

# **Proposed 2018 City of Roanoke Legislative Program**

## **Fiscal Policy**

Any proposed tax reform must be based on the fundamental principle that local revenue sources cannot be further limited or restricted by the General Assembly without the enactment legislation that will authorize localities to establish meaningful and viable alternative sources of local revenue.

The General Assembly must vigilantly and effectively avoid enactment of any further unfunded mandates to localities and initiate procedures to review, assess, and eliminate existing and burdensome mandates imposed on localities. Unfunded mandates include mandatory tax exemptions to specific groups of individuals, as worthy and deserving as they may be.

The General Assembly must provide localities with common sense tools to eliminate unnecessary expenses such as the payment of interest, at statutory interest rates, on refunds based solely on taxpayers' errors or mistakes.

The General Assembly should enable all localities with the authority to implement a tax amnesty program similar to initiatives afforded the Commonwealth and the City of Richmond. Localities would then be able to establish programs to address their specific challenges in collecting overdue taxes and thereby alleviate economic pressures exerted on communities by delinquent taxpayers.

## **Technology and Infrastructure Policy**

The General Assembly should eliminate impediments facing localities from bringing 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology to their citizens.

The Commonwealth and the City must develop partnerships among federal, state, and local constituencies to expand highway infrastructure development throughout Virginia's Blue Ridge, including the expansion of I-73.

## **Environmental Policy**

The City opposes any efforts by the General Assembly to mandate further exemptions from payment of local stormwater utility fees. In addition, the City requests the General Assembly to hold localities harmless from any costs associated with increases in the load of sediment and other pollutants of concern that enter waters of the Commonwealth, including rivers, streams, and tributaries, where such increases in the Total Maximum Daily Load for a locality are attributable to projects and developments approved by the Commonwealth that include crossings of bodies of water within the Commonwealth.

The City supports providing localities with the option, not the mandate, to regulate the use of plastic bags and disposable extruded polystyrene (Styrofoam) food and beverage containers within their communities.

## **Economic Development Policy**

The City encourages the General Assembly to maintain existing tools, including historic tax credits, to encourage development and redevelopment throughout the City and Virginia's Blue Ridge Region.

The City supports continuation and increased funding for the Commonwealth's Opportunity Fund (COF). This important economic development incentive program has played a major role in several Roanoke job creation projects. The COF is an essential tool when competing with other states who often offer lucrative incentive packages to prospective companies.

The City encourages the General Assembly to refrain from enacting further limitations on planning, development, and zoning tools that localities may use in regulating and promoting development within their communities.

## **Education Policy**

The City and Roanoke City Public Schools urge the General Assembly to fully fund its obligations to public education, including funding for technology needed to meet the SOL requirements and enhance learning by all children.

The City and Roanoke City Public Schools urge the General Assembly to maintain the ability of Roanoke City Public Schools to set the start date for its school year.

## **2018 VML Legislative Program**

The City endorses and supports the 2018 VML Legislative Program.

## 2018 Legislative Priorities

The City requests its legislative delegation to patron and support the following legislative initiatives:

1. Authorize localities to adopt ordinances limiting smoking within designated areas of outdoor public spaces.

This proposal requires an amendment to the Virginia Clean Air Act (Sections 15.2-2820 through 15.2-2833).

2. Authorize treasurers and localities to retain third party collection services to collect any delinquent amount due a locality, including local taxes and fees, and reduce the delinquency period from six (6) months to three (3) months before collections activities may be commenced with the use of third party collection agencies. State Code currently limits the ability of the treasurer or director of finance in the use of third party collection agencies and also requires that such obligations be delinquent for at least six (6) months before such collection activities may be initiated. One fee affected by these limitations is delinquent parking citations.

This proposal requires amendments to Sections 58.1-3919.1 and 58.1-3934.

3. Authorize localities and school districts to establish the school year start date. The City enjoys an exception that allows Roanoke Public Schools to start before Labor Day. Flexibility in establishing the school start is critical to the education of the children. This flexibility allows school districts to coordinate programs and educational opportunities.

This proposal requires amendments to Chapter 22.1.