

MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 14, 2023 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday
November 14, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

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

Motion Passes 6-0

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to allow Vice Mayor Gore to participate remotely after closed session. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0**CLOSED MEETING:**

Councilor Denton moves to make a motion to go into closed session pursuant to Va. Code Section § 2.2-371 1 (A)(I) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointments; the assignment and performance of specific appointee and employees of City Council, and to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 7-0

Reconvene Open Meeting

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

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 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

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

Motion Pass 5-0

Councilor Joyner moves to make a motion to postpone the Work Session to the December meeting. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Partin calls the Regular Meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

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

A quorum has been established

Prayer by Reverend Danny Tucker, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilor Holloway.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adopt the Regular Meeting Agenda and second by Councilor Denton.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda and second by Councilor Holloway.

ROLL CALL

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

Mayor Partin- Yes

Motion Pass 5-0

Mayor Partin moves to make a motion to extend the meeting until the completion of CR-1

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

INFORMATION/ PRESENTATIONS

1. **Finance Status Report- Robert Bobb Group** Heather Ness presents a quick update to where they are with their contract for accounting remediation and project management office. She states they have been on the ground since mid August. Heather Ness details out the five work streams working- the accounting remediation and reconciliation, the PMO which includes all the future states standard operating procedures, the work that the industry team is doing as well as the enterprise resource planning team which is doing the

Tyler/ Munis helping with the reconciliation then doing configuration. Russ, who is the interim director of finance, has started as of October 24. Heather Ness walks thru some of the recent successes and talks about goals moving forward.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

- 1. Nathaniel Garrett-** is a soldier stationed locally and gives a brief introduction of himself and what he is currently involved with in the city of Hopewell. Mr. Garrett informs us of a program he is currently with at Harry E. James Elementary School. He introduces a young man mentoring program called Guys for Ties and is at no cost to the students. Their mission is to provide a nurturing and empowering environment where young boys can discover their true potential, develop essential life skills and cultivate a strong sense of worth. Mr. Garrett also introduces another program called Are You Co Inc., he has been operating for the last 10 years. He ends with the assurance that he is willing to provide his services in any capacity that may help or enrich this community.

- 2. Mark Burroughs-**States he has spoken to several people in the city council regarding the condition of our roadways in Hopewell city. Money was invested in painting the bike lanes. He states when they put in the bike lanes, the existing yellow lines were milled up and didn't repair or patch those existing yellow lines. Mr. Burroughs states as a motorcycle rider, it is a severe threat to his safety, his wife and sons' safety as well as any other rider that comes thru this city. There are a bunch of motorcyclist that come thru Hopewell every year to do the Five and Dime ride. Informing that we have roads that are so riddled with potholes and riddled with chewed up mill spots that it's not safe to ride in Hopewell. It's been brought up before and states he knows it's been talked about. It's been kicked down the road long enough. Mr. Burroughs tells that earlier this year in January his son wrecked his bike because there's an oil spill going from the marina all the way down to river road. He remarks, the first thing the cop said when he showed on the scene was 'I can't believe they haven't cleaned that up yet. I notified them of this spill hour's ago.' He comments the fire department had not been out to put sand down, they hadn't put cones out and they haven't done anything to

protect motorists in this city from hitting that oil slick that resulted in my son breaking his foot and having a severe concussion and totaling the motorcycle. He adds that he was talking to a lawyer about suing the city but in talking to a lawyer he asked her where the money would come from and the lawyer stated she didn't know. He tells that he was worried it would take money from away from an already desolate city so he opted not to sue. Mr. Burroughs claims he is telling all now, anybody who lays down a motorcycle in this city, he will encourage them with every fiber of my being to sue. He claims at this point, all have been notified of the problem. At this point, all have had ample opportunity to fix the problem and you choose not to.

