announced regional firefighter testing in June
 - Sanitation Workers (PT)
- Continued recruitment for the following positions:
 - Equipment Operator I (Public Works Utilities)
 - Equipment Operator I (Public Works Streets)
 - Police Officer
 - Equipment Operator II (Public Works Streets)
 - Equipment Operator III (Public Works Streets)

Orientations:

- Conducted orientation for one full-time employee.

Benefits:

- Met virtually for the quarterly Staunton Augusta Waynesboro (SAW) meeting health, dental and prescription coverage review.
- Met virtually with Captrust and AIG to review the supplemental retirement plans and various changes to regulation resulting from the current pandemic emergency.
- Participated in two Employee Town Hall meetings to address employees concerns as we navigate the City's response to COVID 19.

Training:

- Staff attended, virtually, the Virginia Risk Sharing Annual Meeting.

Miscellaneous:

- Attended the Safety Committee Meeting.
- Assisted City Manager and Assistant City Manager in meetings with various departments regarding FY 21 Budget and its impacts.

Community:

- Attended various video meetings of the Valley Community Services Board's Executive Committee, HR Committee and Executive Director Recruitment Taskforce.

Information Technology

- Managed and supported 46 Zoom meetings involving 520 participants for a total of 31,697 minutes. Most of these meetings were also livestreamed on the City's website and government access channel.
- Started Merchant Services project implementation. Credit card machines will be installed and functional at most payment locations in June.
- Assisted Treasurer's office in preparing real estate bills.
- NG911 migration work continues. Network routers have been installed and data has been accepted by the vendor. Project delays continue due to circuit issues between vendors.
- Supported voter registration pollbooks for the general election.

Library

The library's closure continued through the month of May, though staff began preparations to resume pick-up service to the public in mid-June. Accordingly, two vacancies were advertised to bring back some circulation assistants and a page to facilitate these services. Seven former employees who had been involuntarily terminated in April were pleased to accept the job offers to return to work in June.

Digital circulation continued to increase, totaling 3,750 items. Librarians have been troubleshooting the online collections with patrons over the phone.

Library staff completed an inventory of all 68 physical collections in the building. Out of almost 120,000 items owned by Staunton Public Library, only 412 were actually missing. Staff used the project to find mis-shelved materials, identify and correct labeling errors, and pull damaged materials from the shelves.

Youth Services

The Youth Services team continued to post their story times online on the library's Instagram account. The over 14 programs posted during May had over 1,200 views.

Talking Book Center

The Talking Book Center (TBC) circulated 1,563 items in May. Employee Ilia Desjardins has been undertaking an inventory and preparing the annual patron survey. The Talking Book Center, Inc. 501(c)(3) reports that FY21 funding from some local municipalities has been cut or eliminated altogether. The TBC, Inc. board of directors is working on a strategy for fundraising and identifying alternative sources of funding to maintain operations.

Parks and Recreation

Programs and Facilities

- Implemented new video series on department Facebook page that highlights parks facilities and events.
- Staff continued working on interactive programming that will be available on social media.
- The department currently has 317 subscribers to its monthly newsletter.
- Gypsy Hill Gym was the host site for a three-day blood drive for American Red Cross. The blood drive totaled 95 donors, May 26-28. The gym also was a voting site for local city council and school board elections.
- Recreation staff has been working on cleaning and servicing Gypsy Hill Park pool. The pool requires seasonal maintenance to continue proper functional control even during closure. The pool received a new motor, VFD control box, and several new valves as part of the maintenance schedule. The new motor and VFD control were built specifically for Gypsy Hill Pool over a six-month period. The VFD control will save many man hours and enable the filter system to run more efficient at optimal speeds.
- Booker T. Washington continues to serve as an essential worker child care center. This child care service is provided by Boys and Girls Club through a federal grant.

Horticulture

Horticulture completed the following projects and tasks:

- Removed two trees from Gypsy Hill Golf Course and pruned one tree near Churchville Avenue.
- Pruned twelve trees in Gypsy Hill park.
- Completed Mulching in Gypsy Hill and Montgomery Hall Park.
- Sprayed downtown walks and planting beds.
- Replaced planters at the Staunton Public Library.
- Installed two squirrel boxes and three birdhouses in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Horticulture staff completed online training and earned CEU's toward their ISA certifications.

Maintenance

Park Maintenance completed the following projects and tasks:

- Assisted with tree removal in Gypsy Hill Park.
- Continued mowing operations.

