

March 28, 2023 Council Meeting

The regular meeting of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia was held on March 28, 2023 in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 7:00 PM with Mayor LC Jones presiding. Other Council Members present included Kathy Lawson, Aaron Rawls and Tammy Pearson. Staff present included City Manager Leon Towarnicki, Clerk of Council Karen Roberts and Police Chief Rob Fincher.

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order and advised Council would go into Closed Session beginning at 6:30 PM. In accordance with the Code of Virginia, Title 2.2 Chapter 37, Freedom of Information Act and upon a motion by Council Member Lawson and seconded by Council Member Pearson with the following 4-0 recorded vote: Vice Mayor Rawls, aye; Council Member Pearson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; and Council Member Lawson, aye. Council convened in Closed Session to discuss the following matters: (A) Appointments to boards and commissions, as authorized by Subsection 1, (B) Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected, as authorized by Subsection 6.

At the conclusion of Closed Session, each returning member of Council certified that (1) only public business matters exempt from open meeting requirements were discussed in said Closed Session; and (2) only those business matters identified in the motion convening the Closed Session were heard, discussed, or considered during the meeting. A motion was made by Council Member Lawson; seconded by Vice Mayor Rawls with the following 4-0 recorded vote in favor to return to Open Session: Vice Mayor Rawls, aye; Council Member Pearson, aye; Council Member Lawson, aye; and Mayor Jones, aye. No action was taken out of closed session.

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order. Council Member Pearson lead the pledge and offered invocation. Mayor Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting, stating printed agendas could be found in the back of the room and on the City website for those watching from home.


Circuit Court Clerk Jean Nunn issued Oath of Office to newly appointed Council Member – Mayor Jones introduced Circuit Court Clerk Jean Nunn and new Council Member Lawrence Mitchell. Nunn issued the Oath of Office to Lawrence who joined Council Members on the dais.

STATE OF VIRGINIA, CITY OF MARTINSVILLE, to --wit:


I **Lawrence Mitchell** solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all duties incumbent upon me as

Member of the City Council for the City of Martinsville, Virginia

according to the best of my ability, so help me God.

(X)   
Lawrence Mitchell

I, Jean P. Nunn, Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for the City of Martinsville, do certify that **Lawrence Mitchell** on this the 28<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2023 personally appeared before me and took and subscribed the above oath.

  
Clerk

March 28, 2023 Council Meeting

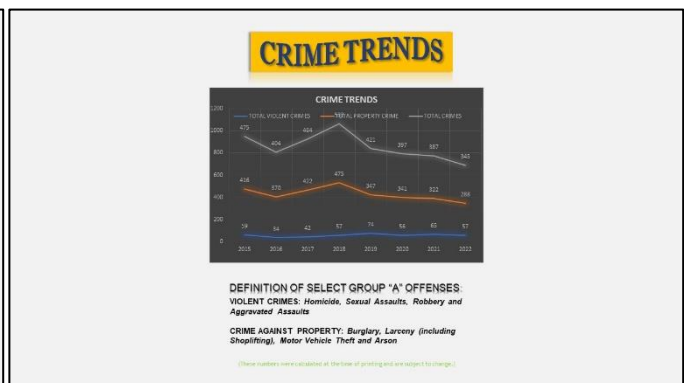
Recognition of Martinsville City Police Department for Reaccreditation – Police Chief Rob Fincher welcomed Sheriff Steve Draper who is a commission member of the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLEPSC), an organization made up of six sheriffs and six police chiefs from across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Draper awarded the accreditation to Police Chief Rob Fincher and members of the Police Department who were also in attendance. Draper said he travels all over the Commonwealth to present these awards but there is no better place than in his hometown. Fincher thanked all the men and women of the Martinsville Police Department. It is a 4-year process to be accredited and 4 more years to be reaccredited. Fincher shared his appreciation for Accreditation Managers Jim Lovell and Ben Peters who help guide them in the direction they need to go. Also, thanks to retired Police Chief Eddie Cassidy; had Cassidy not had everything in order prior to his retirement it would have been a more difficult process for Fincher.

Hear a presentation from the Police Department regarding their 2022 Annual Report – Police Chief Fincher presented the 2022 Annual Report. Council Member Pearson asked Fincher to update Council on the Neighborhood Watch Programs. Fincher explained that Officer Coretha Gravely was in charge of those programs and touched on Neighborhood Resource Officers. Vice Mayor Rawls said that Martinsville is beyond blessed to have the Police Department and the officers that they have. Fincher encouraged residents to contact the Police Department at anytime they need assistance. Council Member Mitchell asked about illegal weapons. Fincher explained they collect far too many illegal weapons.

