

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 12, 2023 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday
December 12, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: John B. Partin, Mayor (Virtual)
Jasmine Gore, Vice Mayor
Janice Denton, Councilor
Brenda Pelham, Councilor
Dominic Holloway, Councilor
Rita Joyner, Councilor
Michael Harris, Councilor (Virtual)

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to allow Councilor Harris and Mayor Partin to participate for meeting virtually.

ROLL CALL	Councilor Denton	Yes
	Councilor Pelham-	Yes
	Councilor Holloway-	Yes
	Councilor Joyner-	Yes
	Councilor Harris-	Abstained
	Mayor Partin-	Abstained
	Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes.

Vice Mayor Gore allows Mayor Partin and Councilor Harris to log off of open session and sign in virtually to closed session, they are excused from vote of closed session motion.

Motion Passes 5-0

Councilor Denton makes a motion to allow Councilor Harris to participate in meeting by zoom.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Excused
Mayor Partin-	Excused
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0**Reconvene Open Meeting**

Councilor Denton makes a motion to reconvene open meeting and second by Councilor Joyner.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Excused
Mayor Partin-	Excused
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0**CERTIFICATION:**

Immediately thereafter, council responded to the question 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 closed meeting?

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Excused
Mayor Partin-	Excused
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to appoint Susan Benton to the downtown design review, and Councilor Denton to the metropolitan planning organization, motion is seconded by Councilor Pelham.

REGULAR MEETING**ROLL CALL**

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Excused
Mayor Partin-	Excused
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

Councilor Gore gives list of pending items to be added to pending list to city clerk

WORK SESSION

WS-1 – Modification to development for 3609 Oaklawn Blvd – Chris Ward – Mr.

Ward begins his presentation stating who the owner is and she is an agent for the property owner. He states the applicant is requesting a free standing sign at the second entrance, currently the ordinance only allows one free standing sign. The new sign will conform with the city sign specs. There are 4 considerations and he goes over those considerations with council. He mentions staff recommends approval of this requested second entrance sign. Planning commission recommends approval of 3-0 at the November 2nd meeting. Councilor Pelham asks raise an interest with Mr. Ward's office to make sure all other signs are conforming. The answer is if the signs are not 50 percent or more damaged they can remain non-conformed. Councilor Pelham stated there should be restrictions for the cushion around the signs because it is dangerous when you can't see around the sign when pulling into traffic. Vice Mayor Gore mentions the Wendy's new sign makes it difficult to see when coming into the road and states Mr. Ward to be cognizant of that when placing the new signs.

Vice Mayor Gore begins regular meeting, roll call is called for attendance.

PRESENT:

John B. Partin, Mayor (Excused)
Jasmine Gore, Vice Mayor
Janice Denton, Councilor
Brenda Pelham, Councilor
Dominic Holloway, Councilor
Rita Joyner, Councilor
Michael Harris, Councilor (Virtual)

Prayer takes place by Reverend Hart followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilor Denton.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to approve the agenda, motion is seconded by Councilor Denton.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes

Councilor Harris-	Excused
Mayor Partin-	Excused
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to approve the consent agenda, motion is seconded by Councilor Denton.

ROLL CALL	Councilor Denton	Yes
	Councilor Pelham-	Yes
	Councilor Holloway-	Yes
	Councilor Joyner-	Yes
	Councilor Harris-	Excused
	Mayor Partin-	Excused
	Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

INFORMATION/PRESENTATIONS

One Digital Insurance Presentation – Mary Jones – Ms. Jones goes over details of where they are currently by going over a brief summary of the renewal. She goes over details of dental benefits, and AFLAC benefits. She provided council with a PowerPoint with details of benefits for employees for dental and vision. She discusses their goals for the next planned year. They wish to offer a competitive benefit package to retain good employees. She goes over what will be available in February. She states they are recommending not going to market because last year they ended up with zero percent increase and she believes they are in a similar position this year. They recommend to stay with local choice.

Economic Development Updates – Charles Bennett – Mr. Bennett begins his presentation giving a short end of year recap on significant things that took place in the city of Hopewell. He discusses the ice rink and worked closely with recreation in parks in the downtown area. He gave a special thanks to all those who helped make the ice rink happen. He discusses good news about other great things that took place throughout the year through EDA.

