

MINUTES OF THE JULY 14, 2026 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell Council was held on Tuesday July 14, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

John B. Partin, Mayor
Rita Joyner, Vice Mayor
Michael Harris, Councilor
Susan Daye, Councilor
Lovena Rapole, Councilor
Malik D. Wheat Councilor

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to make an amendment to the agenda for R-6 for a resolution for Colonel Bendelwski's retirement. Councilor Wheat seconds this motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

CLOSED MEETING

Councilor Wheat makes a motion to go into a closed meeting under Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1), to discuss personnel matters (HR class and compensation study); § 2.2-3711(A)(7), to consult with legal counsel on actual or probable litigation (Hopewell Water Renewal Commission); and § 2.2-3711(A)(8), for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel (offer of gifted properties and franchise agreement). Vice Mayor Joyner seconds this motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA CODE §2.2-3712 (D): Were only public business matters (1) lawfully exempted from open-meeting requirements and (2) identified in the closed-meeting motion discussed in the closed meeting?

Councilor Daye makes a motion to reconvene the open meeting. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds this motion

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

WELCOME TO VISITORS

REPORT TO THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Vincent Jones provided follow-up updates on two matters that had been raised during citizen comments at the June 23 City Council meeting. First, he reported that staff had reviewed the City's convenience center fee structure for dual-axle trailers. Mr. Jones explained that the fee schedule was established in 2017 and that the higher disposal fee for dual-axle trailers is based on their greater capacity to transport larger volumes and heavier loads of refuse, yard waste, and other materials compared to single-axle trailers. He advised that the current fee structure would remain in effect unless City Council chose to take action to amend the policy. Mr. Jones also updated Council on the City's efforts to address concerns regarding the feral cat population. He stated that, following Council's direction, staff worked with the Hopewell Police Department, the Animal Control Unit, and the Hopewell Humane Society to support the continuation of the Humane Society's trap-neuter-return (TNR) program for feral cats. He noted that maintaining the program was important to the health and safety of the community and informed Council that the City's assistance had enabled the program to continue. Mr. Jones then concluded his remarks and proceeded to the remaining items on the meeting agenda.

Crime Summary Report- Police Chief Gregory Taylor

Police Chief Gregory Taylor presented the July Crime Summary Report, highlighting continued reductions in crime throughout the city. He reported that, compared to the same period in the previous year, violent crime had decreased by 37%, property crime by 2%, and total major crime by 10%. Chief Taylor also presented a comparison using 2022 as a benchmark, noting that since the implementation of enhanced public safety technology, violent crime has decreased by 40%, property crime by 30%, and total major crime by 32%. Chief Taylor reviewed overdose statistics, reporting that through July 2026 the City had experienced two fatal and seven non-fatal suspected opioid overdoses, for a total of nine incidents, which he noted was significantly lower than previous years. He also summarized narcotics enforcement activity, stating that officers had made 25 felony narcotics arrests and two misdemeanor narcotics arrests, for a total of 27 arrests during the year. He compared those figures with the three-year average, explaining that arrest