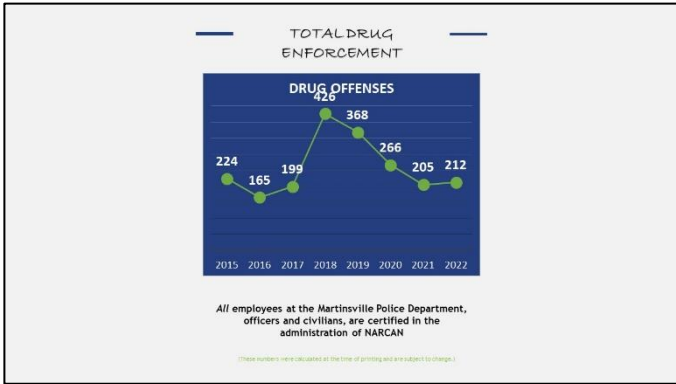
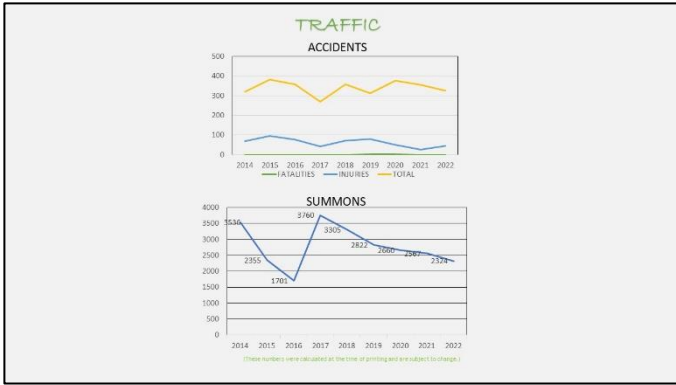


TOTAL CRIME 2021	387
TOTAL CRIME 2022	345

**10.85% DECREASE IN CRIME**



# March 28, 2023 Council Meeting



### DMV GRANTS

Each year, the Martinsville Police Department receives grant funding from the Division of Motor Vehicles. Based on statistical data, the grants are given to jurisdictions in an effort to reduce accidents, injuries, and even deaths related to vehicle crashes. There are two categories that the Martinsville Police Department receives.

- Speed Enforcement:** To reduce speeding within the City of Martinsville, overtime funding is provided for officers to work RADAR within the city limits to reduce crashes.
- Alcohol:** Provides officers the opportunity to work overtime to enforce the DUI laws to reduce alcohol related crashes.

Speed Enforcement	\$5,600.00
Alcohol	\$7,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,600.00</b>

### Local Law Enforcement Block Grants (LOLE) – Byrne/JAG Program

This grant makes federal funds available to localities to help support their efforts to support public safety or crime prevention efforts. These funds can be used technical assistance, training, personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual support and information systems for criminal justice programs. The Martinsville Police Department used these funds for the following:

Uniform jackets	\$4,764.00
Evidence cameras	\$5,064.00
Ballistic shields	\$6,257.00
Computer Voice Stress Analyzer	\$7,262.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,347.00</b>

Total Grants

DMV	\$12,600.00
LOLE-JAG	\$23,347.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$35,947.00</b>



# March 28, 2023 Council Meeting



Approve minutes from the March 13, 2023 Neighborhood Meeting, the March 14, 2023 Council Meeting and the March 15, 2023 Closed Session – Council Member Lawson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Vice Mayor Rawls seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Read and present a proclamation recognizing the month of April, 2023 as Bee City Month – Council Member Pearson read the proclamation which was presented Cindy Edgerton. Ms. Edgerton updated Council on the program which is in the process of becoming a 501c because so many organizations have asked about donating.