COMMUNICATION FROM CITIZENS

1. Travis Burroughs, Ward 3 – Mr. Burroughs speaks to council in reference to the national poverty level in the city of Hopewell, which is twice the national poverty level. He speaks on the tax rate of Hopewell and that it is the same rate as Williamsburg. He speaks on the conditions of the roads of Hopewell stating nothing has been done to improve them.
2. Mark Burroughs, Ward 3 – Mr. Burroughs piggy banks off what his son just spoke about, also stating the times he has spoken to council about the roads and not getting them fixed yet. He stated there are very few restaurants that people are willing to eat at in Hopewell. He states there are many things brought to council that council has done nothing about. He said he has watched majority of council have side bar conversations, one lady spoke about her house was about to go into foreclosure, he asked council how many let her know that because she was a veteran there was tax break for military veterans. He spoke a little about the tax rates as well, stating homes are not worth Williamsburg prices and the tax rates are too high. He goes over statistics of property crime and violent crime.
3. Paul Reynolds, Ward 4 – Mr. Reynolds speak about the flip value taxation of property in Hopewell. He goes into detail about what it means for Hopewell to add this. He states it allows property to tax land improvement and improvements on the land separately. It allows to tax improvements at one rate and land at another rate. He goes into further detail of why this would be good for Hopewell.
4. Shirley Hall, Ward 3 – Ms. Hall speaks about the time the meeting started, stating it did not start until 8 when it was supposed to start at 7:30. She states this should be run in an orderly fashion so the public can participate in a timely fashion. She states council should show up on time.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 Resolution on Mixed Use on Main St Grant – Mr. Bennett – Mr. Bennett states he is requesting council to pass a resolution that enables them to make application for a mixed use on main st grant for 500,00 dollars for a rehabilitation for a building on E. Broadway formerly known as the treasure of hunt building. The application has been prepared by the Hopewell downtown partnership as well as Mr. Bennett. If awarded the grant, the money will come to the City of Hopewell and would administer them from the city of Hopewell to the private owner through a low interest loan. He opens the floor for questions. Councilor Pelham asked about performance agreement and it should be in the resolution not in the attachment. Mr. Bennett stated they are happy to amend it to show that in the resolution. Councilor Joyner reiterates what Councilor Pelham stating there needs to be a line in the resolution to be in sync with RIF requirements that are DHCD is going to put in. Councilor Joyner states the timeframe for completing the contract should be in the resolution. Mr. Bennett stated once rewarded the grant the resolution should be in sync for the timeline of 18 months of completion once receiving the grant. Vice Mayor Gore states she is tracking insert city attorney a whereas where it mentions performance agreement and penalties therein and insert 18 months for duration of the project, she mentions where it says further resolved section is to apply for the grant, her other recommendation is that before a final contract agreement is done it goes back in front of Council. This approval tonight will be just to approve them to apply for the grant.

Councilor Joyner moves to extend the meeting to 9:30 PM, Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 7-0

Councilor Denton states she is aware what they have downtown and she would like to see the bigger picture. She does not have enough information to vote for this right now. Mr. Bennett states to try and make her more comfortable he gives her examples of what they need to do to increase economic development. He states when the project is done council will be proud of it and it will have good economic activity. Vice Mayor Gore stated moving forward she would like to have the grant packet as part of the presentation for review from council so they are clear on what they are voting on. She requested Mr. Bennett to email them the information they are asking about. City attorney gives a breakdown of the amendments to the resolution before signing. Councilor Holloway asked can it be stopped after tonight if they don't agree with how the grant is used. City Attorney stated you can add language to the resolution stating contract must come in front of council for review before using.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve resolution 1212, approve the application for grant funding from industrial revitalization funds mixed used on main st grant for rehabilitation of 207 E broad way with friendly amendments, Councilor Holloway seconds the motion. Councilor Denton asks if the motion is passed right now are they obligating the city to move forward with the project. The answer given to her is no. They accept the project but they do not have to accept the funds. City attorney gives a breakdown of the amendments to be added. Amendments are to add key performance indicators and penalties to be added, the 18 months' time frame for project completion, addition of financial management and record of funds provided to council, and before final agreement is signed the contract will come back to council for final approval.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes

Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 7-0

R-2 Presentation of City of Hopewell 2024 Legislative Agenda – Mr. Bragg – Mr. Bragg begins his presentation explaining who is on the legislative committee. He begins going over his presentation highlighting 10 of the 23 items on his list he provided within the agenda. He briefly explains each item he highlighted beginning with number 1. He states it generates a large portion of revenue for the city. Second was support for education because it pays a major part as well. Number 5 is public transit support and city is requesting \$250,000 to support public transit. He then goes over number 6 and number 9 in brief detail of why those are important as well. He discusses item number 14 about fiscal stress. He discusses number 17 to go over the homeless and mental health; the city is funding \$500,000 annually to support the operation a year round shelter with mental care support. Item number 21 is a request for 16.5 million dollars for the oxygen plant. Item number 22 is the river walk expansion phase where the funding request is 1.5 million to complete the river walk expansion phase. The last item he discusses is the Leachate expansion and the request for funding for that is 3 million dollars. The total for new fund requests are \$21,750,000. Councilor Joyner states it's been 45 years since the city has submitted anything such as this to the general assembly. She thanks him for his work and says she appreciates everything he has done. Dr. Manker states the second package are additional requests to give opportunity to make requests of what did not make the original packet. Councilor Pelham states she would like to have something added to deal with the mold in resident's homes and apartments to hold landlords responsible for not taking care of it like they say they are. Vice Mayor Gore states to put in an ask to have the Hopewell Code department check houses and apartments versus the health department. Councilor Joyner stated she hopes to send over additional request in hopes they will consider. Mr. Bragg states he recommends having a meeting to talk about options to give Hopewell specific authority but they missed the deadline for charter changes, but they can look into other options. Mayor Partin recommends giving Hopewell the ability to explore, if it's not conducive then they don't have to go any further, but they owe it to the residents to look into it. He mentions waste water plant improvements stating city council as a

whole to move forward with those projects but if they do a leachate expansion project but do not have the additional processes in place for removing ammonia, removing nitrogen and other processes, they may not see as much revenue coming through that project. Vice Mayor Gore asked is there a consensus for the committee to research the SVT and bring it back to council but not to General Assembly, and with additional ask of funding they selected three of the additional packet, Vice Mayor Gore should the entire packet be added to the original packet.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adopt the legislative packet with the additional funding ask as an amendment and the legislative committee to move forward with the mold to send to the general assembly and come back with recommendation about the SVT, motion is seconded by Councilor Joyner.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 7-0

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to extend the meeting 10 minutes to allow Dr. Morris to complete his presentation, motion is seconded by Councilor Joyner.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes

Mayor Partin-	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 7-0

R3- Blue Zone Overview – Dr. Cliff Morris Mr. Morris begins his presentation based on the PowerPoint presentation provided to council. He goes over the all cause mortality rates with council in small detail for the US, VA, and the city of Hopewell. He goes over other diseases showing Hopewell is higher than the rest of Virginia. He gives further detail of Blue Zone stating people on blue zone live 10 to 15 years longer than those not on Blue Zone. He states Hopewell has the opportunity of being the first to become Blue Zone in the state of Virginia. He goes over 3 parts that this project is comprised of. He states the first part of it is \$75,000, and the second phase is the planning phase which is \$800,00 to 1.5 million. The transition phase is 5 to 10 years which would be about 1 million per year.

Vice Mayor Gore states the resolution is not in the presentation and recommends getting the resolution to him by email at a later date, and a letter of support that can be shared with potential partners in regard to solicit funds, and she asked council to consider if he needs a representative to go with him on behalf of the city she would like to be the rep for it.

Councilor Pelham makes a motion for the Resolution supporting the city and pursuing blue zone discussion and he has the blessing of council to solicit funds, motion is seconded by Councilor Joyner.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Denton	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes

Vice Mayor Gore - Yes

Motion Passes 7-0

MEETING IS ADJOURNED DUE TO TIME.



Brittani Williams, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor