



**HARRISONBURG | VA**  
**FRIENDLY BY NATURE**



For Immediate Release – Feb. 29, 2024

Contact: Michael Parks, Harrisonburg Director of Communications  
540.432.7701  
Michael.Parks@harrisonburgva.gov

## HDPT adds two electric school buses, eyes growth of electric fleet

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The City of Harrisonburg’s Department of Public Transportation (HDPT) will soon roll out new tools to help reach goals concerning community resiliency and the natural environment.

HDPT recently received two 2024 International CE Series EV school buses, obtained in part thanks to a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Clean School Bus Program grant. The program awarded \$570,300 to HDPT to offset the difference between what two new diesel buses would cost versus the cost of the two electric school buses, as well as for the purchase of associated charging infrastructure. In addition to the buses, HDPT has installed two Level 2 chargers at their facility on Washington Street, with room for eight more chargers to be added when needed. In total, the City’s contribution to the purchase was \$229,650.

The buses, zero-emissions vehicles, are built to travel approximately 135 miles on a single charge and utilize a regenerative braking system that will allow the bus to charge itself when not accelerating. For HDPT Director Gerald Gatobu, the new buses are a step into the future that the department is eager to take.

“HDPT serves many of our community’s youngest members, so it is important to all of us here that we are part of ensuring a healthy future for them by protecting our environment,” Gatobu said. “I am sincerely grateful



*HDPT recently received two new electric school buses which will begin being used on HCPS routes soon.*



for the HDPT team that has worked hard to receive the Virginia DEQ grant and to bring these buses to Harrisonburg. Everyone from our fleet manager, our facilities manager, grants program manager, Harrisonburg Electric Commission (HEC), Kingmor Supply, Inc, and many more are actively part of making HDPT better every day and finding new ways to provide high-quality, reliable service to the people of The Friendly City.”

The buses are currently going through inspections and installation of equipment such as a radio system at HDPT’s Central Garage. Staff, including drivers and City mechanics, will be trained on the new buses before they are assigned to a school route and put into service. The additions bring the City’s fleet to seven fully electric vehicles across all departments, seven hybrid vehicles, and another five hybrid vehicles on order.

The investment into lower-emission vehicles aligns with the Harrisonburg City Council 2043 Vision Plan (<https://harrisonburgva.gov/city-council-vision>), that in part calls for the City to protect natural assets that are critical to maintaining local quality of life by investing in sustainable infrastructure and equipment. The City’s Environmental Action Plan (<https://harrisonburgva.gov/EAP>) also outlines ways the organization can address sustainable transportation by developing an alternative fuel fleet program, among other efforts.

“I am grateful to Gerald and the HDPT team for their diligent efforts to bring these school buses to our community,” Harrisonburg Vice Mayor Laura Dent said. “School buses are an excellent application for electric vehicles – they can charge overnight when not in use, they have no emissions, which is better for our environment and the health of riders, and they will save our taxpayers money in the long run due to reduced fuel and maintenance costs. These important strides help us work toward our 2043 vision for the future.”

Learn more about HDPT at <https://harrisonburgva.gov/hdpt>.

***The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,990 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).*

###