totals remained below previous years due to several operational factors. Addressing gun violence, Chief Taylor reported that there had been 12 verified shots-fired incidents through July 2026, compared to 54 incidents during all of 2025 and 64 incidents during 2024. He also advised Council that the Ward 4 and Ward 5 Neighborhood Watch groups had merged and now meet on the first Monday of each month from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, with Sha'rah Fuller serving as Neighborhood Watch captain. Chief Taylor provided an update on departmental staffing, stating that the Police Department currently had one dispatcher vacancy, with two applicants undergoing background investigations, and five sworn officer vacancies, with one applicant currently in the background process. He announced that the next police testing date was scheduled for July 18 and reported that three recruits had entered the police academy on July 1. Those recruits are expected to graduate in December 2026, complete field training, and be ready for independent patrol assignments by spring 2027. Chief Taylor also reviewed upcoming community engagement activities, including participation in the Hopewell Public Schools Back-to-School Event, the Hopewell Parks and Recreation Community Appreciation Event, the James House Appreciation Day, and Summer Camp Heroes Day, where officers would display police equipment, interact with youth, and participate in community activities. He concluded by outlining the Police Department's Strategic Enforcement Team (SET) priorities for the summer months of June through August, which include enforcement of the City's juvenile curfew ordinance, responding to citizen complaints, addressing loud music violations, focusing patrol efforts in HRHA communities, targeting firearms and narcotics violations, serving outstanding warrants, and increasing visibility in high-call areas. Chief Taylor noted that officers assigned to HRHA neighborhoods had been conducting outdoor roll calls and increasing community engagement in areas such as Davisville and Piper Square. He also announced that, in response to recent complaints, additional overtime patrols had been assigned to the downtown business district during late afternoon and evening hours to address quality-of-life concerns. During Council discussion, Mayor John Partin requested that future monthly crime reports include the number of juvenile curfew violations documented during the reporting period, and Chief Taylor agreed to add that information. The mayor also asked Chief Taylor to evaluate whether the city should consider moving the juvenile curfew to 10:00 p.m. or 10:30 p.m., consistent with practices adopted by other localities. Chief Taylor agreed to research other jurisdictions' policies and report back with recommendations. Vice Mayor Joyner thanked the Police Department for increasing its focus on the downtown area and addressing concerns in locations that had generated repeated complaints from residents and businesses.

Fiscal Year 2026 Year-End Preliminary Report – Stacey Jordan, Deputy City Manager

Stacey Jordan presented the preliminary Fiscal Year 2026 year-end financial report, emphasizing that the figures were preliminary and did not yet include accounts payable accruals, payroll accruals, or any additional year-end transfers required to close the fiscal year. Ms. Jordan reported that, on a citywide basis, preliminary revenues were trending 6.05% (\$9.4 million) higher than Fiscal Year 2025, while expenditures were trending 14.8% (\$10.4 million) higher than the previous fiscal year. She attributed the revenue growth primarily to increased state revenues and higher Hopewell Water Renewal (HWR) capital billing and collections. The increase in expenditures reflected the implementation of the City's classification and compensation study, along with higher capital expenditures for both the school system and enterprise funds. Based on the preliminary figures, the city was projected to end Fiscal Year

2026 with approximately \$8.4 million in revenues exceeding expenditures. Reviewing the General Fund, Ms. Jordan reported that revenues were trending 1.68% (\$4.1 million) higher than Fiscal Year 2025, while expenditures were trending 3.18% (\$354,000) lower than the prior year. She noted that General Fund expenditures reflected annual operating increases and the implementation of the classification and compensation study. Preliminary year-end projections showed the General Fund with an estimated \$5.4 million operating surplus, subject to final accruals and year-end adjustments. For the Enterprise Funds, which include Hopewell Water Renewal, Sewer, Solid Waste, and Stormwater, Ms. Jordan stated that revenues were trending 26.9% (\$12.8 million) higher than Fiscal Year 2025 due to timely customer billing and increased capital project billings. Enterprise Fund expenditures were trending 5.65% (\$3.9 million) higher, reflecting ongoing capital improvement projects and compliance-related work associated with Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Notice of Violation (NOV) requirements. Preliminary projections indicated an estimated \$4.9 million surplus within the Enterprise Funds before year-end adjustments. Ms. Jordan also reviewed the preliminary financial status of the Hopewell City Public Schools, explaining that the City's financial statements reflect only state and federal revenues and the City's local appropriations, and do not include school grant funding or supplemental appropriations received independently by the school division. She reported that school revenues were trending 23.55% (\$1.4 million) higher than Fiscal Year 2025, while expenditures were trending 15.35% (\$7.5 million) higher. She explained that the increase was influenced by the expiration of the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding, which had previously supported school operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on preliminary figures, the schools were projected to end the fiscal year with an approximate \$14,000 operating surplus. Ms. Jordan concluded by reporting that during the fourth quarter, the Finance Department processed 5,036 invoices totaling \$21,572,324, including all scheduled debt payments, and confirmed that the city had completed 100% of its Fiscal Year 2026 debt payments. She advised Council that biweekly meetings had begun with City departments, Hopewell City Public Schools, and the City's external auditors to complete the Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). The City plans to submit its financial information to the auditors by August 31, with the schools submitting their information between September 15 and September 30 to accommodate required state reporting deadlines. Ms. Jordan stated that the City remains on schedule to complete and issue the Fiscal Year 2026 ACFR before the December 15 deadline.

