

# Radford University/Radford City Joint Commission Minutes

The Hub on East Main Street  
May 13, 2025 @ 8:30 am

Attendees: Ben Bondurant, Angela Joyner, David Perryman, Craig Meadows, Jerry Holdaway, Melissa Skelton, Bethany Usher, Susan Trageser, Jenni Webb, Kim Repass, Rob Hoover, Eric Plummer and Lisa Ghidotti. Susan Trageser appeared by Zoom.

The meeting agenda is created by the Commission members and designed to create an opportunity to discuss collaborative initiatives, learn about specific topics and/or areas of interest, and develop relevant action plans as needed.

## **I. Welcome**

The meeting was opened by Co-chair, Angela Joyner, who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **II. City Budget Update**

Craig Meadows, Interim City Manager, updated the Commission regarding the recently approved Radford City budget. The 2026 budget approved by council was discussed. Revenue increases in real estate, meals, and hotel occupancy taxes, as well as adjustments to water and sewer rates were discussed. Concerns were raised regarding the impact of increased real estate taxes and utility costs on tenants. It was explained that the increase in real state taxes from 69 cents to 82 cents would generate \$121,000 per penny increase, but it was emphasized that tax hikes alone would not resolve the financial issues. The city indicated that a graphic would be placed on the city's website to enhance transparency and understanding among residents.

## **III. Radford Community Fest update**

Melissa Skelton and Tricia Smith presented an update on the upcoming Radford Community Fest, scheduled for August 23, 2025. The discussion included strategies for effective promotion and the importance of integrating the event into existing communications. Tricia also announced plans for National Trails Day on June 7, which will be held at the SELU Conservancy and will include a variety of outdoor activities such as hiking, boating, birding walks, and traditional craft demonstrations by the C. E. Richardson Appalachian Education Center.

## **IV. Amphitheater update**

Angela Joyner then shared progress on the amphitheater project, emphasizing the partnership with Midwood Entertainment for programming and management. The design phase is ongoing, and construction cost estimates are being developed with a goal of achieving a net neutral financial impact. A proposal is expected to be submitted to the university president ahead of the June Board of Visitors meeting.

## V. Strategic framework

The meeting concluded with a discussion on updating the strategic framework to better reflect the evolving needs and opportunities of both the university and the city. The group discussed the potential for sponsorships and outlined five strategic pillars, beginning with economic development and innovation. A collaborative innovation space was proposed to support small business growth, and Dan McKinney, Executive Director of the Radford Chamber of Commerce, will assist in identifying specific community needs and resource gaps.

### City Representatives

- Kellie Artrip – Radford City Council Member
- Craig Meadows – Interim City Manager
- Jerry Holdaway – Radford City Chief of Police
- Dan McKinney – Executive Director, Radford Chamber of Commerce
- Kim Repass – Director of Economic Development & Director of Tourism
- Jenni Webb – Director of Communications and City Clerk
- Melissa Skelton – Director of Planning and Zoning
- Ben Bondurant - Real Estate Rep and Developer
- Kelsi Jones – Owner of BT's Restaurant

### University Representatives

- Susan Trageser - Vice President for Student Affairs
- Angela Joyner – Vice President for Economic Development and Corporate Education
- Bethany Usher – Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - Positive enrollment trend was reported, with 2008 undergraduates having paid deposits, up from 1800 last year. The governor's budget has also allocated funds for a new health sciences building in Roanoke, which will support existing programs while expanding nursing education in Radford.
- Rob Hoover – Vice President for Finance and Administration
- Eric Plummer – Assistant VP for Public Safety
- Lisa Ghidotti – Executive Director of Governmental Relations and Strategic Initiatives
- Nichole Hair – Director of Economic Development and Community Engagement
- David Perryman – Associate Vice President for Strategic Communications
  - Radford University was selected as Top Adventure College for 2025 by Blue Ridge Outdoors

<https://www.blueridgeoutdoors.com/newswire/radford-university-crowned-2025s-top-adventure-college/>

### Calendar updates

- CoWorks @ the HUB launch (May 27)
- National Trails Day (June 7)
- Radford Community Fest (August 23)
- Highlander Festival (September 13)
- Homecoming (October 9 – 11)