## PROCLAMATION

### RECOGNIZING THE MONTH OF APRIL, 2023 AS MARTINSVILLE'S OBSERVANCE OF BEE CITY MONTH

**WHEREAS**, pollinators such as thousands of species of bees are essential partners in producing much of our food supply; and

**WHEREAS**, pollinators provide significant environmental benefits that are necessary for maintaining healthy, diverse ecosystems in towns and cities; and

**WHEREAS**, pollinators play a vital role for the trees and plants of our community, enhancing our quality of life, and creating recreational and economic development opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Martinsville manages parks, public landscaping, and other public lands that may include greenways and wildlife habitats; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Martinsville encourages all property owners, developers and residents to promote wise conservation stewardship, including the protection of pollinators and maintenance of their habitats;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, LC Jones, Mayor of the City of Martinsville, on this 28th day of March, 2023, hereby proclaims the month of April 2023 as Martinsville's observance of

#### **Martinsville's Bee City Month**

And, as the City of Martinsville is an affiliate of **Bee City USA®**, all citizens are urged to recognize this observance.

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LC Jones, Mayor



Business from the Floor – Leroy Spencer Hairston, Jr. said he commends Council and wishes former Council Member Chad Martin well. His main concern is excessive litter, partly caused by heavy winds. The City can't do anything more than the citizens are willing to do. Hairston commends the Police Department for responding to his concerns quickly. Mayor Jones said he spoke to the City Manager and residents about the trash in that area, stating that they will monitor it more closely.

Mike Sanguadolche, 708 Starling Avenue attended to represent the Transportation Safety Committee on behalf of Doug Sharp, Chair of the committee. The committee now has six members. Sanguadolche shared several of the concerns that were discussed at the first meeting including Uptown, Cleveland Avenue, the limited view at some intersections, speeding concerns, etc. Vice Mayor Rawls asked the committee to consider Cleveland Avenue near the school as an all-day concern, stating that it is a dangerous intersection. The committee has contacted other local areas to see how they handle parking issues and have discussed parking meters. Rawls said that Martinsville is not the most pedestrian friendly city right now. Sanguadolche shared details on the new Martinsville Transportation Safety Facebook page and encouraged citizens to voice their concerns about traffic.

Comments by City Council – Council Member Mitchell congratulated the Police Department on their accreditation and thanked City Council for the opportunity to serve the citizens.

March 28, 2023 Council Meeting

Council Member Pearson welcomed Mr. Mitchell and she looks forward to working with him. As a follow up to the Bee City proclamation, Virginia Historic Garden Week is in April and the Garden Tour will be April 19. The Garden Clubs in Virginia are more important than people realize to attract tourism. Pearson reminded everyone of the Citizen Advisory Board. Applications are being accepted for several vacant board seats. Pearson welcomed new Chamber an CPEG president Brenell Thomas. Pearson is outraged over the shooting in Nashville, she asked that residents pray for the school, the families and the community. Lawson congratulated the Police Department and said that holding that accreditation for so long is a great accomplishment. Lawson congratulated Mr. Mitchell on his Council appointment. Lawson offered sympathy for the family of Latanya Billups who passed away last week, while at Disney with the high school band. Lawson entertained a motion to add two representatives from the uptown business district to the Citizens Advisory Committee and asked that they meet at the same time as the Emergency Housing Committee to save money on security at the front door. Pearson seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, Lawson amended the motion to allow any City business owner or operator, not just uptown businesses. All Council Members voted in favor. Lawson thanked members of Council for accommodating her schedule in recent weeks. Lawson requested a bi-monthly and year-to-date report on legal expenses accrued through Sands Anderson since this is a new venture and reminded citizens that April 22, from 9:00am-12:00pm is Hazardous Waste Day. Vice Mayor Rawls welcomed Council Member Mitchell, sharing that it was a difficult decision and he has reached out to the other three candidates. Rawls is grateful for the Police Department and offered congratulations on their accreditation. Rawls offered kudos to Mr. Sanguadolche for standing up for the community and taking action. Mayor Jones welcomed Mitchell and requested prayers for Nashville and Alabama for the loss of lives. Congratulations to the Police Departments, he is hearing a lot of compliments from citizens. Jones encouraged residents to step up and become more involved in the City.

Comments by the City Manager – City Manager Towarnicki explained that City Council has selected the firm of Sands Anderson to provide City Attorney services going forward; they will have someone to attend Council meetings in the future. Any request for legal services must originate through the City Manager's office to better manage what's taken to them and costs associated with it. Towarnicki explained the variety of ways for residents to apply for board and commission vacancies and the information that can be found online. There will be a public input meeting on March 30 at 6:00pm with CFI Consulting to determine firsthand from citizens what obstacles they face when trying to purchase a home or obtain lending

There being no further business, Council Member Lawson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Vice-Mayor Rawls, with the meeting adjourning at 8:40pm.