Treasurer's Collection Report – Jason Yancey, City Treasurer

Jason Yancey presented an end-of-fiscal-year update on the City's tax collections, investment accounts, and cash balances. He compared current collection rates with those reported to Council during his March presentation and noted continued improvement across all major revenue categories. For 2024 personal property taxes, Mr. Yancey reported that the collection rate had increased from 94.48% in March to 95.65% as of July 1. While he stated that additional progress was still needed, he emphasized that collections were moving in the right direction. For 2024 real estate taxes, the collection rate improved from 98.50% in March to 98.74%. He also reported that 2024 business license collections had increased from 99.77% to 99.99%, leaving only \$843 outstanding. Mr. Yancey then reviewed 2025 collections, reporting that personal property tax collections had increased from approximately 89% in March to 92% as of July 1, adding that the rate had risen by an additional quarter of a percentage point since that date. Business license

collections improved from nearly 96% to 98.31%, while real estate tax collections increased from 96.45% to 97.76%, reflecting continued progress in overall revenue collection efforts. He also provided an early update on Fiscal Year 2026 real estate tax collections, noting that 50.81% of taxes had already been collected during the first half of the collection cycle, slightly exceeding the expected 50% benchmark and indicating that many taxpayers had paid ahead of schedule. Mr. Yancey concluded by reviewing the City's investment portfolio and cash balances. He reported that the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) had a market value of just over \$9 million as of June 30, while the Charles Schwab investment account had an estimated value of approximately \$6.2 million as of May 31. The Sewer System investment account had a market value of approximately \$1.7 million as of March 31. He also summarized the balances of several City bank accounts, including approximately \$19.5 million in the City's master account, \$123,000 in the Special Welfare account, approximately \$300 in the School Board prepaid cafeteria account, approximately \$11,500 in the Beacon Theatre account, and approximately \$10,000 in the EMS Revenue Recovery account. Following the presentation, Mayor John Partin commended Mr. Yancey on the progress made during his first six months as Treasurer, praising the improvements in collection rates and encouraging him to continue the positive momentum. Mr. Yancey thanked the Mayor and Council, acknowledging that while significant progress had been made, additional work remained to further improve collections.

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM CLOSED MEETING

There were no actions resulting from closed meeting

PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Prayer by Reverend Boggs, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, led by Mayor Partin

CONSENT AGENDA

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Councilor Daye seconds this motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

C-5 Proclamation Designating July as Park and Recreation Month and July 17,2026, as Park and recreation Professionals Day- Tabitha Martinez, Director of Recreation and Parks

Tabitha Martinez addressed the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and members of City Council to express her sincere appreciation for approving the proclamation recognizing Parks and Recreation Month and Parks and Recreation Professionals Day. She emphasized that the recognition was not for her personally, but for the dedicated Parks and Recreation staff who serve as the department's frontline employees. Speaking emotionally, she credited the department's success to their hard work, commitment, and daily service to the Hopewell community. Although she prefers working behind the scenes rather than receiving public recognition, she stressed that her staff truly deserved the acknowledgment and invited those in attendance to stand and be recognized for their contributions. Martinez then read the official proclamation, highlighting the essential role parks and recreation play in promoting the health, well-being, and quality of life of Hopewell residents. She noted that the city's parks, trails, playgrounds, athletic facilities, and recreational programs foster physical and mental wellness, support youth development, encourage lifelong learning, strengthen families, and provide safe, accessible opportunities for recreation and connection with nature. She further explained that parks and recreation contribute to Hopewell's economic vitality by attracting visitors, supporting local businesses, enhancing property values, and improving the city's overall livability. Additionally, she emphasized the department's role in protecting natural resources, preserving green spaces, and improving the community's resilience to flooding and severe weather. Continuing the proclamation, Martinez recognized the dedication of Parks and Recreation professionals and volunteers who work to ensure that Hopewell's public spaces remain safe, welcoming, inclusive, and enriching for residents of all ages. She also acknowledged the national designation of July as Parks and Recreation Month by the U.S. House of Representatives and formally proclaimed July 2026 as Parks and Recreation Month in the City of Hopewell. She further recognized July 17 as Parks and Recreation Professionals Day, honoring the commitment of parks professionals and volunteers whose daily efforts strengthen the community and enrich the lives of residents. In closing, Martinez shared her excitement about celebrating her staff during a small appreciation luncheon planned for Parks and Recreation Professionals Day and expressed hope that members of City Council would attend. She reiterated that every compliment and success attributed to the department belongs to her staff, while joking that any mistakes are likely the result of her own decisions. She concluded by praising her team's exceptional work, stating that she could not perform her role without them, and thanked the Council again for recognizing their dedication and service.

C-6 Proclamation in recognition of Mary French Elder's Service to the city. – Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Vice Mayor Joyner presented a proclamation honoring Mary French Elder for her distinguished service to the City of Hopewell, noting that although Ms. Elder was unable to attend the meeting, City liaison Kelly Davis was present to accept the recognition on her behalf. She read the proclamation, recognizing Ms. Elder's more than 25 years of exceptional volunteer service on the Architectural Review Board and the Downtown Design Review Committee. Vice Mayor Joyner highlighted Ms. Elder's unwavering commitment to historic preservation, thoughtful community design, and her instrumental role in developing the City Point Historic District Design Guidelines, which continue to serve as an important framework for protecting Hopewell's historic character. Vice Mayor Joyner further recognized Ms. Elder's longstanding advocacy for the preservation and revitalization of downtown Hopewell, emphasizing that her leadership helped shape policies and projects that honored the city's history while promoting investment and

economic vitality. She noted that after more than 45 years of exemplary public service, Ms. Elder leaves behind a lasting legacy of leadership, dedication, and stewardship that has enriched the City of Hopewell and inspired those who had the privilege of serving alongside her. The proclamation formally expressed City Council's sincere appreciation for Ms. Elder's invaluable contributions to the preservation of the City Point Historic District and the continued revitalization of downtown Hopewell, while also congratulating her on her retirement and extending best wishes for her continued health, happiness, and fulfillment. Following the reading of the proclamation, Vice Mayor Joyner shared personal reflections on her years of working alongside Ms. Elder. She described it as an honor and privilege to have served with her for many of those 25 years and spoke about the critical role Architectural Review Boards play in preserving the architectural and cultural heritage of communities. She compared Hopewell's preservation efforts with those in historic cities such as Charleston, South Carolina, noting that the board's work safeguards important local landmarks, including the DuPont villages and historic buildings along Prince Henry Avenue. Vice Mayor Joyner praised Ms. Elder's fine arts background, expertise in interpreting architectural standards and design guidelines, and thoughtful judgment in reviewing cases. She concluded by expressing her gratitude for Ms. Elder's outstanding service and stated that it was a privilege to present the proclamation to Kelly Davis on Ms. Elder's behalf.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Jeffrey Maurice Torres Ward 3, addressed City Council with several policy recommendations. He first proposed that the City consider establishing a real estate tax homestead exemption for senior citizens, stating that such a program would recognize longtime residents and encourage continued homeownership in the community. Mr. Torres also suggested that City departments provide text messaging as an additional method of communication with residents, explaining that it could improve responsiveness and create better documentation of interactions compared to voicemail and email. Finally, Mr. Torres urged Council to consider prohibiting the sale of vaping products within the city, expressing concern about the prevalence of vaping among students in elementary, middle, and high schools. He stated that, based on conversations with educators and School Resource Officers, vaping devices are difficult to detect because of their limited metal content, making them less likely to be identified by standard metal detectors. Mr. Torres argued that restricting the sale of vaping products would demonstrate the City's commitment to protecting youth and reducing access to products that contribute to nicotine addiction and disrupt the school environment. He concluded by reiterating his support for a senior homestead exemption, expanded text communication with City offices, and measures to limit youth access to vaping products.

Kevin Randesi Ward 2, addressed City Council regarding the City's B-1 (Downtown Business) zoning district and questioned whether the current regulations encourage or discourage private investment in downtown Hopewell. He stated that many downtown buildings require significant rehabilitation and emphasized the importance of creating an environment that attracts property owners and businesses willing to invest in the area. Mr. Randesi expressed concern that several provisions of the B-1 zoning ordinance impose unnecessary restrictions on property owners. He cited requirements related to storefront transparency, including provisions governing the use of blinds and draperies during business hours, and questioned whether such standards could create

unintended compliance issues for businesses requiring privacy, such as law offices or professional services. He also referenced detailed regulations governing signage, canopies, and decorative lighting, noting that many exterior improvements are subject to review and approval by the Architectural Review Board (ARB). He questioned whether these requirements protect downtown's character or create barriers to redevelopment and investment. As potential solutions, Mr. Randesi suggested that the City distinguish between historic and non-historic properties by creating separate standards for buildings that contribute to the historic character of downtown and those that do not. He recommended allowing greater flexibility for non-historic structures to use modern materials and make reasonable exterior improvements while preserving stricter standards for historically significant buildings. He also encouraged Council to consider reducing the Architectural Review Board's authority over routine exterior improvements in order to streamline redevelopment efforts. Mr. Randesi concluded by urging the City to balance historic preservation with policies that encourage business investment and economic growth in downtown Hopewell.

Debbie Randolph Ward 1, addressed City Council regarding transparency in the use of public funds and the procurement process for a proposed operational audit. She first requested that the City provide regular public updates on the \$15 million bond approved for infrastructure improvements, noting that Council had previously identified the projects to be funded and anticipated cost ranges. Ms. Randolph stated that residents would benefit from periodic reports showing the progress of each project, how bond proceeds are being spent, and whether available funding remains sufficient to complete all planned improvements. She also encouraged Council to provide similar updates on the more recent school capital bond, allowing the public to track expenditures as those projects move forward. Ms. Randolph also expressed concerns regarding the proposed \$391,000 operational audit for the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA). While stating that her concern was not with the audit itself, she questioned the proposed cost and the decision to utilize a single auditing firm without issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP). She suggested that obtaining competitive proposals could potentially reduce the cost of the audit and asked Council to consider using a more competitive procurement process before proceeding. She concluded by thanking Council for considering her concerns.

Colonel Pratt Ward 7, addressed City Council regarding recent media coverage involving a proposed data center and emphasized the importance of timely communication with the public. He stated that, after reviewing several news articles, he found conflicting information regarding studies associated with the proposed project, contributing to public confusion. He expressed concern that media reports indicated the City had initially declined to comment before later issuing a response, creating the perception that the City was reacting to public criticism rather than communicating proactively. Colonel Pratt echoed an earlier public comment advocating for improved communication between the city and its residents. He encouraged Council to consider evaluating the feasibility of implementing a faster and more responsive communication system that would allow residents to receive timely information and enable the city to respond more effectively to community concerns. He suggested conducting a feasibility study to determine the costs, staffing requirements, and implementation timeline for such a system, stating that taking this step would demonstrate the City's commitment to transparency and responsiveness. He concluded by thanking Council for its consideration.

Ed Houser Ward 5, addressed City Council to express his opposition to the potential development of a data center in Hopewell. He stated that he believes such a project would negatively affect the City's future, discourage residential and commercial investment while reduce surrounding property values. Mr. Houser expressed concern that homeowners located near a proposed data center could experience declining property values while continuing to face increasing property taxes. Mr. Houser also raised concerns about the potential impact a data center could have on the City's water and wastewater infrastructure, stating his belief that existing systems are already under significant strain. He referenced information he had read regarding data centers and expressed the opinion that Virginia already has a substantial concentration of such facilities. He urged Council to carefully consider the long-term consequences of any future decisions regarding data center development and encouraged elected officials to prioritize the City's long-term interests when evaluating potential projects. Mr. Houser concluded by expressing skepticism regarding public communications about the proposal and emphasized the importance of transparency and public trust as discussions on the issue continue.

