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## Proposed Budget Available to Public

Harrisonburg, VA – Harrisonburg’s City Manager has presented the proposed budget for fiscal year 2015-2016 to City Council.

The total budget for 2015-2016 is proposed at \$221.5 million. The General Fund proposed budget totals \$100.5 million. This is a 6.6% increase over the current year’s original budget. Revenues include a proposed six cent increase in the real estate tax rate and an estimated \$3.2 million in growth in other general fund revenues. This budget also establishes a new Stormwater Fund to address State and Federal mandates relative to Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts. The billing rate has been set at \$10.50 for every 500 square feet of a parcel. The Water Fund has proposed an increase in rates by ten cents per 1,000 gallons; and the Sanitation Fund has a proposed \$3.00 increase to the monthly solid waste management fee, to offset revenues lost with the closing of the Resource Recovery Facility.

“The impact of a growing community continues to have a significant effect on our budget,” explained City Manager Kurt Hodgen. “While we have not added new services or programs for several years, we have more people needing or consuming the services, programs, and facilities that we already provide.” According to the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, Harrisonburg’s population has grown 7.6% since 2010, nearly twice the growth of the average of all cities in Virginia as well as neighboring Rockingham County.

To help meet the needs of more people, the City has expanded or is expanding its infrastructure through capital investments (example: parks and recreation facilities, new streets, sidewalks and trails, traffic signals, street lights, detention facilities, emergency communications equipment, etc.), which in turn has caused increases in the City’s operational costs. The City also recognizes the financial demands of a growing public school system.

Hodgen added, “This proposed budget reflects attention on growth-related needs.”

Designing a city budget is an important and challenging task to be completed each year. It requires a great deal of time and effort, a careful ordering of priorities, consultation with the comprehensive plan and capital improvement plan, as well as input from citizens.

A public hearing will be scheduled and advertised for April 28 to allow for members of the community to comment and provide insight on the proposed budget.

Residents wanting to post comments before the public hearing have an opportunity to do so through [www.BeHeardHarrisonburg.org](http://www.BeHeardHarrisonburg.org). This online forum provides a platform to receive citizen feedback on various topics. A budget-related discussion has been added and will be available until the public hearing is over.

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The 2015-2016 budget will need to be approved by May 31 and the fiscal year will run July 1, 2015 until June 30, 2016.

To review a complete copy of the proposed budget, visit [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/budget](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/budget). Printed copies are also available for viewing in the City Manager's Office and Massanutten Regional Library.

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