3. **Sha'rah Fuller-** Starts off by commenting she prays for each and every one. You have a job that we only see a snippet of what you (the councilors) do and we judge it like we judge social media, where we see five seconds of someone's life and you think we know their whole world and ...we don't really know your whole world. She explains there are some issues that we have going on in our city and right now we have gotten our property tax bill. Ms. Fuller states her bill for her house is \$2,400. She tells of the hardship this bill is having on her and her family and the difficult choices she is dealing with as a mom with children. She explains she is talking as a Hopewell citizen and as a mom, who cares about her family and who cares about the city. She talks about action she seen being taken where feet are dragged in areas that don't need to be dragged in, things are being rushed thru in areas that don't need to be rushed thru and there are things being ignored where they need to stop being ignored. Ms. Fuller states we elected you all for a reason, we trust you. You have been given a measure of trust. Please don't abuse it. She states she is facing foreclosure on her home because she cannot afford the property taxes. She states getting a note, telling her and then seeing it posted on Facebook that they are going after people who are delinquent on their taxes. She talks of being excited about Cookout but asked a question at the Ward 5 meeting that she hasn't gotten an answer for and that is-Do we have the staff or police force to be at Cookout for the ruckus that it will cause for the late night crew. We are taxing people out of Hopewell because we need the money but not realizing people are leaving Hopewell because they don't have the money. She asks that council really looks at it and to please stop ignoring their plights; she's not the only home having to consider this. Ms. Fuller shares her heart and her situation. She states there is a lot on their plates. She asks to consider what they are facing about doing their jobs as police officers and people choosing to live in the city. Ms. Fuller details some incidences at the schools and on the school buses. She comments that

we need change and it has to start at the top.

4. **Shirley Hummel-** States we the people would very much like you to increase our police force to its desired number. She continues, right now there are officers that are working a lot of overtime to fill in the places of those who have left. They seem to be leaving because we cannot or will not pay them a competitive wage so they are leaving to go where they can make more money. So those who remain are tired and have very little home time. Ms. Hummel would like you to do your due diligence and get this job done and work on the amount of money that they make. She asks, who are you going to call if trouble comes to your house. If they are stretched too thin, there may be no one to come until it's too late. She comments, they are stretched pretty thin right now and they try really have to do all they're supposed to, but we have to help them... You have to help them.
5. **Ripley Ballou-** States when Robert Bobb Group was hired this summer, he asked that we would see regular reports and I want to commend council for A, they come and give the reports and that the reports are being published on the city council website. Mr. Ballou would like to urge the citizens that don't have the opportunity to come to the council meetings and hear them. Please read those and understand what is going on. There are still many, many challenges that lie ahead. He concludes that he thinks we are making progress.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1- PPTRA Budget Resolution Approval Request- Shannon Foskey, Hopewell City Treasurer. Ms. Foskey comes before city council to get approval for the PPTRA. With Personal Property tax assessments decreasing, she proposes a PPTRA percentage of 31 percent. She details this rate is closer to the PPTRA reimbursement given from the state of Virginia of 2023. This will help tax payers with a slight decrease for their 2023 personal property tax bills compared to 2022. With personal property tax assessment decrease, Ms. Foskey proposes a PPTRA of 31 percent.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve the PPTRA rate for 2023 to be 31 percent as proposed in the resolution. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 7-0

R-2-Proposed Changes to the city's Parking Enforcement and Inoperable Vehicles Ordinance-Danielle Smith, Hopewell City Attorney. Attorney Smith brings before council a minor amendment to the Hopewell city code, 22-91.1. She state this will allow any employee of code enforcement to enforce the provisions listed herein. Specifically, to site cars parked in the city illegally. Right now, that power rests with law enforcement. Attorney smith is asking for the city manager to be able to establish a designee specifically someone from code enforcement to also have that authority in the City of Hopewell. The ask is for the city council to adopt the amendment to the ordinance tonight on the first reading or continue the matter to a second reading for the December 12th meeting.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve the amendment to the ordinance tonight, to approve the amended Parking Enforcement and Inoperable Vehicles Ordinance on the first reading. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Gore-	Yes
Councilor Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes

Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes

Motion Pass 7-0

R3 –Hopewell High Visibility Black Plate upgrades and Hopewell Crossing improvements, Virginia Highway Safety Improvement Program – Michael Campbell, Hopewell City Public Works Director – Mr. Campbell discusses two applications with VDOT for Virginia highway safety improvement plan grants. He gave the application number for both which are 10695 and 11127. This is a federally and state funded 100 percent reimbursement grant program. Working with VDOT, city staff has identified and applied for two proposed projects. Mr. Campbell describes the two projects, the first application 10695 is in the amount of \$353,193.00, and the second application 11127 is in the amount of 353,948. He states the application cycle closed on October 31, 2023 and VDOT’s review is pending the city’s resolution support. He describes the location and work to be done for the job sites. He states again that it is 100 percent reimbursed, no city match. Total value of application is 707,141. The funding will be available next year. VDOT’s application review is pending the city’s resolution and support. City Staff is also requests that the city formerly add the projects to the city’s capital improvement program and are requesting action on tonight.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve the resolution as presented and to add these projects to the city’s CIP list. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Mayor Partin-