Mark Burroughs Ward 3, addressed City Council on several matters. He formally requested that Council consider amending the City's convenience center fee policy so that residents using personally owned tandem-axle trailers would be charged the same disposal fee as residents using single-axle trailers when disposing of residential yard waste. Mr. Burroughs stated that, as a city taxpayer, he believed personal-use tandem-axle trailers should not be treated the same as commercial vehicles. Mr. Burroughs also requested clarification regarding a reference in the previous meeting's minutes to a City Council rules change discussed in closed session, noting that he had not seen updated Council rules posted online. He further inquired about the status of a public document website that had previously been discussed with the City Attorney, stating that he had not received any additional information about the project. Speaking on the topic of transparency, Mr. Burroughs echoed earlier comments from other citizens, stating that residents should be able to easily follow City projects, initiatives, and expenditures without relying on news reports or social media. He encouraged the city to provide more proactive communication through public meetings, town halls, and readily accessible public information. Finally, Mr. Burroughs suggested that the City explore the installation of solar panels on school buildings, referencing another school division that reportedly achieved significant utility savings and tax-related financial benefits through such a program. He suggested the concept could be evaluated as a potential long-term cost-saving measure for Hopewell Public Schools and the City.

Jennifer Shaffer Ward 4, addressed City Council for the first time and shared her concerns about the financial challenges facing elderly and disabled residents. She stated that she has lived in Hopewell for 41 years after moving from Norton in Wise County, Virginia, and explained that she originally chose Hopewell because it reminded her of her hometown. Ms. Shaffer noted that she is active in the community through volunteer work and as a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion. Ms. Shaffer expressed concern that increasing housing costs, including higher property taxes and mortgage-related expenses, have significantly affected her ability to remain in her home. She explained that she is 68 years old, receives disability income, and has explored available tax relief programs but believes the current assistance is insufficient for residents in her situation. She urged Council to consider expanding support for elderly and disabled homeowners to help them remain in their homes and continue

living in Hopewell. Ms. Shaffer also voiced concern about the City's future, stating that she worries rising costs and financial pressures may discourage younger generations from remaining in or moving to Hopewell. She concluded by asking Council to give greater consideration to the needs of senior citizens and residents with disabilities when making future policy decisions, expressing her hope that longtime residents like herself can continue to call Hopewell home.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 (Public Hearing) Ordinance repealing and reenacting Hopewell City Code Chapter 9 (Barbershops, Beauty Parlors, and Tattoo Parlors) sections 9-41 through 9-61– Anthony Bessette, City Attorney

Anthony Bessette presented a proposed ordinance to modernize the City's regulations governing tattoo parlors and body piercing establishments. He explained that the proposed revisions originated from an inquiry by an individual interested in opening such a business in Hopewell, prompting a review of the existing ordinance. Bessette advised Council that the current ordinance was outdated, contained limited provisions addressing modern health and safety standards, and included obsolete restrictions, such as a prohibition on tattooing religious symbols. He stated that the ordinance no longer reflected current industry practices or regulatory expectations. To develop the proposed revisions, Mr. Bessette reviewed comparable ordinances from several Virginia localities and drafted an updated ordinance tailored to Hopewell's needs. He also consulted with the Virginia Department of Health, incorporated the agency's recommendations, and reported that the draft before Council was jointly recommended by the City Attorney's Office and the Virginia Department of Health. He concluded by offering to answer any questions from Council regarding the proposed ordinance.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to approve the Ordinance repealing and reenacting Hopewell City Code Chapter 9 (Barbershops, Beauty Parlors, and Tattoo Parlors) sections 9-41 through 9-61. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

R-2 (Public Hearing) Ordinance amending Hopewell City Code Chapter 33 (Streets and Sidewalks) sections 33-60 through 33-62 – Anthony Bessette, City Attorney

Anthony Bessette presented a housekeeping amendment to the City Code concerning the inspection of work performed within public rights-of-way. He explained that the existing ordinance assigns the authority and responsibility for inspecting roadway excavations and utility work to the Director of Development. However, in practice, those duties are performed by the

Deputy Director of Public Works for Stormwater and Engineering, who is the appropriate official to oversee such inspections. The proposed amendment would formally transfer the inspection authority and related responsibilities to that position, aligning the ordinance with current operational practices. Following the presentation, Mayor John Partin opened the required public hearing. With no speakers registered to comment, the public hearing was closed. Council briefly discussed whether to place the ordinance on a future consent agenda or take action immediately and expressed its preference to proceed with approval at that meeting.