Police

- The three recruit officers returned to their basic training at the regional academy; they are scheduled to graduate on July 9.
- Police personnel responded to 2,282 incidents during the month, including 1,370 citizen calls for service, 409 officer-initiated activities, 249 administrative calls and 254 directed patrols.
- The Police Department's E-911 Center handled a total of 4,466 telephone calls during the month, including 960 9-1-1 calls.
- The average response time for police emergency calls for service during the month was 3 minutes and 59 seconds; it is 3 minutes and 51 seconds for the year.

Public Works

- Public Works accepted delivery of one 5-ton dump truck, replacing a 2004 model with excessive rust and wear. Also accepted was a trailer truck mounted attenuator which will protect motorists from colliding with stationary or slow-moving trucks performing maintenance and repair operations in work zones.
- In-ground vehicle detection sensors were installed at the intersection of Frederick and Augusta, replacing the older vehicle detection loops recently damaged by a water main break.
- Preventative maintenance was performed on all facility air conditioning systems.
- Building Maintenance crews installed sneeze guards at various customer service areas throughout the city.
- The street department continued to assist the refuse department with daily collection.
- Crews completed the first round of mowing and weed eating.
- The street sweepers covered 92 miles while collecting 71 tons of debris.

- The spring paving schedule was completed with 16,000 tons of asphalt used to resurface 1.4 lane miles of primary routes and 12 lane miles of secondary routes. The primary routes were funded by a VDOT grant; the secondary routes were funded by street maintenance funds.
- The asphalt crew used 16 tons of asphalt to repair berms and utility cuts.
- The ceiling, walls, and pipe galleries at the water treatment plant filter building were epoxy coated.
- The utility crew repaired seven water main breaks, one valve, seven meters, one sewer main and two sewer laterals. The crew installed one new water service and one new sewer service. They also cleared blockages in six sewer mains and twelve sewer laterals, and cleaned and video inspected 1,300 feet of sewer line.
- The utility locator processed and marked 717 locate tickets for Miss Utility.
- Water treatment plant staff completed lead and copper sampling and testing that is required by the Virginia Department of Health every three years. Lab personnel completed annual laboratory proficiency testing.

Tourism

Activities

The Tourism Department staff took part in the following promotional, networking or administrative activities in May:

- Produced weekly e-newsletters and Staunton on Tap weekly listing of events.
- Produced a monthly e-newsletter.
- Interviewed three digital marketing firms to become the new agency of record for the Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail.
- Produced two Staunton Responds videos.
- Chaired the Business Recovery and Outreach working group for the city's overall Stabilization and Recovery Team and organized business stakeholder meetings.
- Served as an American Shakespeare Center SafeStart advisor.
- Hosted and took minutes for weekly Beverley Street restaurant and retailer meetings.
- Organized the closure of Beverley Street for outdoor dining.
- Wrote the guidelines for outdoor dining on Beverley Street and the business toolkit for safe operation

- Designed Dine Out in Downtown graphics and "Strong. Resilient. Staunton." graphics
- Wrote blog posts for National Travel & Tourism Week.
- Produced "We'll Be Waiting for You" video.
- Served as project manager for the Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail and Greater Augusta Regional Tourism regional tourism projects.
- Attended a Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership meeting, weekly Stabilization & Recovery meetings, bi-weekly Business Recovery & Outreach meetings, weekly Virginia Tourism Corporation COVID-19 response meetings.

Public Relations

The following is a list of newspapers, websites, magazines and television stations that published articles/stories about Staunton:

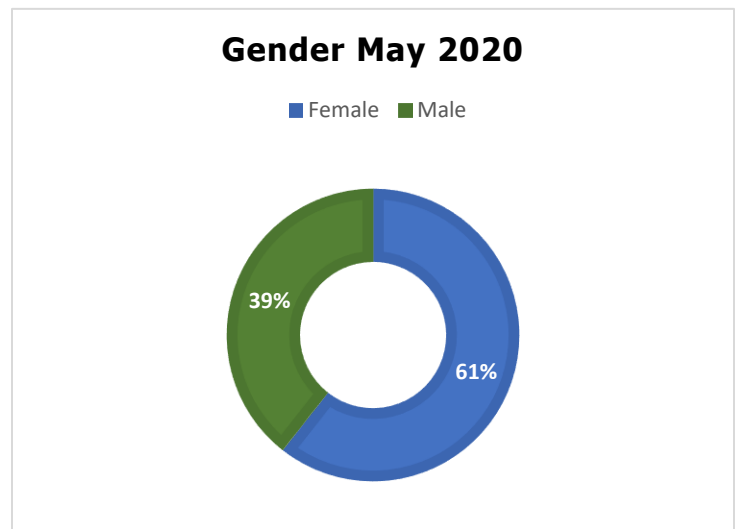
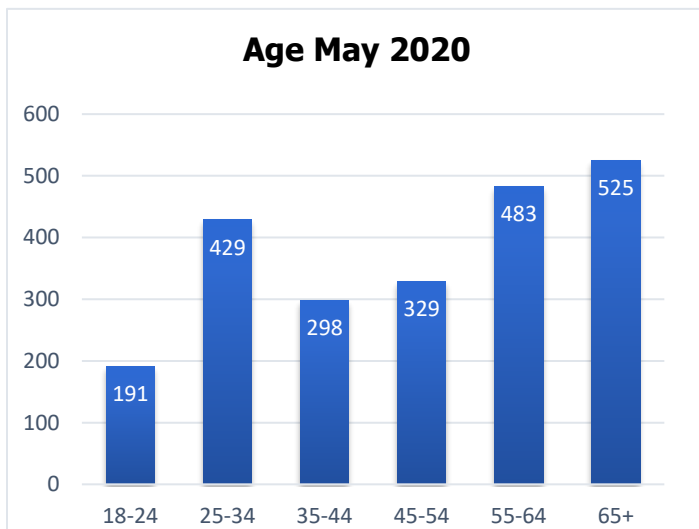
Date	Headline	URL	Source	Reach
05/21/20	Opinion 'The Grapes of Wrath' Review: Plain-Spoken and Powerful	https://tinyurl.com/y8bzupbp	The Wall Street Journal	38,525,183
05/15/20	Staunton Plans To Reopen Gypsy Hill Golf Course On Memorial Day Weekend	https://tinyurl.com/ycmszlxr	WHSV	1,077,318
05/27/20	With Major Festival Canceled, Staunton Is Marketing Local Tourism	https://tinyurl.com/y8bthtu4	WHSV	1,077,318
05/29/20	The Shack To Expand By Opening Staunton Grocery	https://tinyurl.com/yc9rsyg3	WHSV	1,077,318
05/14/20	Red Wing Roots Music Festival Postpones Event Until 2021	https://tinyurl.com/y7g2mhyv	WHSV	1,077,318
05/26/20	Queen City Mischief & Magic Not Happening In-Person This Year	https://tinyurl.com/yc3dprqm	WHSV	1,077,318
05/15/20	Frontier Culture Museum Cancels Summer Camps, No Date Yet For Reopening To The Public	https://tinyurl.com/yc6xyrh5	WHSV	1,077,318
05/05/20	Neighborhood In Staunton Howling While Housebound	https://tinyurl.com/ycxulx8p	WHSV	309,948
05/06/20	Bed And Breakfasts Across The Valley Are Adjusting To Change	https://tinyurl.com/y7dym1ck	WHSV	309,948
05/06/20	American Shakespeare Center In Staunton Connecting Through BlkFrstV	https://tinyurl.com/y73nwl82	WHSV	309,948

Date	Headline	URL	Source	Reach
05/26/20	Queen City Mischief & Magic Canceled For 2020, Working On Virtual Festival	https://tinyurl.com/ydddwx7	The News Leader	280,219
05/27/20	The Shack Owner Ian Boden To Reinvent Staunton Grocery In New Venture With Wife Leslie Boden	https://tinyurl.com/y8tnvwbq	The News Leader	280,219
05/29/20	Staunton Moves Forward With Plan To Temporarily Close Beverley Street For Outdoor Dining	https://tinyurl.com/yasotddb	The News Leader	280,219
05/01/20	Staunton's Happy Birthday America Canceled	https://tinyurl.com/yacsbfxk	NBC29 WVIR	270,592
				131,924,835

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
May 2019	May 2020	% Change
22,596 visitors	6,313 visitors	-72%
49,513 page views	13,694 page views	-72.3%
194 visitor's guide requests	52 visitor's guide requests	-73%

Website Demographics



Top 10 States		Top 10 Metro Areas	
May 2019	May 2020	May 2019	May 2020
Virginia	Virginia	Washington, D.C.	Harrisonburg
District of Columbia	Maryland	Harrisonburg	Washington, D.C.

