

**RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE  
CITY OF STAUNTON'S  
2019 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Staunton, Virginia, governing from a position closest to the City's citizens and desiring to make City government more responsive to Staunton citizens, believe it is important to advise the City's representatives in the Virginia General Assembly of the City's legislative positions.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the City of Staunton that the legislative principles adopted by the Virginia Municipal League (VML) are hereby endorsed:

**The Governor and General Assembly should not:**

- Restrict further local revenue authority or sources.
- Impose new funding requirements or expand existing ones on services delivered by local governments.
- Shift state funding responsibilities onto local governments.
- Impose state fees, taxes or surcharges on local government services.
- Place additional unfunded mandates and other administrative burdens on local governments.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that City Council respectfully requests that the General Assembly **support** legislation regarding the following issues:

**A. Education**

1. The General Assembly should fully fund public education—funding all mandated programs and services of education on the basis of realistic costs; increasing Standards of Quality funding, coming from general fund revenues, appropriated to elementary and secondary education; providing for flexibility in the use of those funds to meet unique local needs; and supporting specialized training, professional development and extended contracts for staff in challenged schools.
2. The General Assembly should fully fund the Virginia Preschool Initiative.
3. The General Assembly should continue to support the revisions of the system of accountability to encompass balanced assessments and expand the implementation of problem-based assessments for greater validity and more cost-effective sampling techniques, and continue the implementation of expedited test retakes to more accurately reflect student achievement, sense of inquiry, and love of learning.

4. The General Assembly should enact legislation to double the sales and use tax revenue distribution statewide to provide funding for capital for new or renovated school building projects, using the same formula for sales and use tax distribution as is used currently for distribution for Standards of Quality funding.
5. The General Assembly should provide new avenues for funding public school construction and renovation costs, including the creation of a pilot program of competitive grants using funds from the Virginia Public Building Authority to offset new construction costs for publicly owned and operated K-12 schools.

## **B. Pediatric Cancer Research**

City Council is appalled by the lack of cancer research coordination, the glacially slow FDA new treatment approval process, and the totally inadequate level of federal funding for pediatric cancer research. Less than 4% of all cancer research spending is for pediatric cancer and only two treatments are currently approved by the FDA. Council requests that the Virginia General Assembly petition the federal government to make pediatric cancer a real priority in order to save the lives of countless children who cannot speak for themselves or vote.

## **C. Certificates of Public Need**

Council supports Virginia's Certificate of Public Need (COPN) program as an important component of the Commonwealth's health care system and encourages the General Assembly to retain COPN in its current form.

## **D. Chesapeake Bay Water Quality**

City Council requests that the Commonwealth increase Stormwater Legal Assistance Fund (SLAF) funding to at least \$50 million and Agricultural BMP Cost-Share Program funding to at least \$100 million.

## **E. Transportation**

1. City Council supports improvements to railroad infrastructure to increase freight shipment capacity and reduce truck traffic and impacts on Interstate 81.
2. City Council supports a Primary Seatbelt Law.
3. City Council supports a ban on handheld cell phone use by operators of moving motor vehicles.

4. City Council supports the use of non-motorized transportation, including trails, pathways and green corridors, for health, energy conservation and cost reasons for all Virginians.
5. City Council supports increased federal and state funding for public transit; policies that allow for the equitable distribution of such funding; and dedicated sources for such funding.

#### **F. Libraries**

City Council supports efforts to maintain and increase State Aid to Public Libraries as mandated by the Code of Virginia to strengthen funding for public library materials and programs that target childhood literacy and STEM instruction.

#### **G. Virginia State Parks**

City Council encourages the Governor and General Assembly to support additional land acquisition for state parks, outdoor recreation and natural areas.

#### **H. Broadband Expansion**

City Council supports the expansion of broadband to all areas of the Commonwealth.

#### **I. Solar Tax Incentives**

City Council supports state tax incentives for private homeowners, businesses and the solar energy industry to incentivize an increase in the use of clean solar energy systems, to reduce dependence on extractive fossil fuels and emissions and increase energy independence.

#### **J. Predatory Lending**

City Council continues its eight-year long fight against predatory lending. Council supports:

- A return to the usury law (36% interest rate cap inclusive of all fees) that Virginia had prior to 2002.
- Vigorous enforcement by the Attorney General of the ban on illegal internet loans.
- If the Senate and the House refuse to act, swift approval by the General Assembly of a statewide referendum on an interest rate cap.

## **K. Equal Rights Amendment**

City Council supports passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and urges the General Assembly to take the necessary steps to put this matter before the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## **L. Opioids**

City Council supports any efforts to curb opioid use and abuse, including state programs that partner with local governments to deal with the effects of this growing epidemic.

## **M. Fair Elections**

Like many of our citizens, members of City Council regard with concern the reports received from other states and regions of apparent attempts on the part of government officials to suppress voter turnout. Reductions in voting locations, malfunctioning voting machines, preemptory removal of citizens' names from voting rolls, and other such strategies for unfairly influencing the outcome of an election reflect an abandonment of the democratic principles upon which our nation and commonwealth were founded.

Council urges our representatives in the General Assembly to make every effort to ensure that Virginia elections are fair, secure, accurate, accessible, and transparent. Further, Council urges the General Assembly to explore and implement additional strategies for encouraging voter turn-out, including:

- automatic registration
- expanded voting hours
- establishment of election day as a state holiday

## **N. Public Notice, Public Hearing and Public Procurement**

The General Assembly should support legislation to reduce required, expensive newspaper advertising for public notices, public hearings and public procurement including legislation to give localities the option to use electronic or other forms of notification as an alternative to newspaper advertising.

## **O. Behavioral Health and Development Disability**

- The General Assembly should provide full funding for the System Transformation Excellence and Performance (STEP-VA) initiative of the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services during the 2018-2020 biennial budget.

- The General Assembly should increase the Medicaid Early Intervention case management reimbursement rate to its data-determined adequacy.
- The General Assembly should fund 800 additional Family and Individual Supports (FIS) Waivers and 250 Community Living (CL) Waivers.

**P. State Aid to Localities for Law Enforcement - HB599**

The City of Staunton requests the General Assembly fully fund HB599 for law enforcement as mandated by the Code of Virginia.

**Q. Jail Staffing/Compensation Board**

The City of Staunton requests the General Assembly fund the required staffing positions based on the Average Daily Population (ADP) for regional jails, which would result in 70 more positions for Middle River Regional Jail based on ADP for 2017.

**BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that City Council respectfully requests that the General Assembly **oppose** the following legislation:

**A. Eminent Domain by Private Utilities for Surveying**

City Council opposes the eminent domain rights extended to Dominion Virginia Power and other private utilities to enter onto private property without the consent of the landowner for the purpose of surveying for proposed projects before agreements have been reached with such property owners.

**B. Stormwater Utility Exemptions**

City Council opposes legislation which would exempt any property owner from the payment of local stormwater utility fees.

The Clerk of Council shall mail or deliver a copy of this Resolution to the Governor, the City's representatives in the General Assembly, other selected members of the General Assembly and area local governments; to the Virginia Municipal League, Virginia Association of Counties and Virginia First Cities and to other interested persons, as appropriate.

Adopted this 8<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2018.

Carolyn W. Dull  
Carolyn W. Dull, Mayor

ATTEST: Suzanne F. Simmons  
Suzanne F. Simmons  
Clerk of Council