Vice Mayor Joyner make a motion to approve the Ordinance amending Hopewell City Code Chapter 33 (Streets and Sidewalks) sections 33-60 through 33-62. Councilor Rapole seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

R-3 (Public Hearing) Modification of Development Standards request from the Well of Hope Church of the Nazarene to install a second freestanding sign on Parcel #089-1462, also identified as 3308 Oaklawn Blvd., in the B-4 Corridor Development District – Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Chris Ward presented the first reading and public hearing for a Modification to Development Standards request concerning 3302/3308 Oaklawn Boulevard (Parcel 0891462) in Ward 7, zoned B-4 Corridor Development. The applicant, Well of Hope Church of the Nazarene, requested approval to install a second freestanding sign on the property, which is owned by Riley Ingram. Mr. Ward explained that the City's development standards currently permit only one freestanding sign per parcel. The property is occupied by two tenants Ingram and Associates Real Estate on the east side of the building and Well of Hope Church of the Nazarene on the west side. He stated that the church had installed a post-and-panel sign without first obtaining the required permit, resulting in the need for Council to consider a modification to the development standards. Mr. Ward reviewed the applicable provisions of the City's sign ordinance, noting that all freestanding signs require permits and that only one freestanding sign is generally permitted per parcel. He also outlined the criteria Council must consider when evaluating requests for modifications to development standards. Staff determined that the request did not constitute a variance, special exception, conditional use, or rezoning; was not based primarily on financial considerations; did not alter a previously imposed property-specific condition; and met the applicable review standards. Mr. Ward explained that staff had evaluated alternative options, including adding the church's name to the existing freestanding sign or installing a building-mounted sign. However, he noted that the existing sign is located beyond the property's entrance on Oaklawn Boulevard, meaning motorists traveling on the one-way roadway would pass the church entrance before seeing the sign. He also advised that the property owner does not permit

building-mounted signs on the structure. Based on these circumstances, staff recommended approval of the modification, subject to the conditions that the new freestanding sign comply with all applicable sign standards in the City's development regulations and be located so that it does not obstruct visibility for vehicular traffic. Mr. Ward also reported that the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the request at its public hearing held the previous month. Following the presentation, Mayor John Partin opened the required public hearing. With no citizens signed up to speak, the public hearing was closed, and Council proceeded with consideration of the request.

Councilor Rapole makes a motion to approve the modification of development standards request from the Well of Hope Church of the Nazarene to install a second freestanding sign on Parcel #089-1462, also identified as 3308 Oaklawn Blvd., in the B-4 Corridor. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

R-4 Legacy Swim Club 2026–2027 MOA (formerly known as NOVA South) – Tabitha Martinez, Director of Recreation and Parks

Tabitha Martinez provided City Council with an update regarding the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the organization formerly known as Nova South. She explained that the only change to the agreement was the organization's legal name change to Legacy Swim Club. Ms. Martinez stated that no substantive provisions of the agreement had been modified and that the update was administrative in nature. In accordance with the terms of the MOA, the City Manager is authorized to execute the revised agreement. She presented the update to ensure Council remained informed, consistent with previous presentations concerning the agreement.

R-5 Resolution amending the fiscal year 2027 budget to fund an operational audit for Hopewell Public Schools – Stacey Jordan, Deputy City Manager

Stacey Jordan presented a resolution authorizing Hopewell Public Schools to utilize its surplus funds to pay for an operational efficiency assessment of the school system. She explained that the resolution would permit the School Division to use its available surplus to fund the assessment, which is intended to evaluate operational efficiencies and identify opportunities for improved effectiveness within the school system.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to approve the resolution amending the fiscal year 2027 budget to fund an operational audit for Hopewell Public Schools. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Abstain
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

R-6 Proclamation Honoring Col. Richard Bendeleswki upon his retirement from the United States Army – Mayor Johnny Partin Jr.

Councilor Wheat makes a motion for Proclamation Honoring Col. Richard Bendeleswki upon his retirement from the United States Army. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds this motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes
Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,



Sade' Allen, City Clerk


Johnny Partin, Mayor