Yes

Motion Pass 7-0

R4- Collective Bargaining Resolution-Cynthia Hudson, Esq., Dr. Manker, Hopewell City Manager. Ms. Hudson is unavailable for tonight's meeting. Dr. Manker presents a resolution for the council approval of the collective bargaining resolution. The city council held a close session on October 26, 2023 to receive legal advice, specifically about the issue of collective bargaining for retained council Cynthia Hudson. Staff recommends, it is the intention of city council to direct city administration to begin the review of what impact is implementation for presentation to city council within 120 days or sooner. It is also the intention of city council for consideration for future adoption of collective bargaining ordinance for after the completion of the PMO financial services from the Robert Bobb Group. Staff is asking for approval of this resolution tonight November 14, 2023.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to accept the resolution and direct city administration to draft a collective bargaining ordinance for the Hopewell City Councils' future consideration, based on parameters, the Hopewell City Council will set upcoming Hopewell City Council work sessions and Hopewell City Council meetings after the completion of the audit work and PMO services performed by the Robert Bobb Group. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Gore-	Yes
Councilor Denton-	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	No
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	No

Motion Pass 5-2

Mayor Partin introduces two guests present from PBA for questions on collective bargaining. Councilor Holloway and Councilor Pelham call "Point of Order" due to a present motion on the floor. Mayor Partin states he is asking a question as part of discussion. Mayor Partin explains he has a question that has to do with the motion on the floor about the ordinance that's presented. Attorney Smith clarifies the order of questioning as it relates to voting on a motion. There is some discussion from council member as to when you can ask questions in the presence of an active motion. Mayor Partin asks Attorney Smith if he can request a motion to waive the rules to allow the guests to speak. Attorney Smith answers Mayor Partin- he can't make that motion. Mayor Partin clarifies that he can't make that motion but he can ask for someone.

Council Joyner makes a motion to waive the rules to allow the guests to speak. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Gore-	No
Councilor Denton-	No
Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway-	No
Councilor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes

Motion Pass 4-3

Vice Mayor Gore requests a 'Call for the Vote' to move forward with the current vote on the motion.

R5- Robert Bobb Group- Scope change approval- Dr. Manker, Hopewell city Manager. Dr. Manker comes before council with a Council Action Form for the

Robert Bobb Group scope change approval. The Robert Bobb Group was selected as the firm to provide fiscal turnaround services for the City of Hopewell on August 28, 2023. Tonight, staff recommends the approval of the scope change that was presented to you in closed session on November 5, 2023. Staff recommends the approval of the scope change presented to City Council to direct the City Manager to execute the modified agreement and also include the additional payment of \$974,985 from the un-assigned fund balance.

Councilor Holloway makes the motion to approve as stated by city manager. To adopt the resolution \$974,985 for the Robert Bobb Scope Change. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 7-0

CR-1 Approve the proposed changes to the City Attorney Employment Contract- Vice Mayor Gore. Vice Mayor Gore defers to the City Attorney. When council appoints the City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk, they are appointees of council and have contracts of employment. It was noticed that there was an issue in regards to a term in the contract for the City Attorney that goes against the charter. So, this is a simple clerical error to address that and get rid of the term limit to address that as it pertains to the employment. Vice Mayor Gore refers to the City Attorney to make sure everyone is on the same page. Council has talked about this several times, so hopefully this shouldn't be a concern issue. Attorney Smith echoes Vice Mayor Gores' comments that the city charter does not allow for term limits on City Attorney contracts. It is up to

City Council to validate or terminate the City Attorney contract instead of setting term limits. Some of these corrections address that issue. Attorney Smith adds Vice Mayor Gores' comments were that the city charter designates the city attorneys' power as not involving term limits. It is up to City Council to either validate or terminate a city attorneys' contract. Some of the contract provisions here in the current contract violate that provision of the city charter so that's the reason for the change or changes. I would echo Vice Mayor Gores' comments.

Vice Mayor Gore makes a motion to approve the proposed changes to the City Attorney Employment Contract, to adopt the changes to the city attorneys contract to comply with the city charter. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to adjourn.

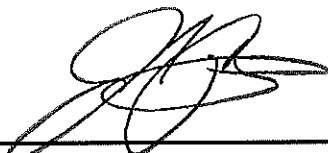
Vote: 7 Aye

0 Nay

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brittani Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Brittani Williams, City Clerk

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Johnny Partin", written over a horizontal line.
Johnny Partin, Mayor