Maryland	North Carolina	Norfolk-Portsmouth- Newport News	Roanoke-Lynchburg
North Carolina	Pennsylvania	Roanoke-Lynchburg	Norfolk-Portsmouth- Newport News
Pennsylvania	Florida	Richmond-Petersburg	Richmond-Petersburg
New York	New York	Charlottesville	New York
Georgia	Tennessee	Baltimore	Charlottesville
Tennessee	California	New York	Baltimore
West Virginia	New Jersey	Charlotte	Philadelphia
New Jersey	Georgia	Philadelphia	Nashville

Smith Travel Research (STR) Hotel Occupancy Report

Occupancy (%)	2020				Year To Date		
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	2017	2018	2019
This Year	36.4	42.5	34.6	20.4	50.0	44.4	33.4
Last Year	32.9	40.1	46.4	58.3	48.4	50.0	44.4
% Change	10.8	6.0	-25.3	-65.0	3.3	-11.2	-24.8

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Office on Youth

Crime Control Programs

- Twenty youth received detention alternative services.

Parenting Programs

- Coordinator gathered information on how to conduct virtual parenting classes and reached out to families who have recently attended parenting classes via text, phone, and email to provide resources and assistance.
- Coordinator and Division Supervisor continued to work with YMCA to produce parenting videos for the community.

Substance Abuse Prevention Program

- Prevention coordinator participated in a virtual Community Coalitions of Virginia meeting. On May 4 and a Cannabis 101 webinar hosted by King County on May 7.
- Prevention coordinator and division supervisor participated in the Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) Training *Effective Messaging on Marijuana* on May 20.

- Virtual youth coalition meetings were held on May 7, May 14 and May22. Youth shared ways they have been impacted by COVID-19 and also ways that mental health can affect substance abuse. Youth participants discussed ideas on producing videos for social media on how the youth can cope during COVID-19.

Check and Connect

- Due to COVID-19, the program coordinator continued to reach out to the students and/or parents weekly via phone, email, text, or other remote methods.

Community

- Coordinated with Klines, Lowes and Home Depot to create a seed project for Staunton City Schools – distributed with meal deliveries.
- Division supervisor and parenting coordinator attended two virtual Staunton Family Assessment Planning Team meetings.
- Division supervisor and/or director attended Community Meeting with YMCA, United Way, Salvation Army, and community pastors each Monday in May.

Staunton Downtown Development Association¹

SDDA Offices

The offices of Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) in the Stratton Building have reopened to the public. Visitors are asked to continue to practice social distancing and wear masks while in the building. The SDDA encourages visitors to continue to reach out via email and/or phone prior to arrival.

Marketing Manager

Hannah Adams recently joined the SDDA team as the organization's Marketing Manager. Over the past several weeks, Ms. Adams has started updating and expanding the SDDA's website and social media accounts. She has also provided support and design services to downtown business owners as they begin to develop social/safety reminders and signage in their storefront and restaurants. She is working closely with the City of Staunton Tourism Department to develop new promotional efforts which support and promote downtown businesses.

¹ The Staunton Downtown Development Association (SDDA) is an independent, non-profit corporation, separate from the City of Staunton. Pursuant to the Staunton City Code and a contract with the City, SDDA provides facilities and services funded by the City in the City's downtown service district. SDDA furnishes information to the City Manager's Office for inclusion in this Activity Report to update the City in the performance of its obligations.

SDDA Website

In response to COVID-19, SDDA established on its website a listing of downtown businesses which are currently open and/or providing services. The SDDA has focused on keeping the listing updated daily, as a service to businesses as well as a resource for the community. Business owners continue to provide updates to the SDDA. The SDDA has also included other City of Staunton businesses (not in the historic downtown business district) into the listing, recognizing the importance of assisting downtown neighbors during this health crisis.

A page has also been created for the city's Dine Out in Downtown initiative, working to inform the community about new curbside pickup locations and what is open for dining while the streets are closed. There is also information about best safety practices for shopping and dining downtown. Additionally, the SDDA is working to overhaul their website to include more ways in which to support downtown businesses, including a virtual storefront. The website changes are ongoing and will take a few months to complete but should be fully responsive and updated before the holiday shopping season begins.

Staying Connected

The SDDA has been in continued communication with downtown stakeholders over the past several weeks through email, social media and telephone calls. The SDDA has been encouraging business owners and offering reminders to continue communication with their customers through emails and social media. SDDA, in conjunction with the city, have hosted weekly online meetings with retailers and restaurants affected by the Beverley Street closures to gauge feedback and help alleviate concerns. Information gathered during these weekly roundtable discussions is shared with the Staunton Stabilization and Recovery Committee. Additionally, the SDDA has participated in online meetings of the SAW MSA coalition. Through these committees, email blasts, and social media channels, the SDDA remains in constant communication with downtown business owners and community members.

BRITE Transit Program

Executive Director Greg Beam serves on the BRITE Transit Advisory Committee and is continuing to revamp and improve upon advertising opportunities for the BRITE buses and trolleys. SDDA plans to continue marketing this advertising opportunity as an additional way for downtown businesses and nonprofits to reach customers in the City of Staunton.

Staunton Augusta Art Center Collaboration / Weekly Art Contest

The SDDA partnered with the Staunton Augusta Art Center (SAAC) to provide a weekly online art contest. This collaboration has provided support to SAAC, strengthening a relationship with a community/downtown partner. Winners of the online weekly art contest as well as volunteers for Art in the Park are receiving t-shirts with the SAAC and SDDA logos.

Downtown Flower Baskets

As per the SDDA contract with the City of Staunton, the SDDA has coordinated the annual addition of 40 hanging flower baskets in downtown. The baskets were placed on downtown light poles over Memorial Day weekend and conditions pending, should remain until Labor Day.

Downtown Giveaway

The SDDA coordinated with downtown business owners who wanted to participate in a giveaway promotion. The primary goal of this was to help the businesses grow their social media following. Twenty-six businesses donated goods or gift cards, which SDDA then bundled into three giveaway packages. SDDA gathered and packaged the items, photographed them and marketed the promotion on social media and selected/verified the winners. The giveaway was successful—some businesses gained over 100 followers on both Facebook and Instagram

Dine Out in Downtown Design & Signage

Ms. Adams worked with the City of Staunton Business and Recovery Team to create signage to support Dine Out in Downtown. The SDDA designed and ordered 12 different signs, six indicating the new curbside pickup locations, four stating the "best practices" for safety measures and two pointing to additional dining and shopping options both up Central Avenue and down towards the Wharf. Sarah Lynch, owner of Baja Bean and Brent Schoenduby, owner of Shenandoah Pizza provided space for the SDDA to safely store the signs during the week.

COVID-19 Signage for Businesses

The SDDA has developed a template for mandatory signage as outlined in the Forward Virginia plan. SDDA has been offering these templates as well as customization services to local businesses that need to place signs on their front entrances. All signs are customized with the businesses name, logo, brand colors and additional safety measures they are taking in order to ensure a safe shopping experience. Thus far, six businesses have used this service and are displaying the signs. A generic template as well as a link to the customization services were included in the Business Toolkit created by the City of Staunton.

Cville Weekly Ad

The SDDA worked with the City of Staunton Tourism Department to design an ad to be placed in both the Cville Weekly printed Summer Guide as well as on Cville Weekly's website. The ad used the city's logo and guided readers to the SDDA's website showing what is open in downtown Staunton. SDDA purchased the ad with the goal to drive some new business from Charlottesville and the surrounding area to Staunton in an effort to increase tourism revenue.

Hand Sanitizing Supplies

SDDA provided support to downtown business owners by purchasing a bulk order of hand sanitizer as well as hand sanitizing stations. The SDDA sold the cases of hand sanitizer and stations at cost to downtown businesses, saving each businesses money by ordering in bulk. In total, 38 different downtown businesses and organizations ordered almost 200 gallons of sanitizer as well as numerous sanitizing stations through SDDA. Jonathon Wright, owner of Redbeard Brewing served as the contact and shipping location for the hand sanitizer and Kay Shirey, owner of Stelle Rose at Staunton Station served as the contact and shipping location for the hand sanitizer stations.

WMRA Interview

Mr. Beam was interviewed by Mike Tripp, of WMRA on June 4. The segment, "Staunton Shops Slowly Respond To Relaxed Restrictions" shared how downtown businesses were responding to the restrictions being lifted, moving into Phase 2. The segment also included feedback from Chip Clark, owner of 101 West Beverley and The Wine Cellar, Nikki Swats, owner of Allure Salon and Mayor Carolyn Dull. The complete interview can be found at: <https://www.wmra.org/post/staunton-shops-slowly-respond-relaxed-restrictions#stream/0>.