

CITY OF LYNCHBURG 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The City of Lynchburg's 2024 Legislative Agenda is designed to highlight those areas of importance to the city. The Lynchburg City Council has prioritized Education, Public Safety, and Economic Strength. The City Council asks that the legislators keep the following principals in mind as they evaluate and vote on future Virginia legislation.

EDUCATION

Early Childhood Education/Pre-K Initiatives: The City of Lynchburg supports legislation that would improve access to and quality of early childhood education. This should be accomplished through incentives or other direct support for the development of early educational opportunities.

Educational Funding: The City of Lynchburg supports legislation to modernize the Standards of Quality funding formula to more accurately reflect the staffing levels required to operate an effective school division. This includes providing funding for critical teacher support positions and ensuring that the teacher salaries included in the formula are nationally competitive.

Funding for Infrastructure: The City of Lynchburg supports legislation that would provide funding and support for capital investment in K-12 facilities. This includes direct state capital funding and support for amending the Code of Virginia to allow all localities the option of increasing local sales taxes specifically for the purpose of school construction and major renovation.

Support an Elected School Board: As City Council supports a transition to an elected school board, the City of Lynchburg and City Council request legislation to make it easier for localities to transition from an appointed to an elected school board.

Commented [BM1]: Vice Mayor Faraldi suggest a language change to the amended as opposed to the previous "The City of Lynchburg supports legislation to make it easier for localities to transition from an appointed to an elected school board."

PUBLIC SAFETY

911-Operators: The City of Lynchburg requests that 911-Operators be considered as Emergency Services Personnel at the same level with others included within the Line of Duty Act and entitled to the same benefits.

Blighted Properties: The City of Lynchburg asks that the General Assembly amend the Code of Virginia to allow cities to impose a civil penalty of \$500 per month for a derelict commercial or industrial property in the same manner as is allowed for a residential property.

Derelict Housing: The City of Lynchburg asks that the state provide funding to the existing account "Virginia Removal or Rehabilitation of Derelict Housing Fund" to support the rehabilitation, renovation and demolition costs.

Driving/Operating a Motor Vehicle, Etc. Under the Influence of Marijuana: The City of Lynchburg is requesting the General Assembly amend Virginia Code Sections 18.2-266(v), 18.2-266.1(A), 18.2-269(A)(4), and 46.2-341.24(A)(v) by including an equal to or greater than amount/level of marijuana per liter of blood that would be presumptive that a person is driving or operating a motor vehicle, commercial motor vehicle, engine, or train under the influence of drugs.

Commented [BM2]: Councilmember Dolan requests an addition to the Legislative Agenda to include a change in State Codes concerning driving under the influence of marijuana.

Emergency Custody Orders (ECOs) and Temporary Detention Orders (TDOs): The City of Lynchburg supports legislation to remove the mandates that law enforcement must stay with ECO patients at the hospital and that law enforcement no longer must transport TDO patients.

Law-enforcement officers; protected personal information: The City of Lynchburg supports legislation to protect any law-enforcement officer who would provide information relative to a criminal investigation or in proceedings preliminary to a criminal prosecution the right to refuse to disclose their residence address, home telephone number, or any personal information concerning their family. Also, provides that any law-enforcement officer who testifies as a witness in a criminal case may refuse to disclose personal information concerning their family unless it is determined by the court that such evidence is relevant to the case.

Line of Duty Act: The City of Lynchburg requests that any Police Officer, emergency service personnel and any subdivision that are responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the enforcement of the penal laws and exposed to the same risks of injury or death are covered under the Virginia Line of Duty Act in the same manner as those already covered under the LODA.

Modernize Fire Programs Funding: The City of Lynchburg supports legislation that would replace the current Fire-Rescue programs funding including the Four for Life program and the Aid to Localities program with a modernized formula driven program similar to the HB 599 funding that Virginia Police Departments receive. The current programs restrict funding for very specific uses which can lead to less effective spending. An updated formula driven program with fewer restrictions would ensure the funding goes to the highest priority uses.

Primary (Versus Secondary) Offense Enforcement: The City of Lynchburg requests that the General Assembly allow law-enforcement officers the ability to stop (as primary offenses versus secondary offenses) vehicles and persons for violations of defective/unsafe equipment, dark window tint, expired registration and/or inspection (upon immediate expiration versus delayed expiration), smoking in a vehicle with a minor, jaywalking, and the other applicable traffic offenses described under HB 5058 of the 2020 Special Session I.

Recklessly Allowing A Child Access to a Loaded Unsecured Firearm(s): The City of Lynchburg requests the General Assembly consider changing the age threshold from fourteen (14) years of age to seventeen (17) years of age under Virginia Code Section 18.2-56.2(A).

Commented [BM3]: Councilwoman Dolan suggests to request the State to change the age threshold from fourteen (14) to seventeen (17).

'Secondhand Smoke' Exposure to Children: The City of Lynchburg requests that the General Assembly add a separate criminal offense to the State Code that makes it a Class 3 misdemeanor to expose 'secondhand smoke' from tobacco, marijuana, or other smoked products to a child younger than 15 years of age. A conviction for such an offense, in accordance with applicable evidentiary rules, would be able to be admitted in applicable child abuse/child neglect civil court proceedings. Where appropriate, Sec. 46.2-810.1 of the State Code would be revised.

ECONOMIC STRENGTH

Business License Tax: The City of Lynchburg opposes legislation that would reduce or eliminate a locality's authority to impose a business license tax. The loss of \$10,500,000 in revenue from the Business License Tax would equate to a 14-cent increase in the city's Real Property Tax rate.

Communications Sales and Use Tax: The City of Lynchburg supports legislation to extend the Communications Sales and Use Tax to include audio and video streaming services and prepaid calling services.

Economic Development: The City of Lynchburg asks that the General Assembly increase funding for existing economic development/redevelopment incentive funds. These incentives play a pivotal role in attracting, retaining, and expanding business and bringing good paying jobs to the city. Programs that support redevelopment are especially important for LYH because we are an urban City that is virtually fully developed. Grant programs that assist with redevelopment and rehabilitation continue to be essential for our continued success.

Unfunded Mandates: The City of Lynchburg request that any new legislation that requires localities to perform certain actions provides the local funding needed to carry out the requirements.

OTHER PRIORITIES

Change in FOIA Exemption: The City of Lynchburg requests a change in current legislation to allow for elected officials an exception under the Freedom of Information Act to access otherwise exempted public records.

State Supported Local Employees: The City of Lynchburg requests that all locally supported state employees receive competitive pay for their positions. This includes: Commissioner of Revenue, Sheriff's Office, Commonwealth's Attorney, Treasurer, Employees of the Circuit Court, Judges and employees of the General District Court, Magistrate(s), Juvenile and Domestic Court employees and other states appointed required staff.