

MINUTES OF THE MAY 13, 2025, CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

John B. Partin, Mayor
Rita Joyner, Vice Mayor
Michael Harris, Councilor
Ronnie Ellis, Councilor
Susan Daye, Councilor
Dominic Holloway, Councilor

CLOSED MEETING

Councilor Daye makes a motion to go into closed meeting under Va. Code § 2.2-371 l(A)(29) and (8), to discuss the award of a public contract where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the City's bargaining position and to consult with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters (offer request, two proposed real estate contract discussions, unsolicited offer); § 2.2-371 l(A)(8), (Data Integrators); and § 2.2-371 l(A)(1), to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointments (interview candidates for City Clerk, former City manager and City clerk's separation of employment, and the contract modification agreement for the interim City Manager). Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner-	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?

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

WORK SESSION

1. Report out for City Arborist grant award letter - Michael Crocker, Public Works Director

During a city council work session, Councilor Holloway questioned City Attorney Anthony Bessette about the removal of an item he had submitted for the meeting agenda. Holloway emphasized that under Council Rule 304, once a councilor places an item on the agenda, it can only be removed by the councilor themselves prior to adoption of the agenda, or by a two-thirds vote afterward. He asserted that his item was already on the published agenda and was removed without his consent, and without a vote, which he argued violated the council's rules.

Attorney Bessette responded by referencing *Robert's Rules of Order*, which are incorporated into the city's charter. He explained that the item Holloway attempted to place on the agenda—a motion to reconsider—was not valid because it pertained to an issue where action had already been taken, and thus was not subject to reconsideration. Bessette said the clerk had consulted him before publishing the final agenda, and he advised that the item should not be included based on procedural grounds.

Holloway disputed this, insisting the item had already been added before the attorney's intervention and that it was not within Bessette's authority to remove it. Holloway expressed frustration, accusing Bessette of participating in a "small

coup” and manipulating rules in coordination with other council members. He demanded a direct answer on whether Bessette believed he had the legal authority to remove the item from the published agenda, asserting that this action undermined the democratic process and transparency.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to extend the meeting until CCR-6 is finished. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

Councilor Holloway questioned City Attorney Anthony Bessette on whether an absent councilor’s vote should be counted as a “no” vote, specifically referencing past procedural decisions where absence was seemingly treated as opposition. Holloway pressed for a clear, legal answer rooted in the city’s charter, state code, or Robert’s Rules of Order, without opinion or interpretation. He emphasized this issue in the context of a prior vote from February, raising concerns about whether Councilor Ellis, who was absent during a closed session, could be considered as having been on the prevailing side.

Bessette attempted to clarify that while an absent vote is not counted as a “no” vote in the formal sense, under Robert’s Rules, absence can have the effect of a “no” in some procedural contexts. He stressed the nuance that Robert’s Rules distinguishes between the literal counting of votes and their procedural effect, and resisted offering a blanket yes-or-no answer without knowing the exact context.

Holloway reiterated that he wasn’t seeking a general explanation but a definitive ruling as parliamentarian on whether absence equates to a “no.” He accused the city attorney of evasiveness and complicity with other council members in manipulating procedural norms to marginalize certain voices, calling it a “small coup.” Despite repeated interruptions and procedural disputes, including over time limits and closed session confidentiality, Holloway’s central demand remained: a direct, legal ruling on whether an absent councilor’s vote is counted or assumed as

a “no,” asserting that past decisions and current debate hinge on this very question. Ultimately, Bessette stated clearly that an absent councilor’s vote does not count as a “no” under Robert’s Rules or the city's governing laws, although he maintained that in certain procedural instances, such absence might have the effect of a “no,” depending on the vote structure and motion type.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to overrule the parliamentarians' ruling and discussion on the matter. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL	Councilor Harris-	No
	Mayor Partin-	Yes
	Councilor Ellis-	Yes
	Councilor Daye-	Yes
	Councilor Stokes-	Absent
	Councilor Holloway-	Yes
	Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-1

Michael Crocker addressed Council to provide an update on the city arborist position and a related grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry. Crocker reported that the city had previously applied for and successfully secured a grant totaling \$108,403. This funding will fully cover the arborist’s salary, benefits, equipment, and supplies, with no cost-sharing requirement from the city. The new arborist position has already been incorporated into the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, so no formal action or approval was needed during the meeting. The role will be housed within the Department of Public Works but will also support the Planning and Development Department. The arborist will play a key role in advancing Hopewell’s urban forestry efforts, particularly in supporting the city’s tree strategies and achieving its tree canopy goals through six defined objectives. Crocker concluded by opening the floor for questions, but none were posed by council members.

2. Conditional Use Permit on a non-conforming lot, Parcel #014-1252 **Clingman St** - Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward presented during a work session before City Council regarding a

conditional use permit (CUP) request submitted by La Nova Properties, LLC, to construct a single-family home on a nonconforming lot located at Parcel 0141252 on Clingman Street in Ward 5. The parcel, currently zoned R-2, does not meet zoning requirements in either width (required: 75 feet; existing: 50 feet) or area (required: 7,500 sq. ft.; existing: 4,250 sq. ft.). The proposed construction is a two-story, three-bedroom, 2.5-bath home measuring 1,456 square feet—larger than the neighborhood average of 1,267 square feet. The home design includes vinyl siding, and it will meet all R-2 setback requirements.

Ward presented architectural elevations of the proposed structure and noted that the design is compatible with surrounding homes. Staff recommended approval of the CUP with several conditions, including 12-inch minimum eaves, 20% tree canopy coverage, installation of a concrete or asphalt driveway, a brick or stone foundation on all sides, foundation plantings, and final construction that closely matches the presented elevations.

Ward also reported that one adjacent property owner spoke in opposition at the public hearing, expressing concerns that construction would block his informal access route to the rear of his property, which currently passes through the subject parcel. The Planning Commission ultimately recommended denial of the CUP, citing the lot's small size and the proposed home's scale being inconsistent with the surrounding properties. Ward clarified that no vote or action was required at this meeting, as it was a work session.

During council discussion, a question was raised about an existing concrete slab that partially straddles two properties and whether the applicant had proposed any accommodations. Ward responded that the applicant intends to widen the driveway on their own property to ensure adequate parking while maintaining the shared pad.

3. Conditional Use Permit, auto-related use - Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward presented a zoning amendment proposal during a City Council work session. The request, initiated by City Council, aims to amend several sections of the zoning ordinance, specifically Articles 10, 11, 11A, 12, and 13, to allow automobile-related uses by Conditional Use Permit (CUP) within the affected zoning districts. These districts span Wards 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7, and the proposed amendment would provide Council the authority to review and issue CUPs for such uses in these areas.

Ward outlined that currently, auto-related uses like automobile and truck service establishments and rental agencies are permitted in the V2 district, with additional allowances for sales in the B3 and B4 districts, and more intensive operations such as painting and bodywork in the M1 and M2 industrial zones. These uses are permitted by right in 96.8% of all commercial and industrial land in the city, with the exception of the B1 downtown district. However, they can have a number of negative impacts, including parking congestion, outdoor storage and display, noise and air pollution, waste disposal challenges, fire hazards, aesthetic concerns, and increased risk of theft and vandalism.

During the Planning Commission's public hearing, one citizen questioned whether a CUP was necessary, suggesting that potential impacts could be addressed through enforcement of existing ordinances such as noise regulations. Ward emphasized, however, that the proposed CUP requirement would apply only to new auto-related businesses and would not affect existing operations. The goal is to be proactive by requiring public input and site-specific evaluation before such businesses open, rather than relying solely on reactive enforcement measures once issues arise.

Staff recommended adopting the CUP requirement for auto-related uses as an interim measure while the city undergoes a comprehensive zoning ordinance update, anticipated to be completed within the next year. The Planning Commission also recommended approval. As this was a work session, no formal action was taken, but Ward remained available for questions. With no questions from the Council, the session moved on.

4. CDBG Annual Action Plan - Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward introduced the beginning of the required 30-day public comment period for Hopewell's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and its corresponding Annual Action Plan. Ward explained that as an entitlement community, Hopewell receives yearly CDBG funds directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which are intended to support HUD's mission of building strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities. All CDBG expenditures must meet one of three national objectives: benefiting low-to-moderate-income persons, eliminating slums and blight, or addressing urgent needs such as natural disasters.

Since 2019, Hopewell has received approximately \$1.5 million in CDBG funds. While the exact allocation for the current year is not yet known, Ward estimated it

would be around \$245,000, consistent with previous years. This year's plan includes three separate funding pools: the anticipated annual allocation, \$258,000 in unspent funds from prior years (some dating back to 2018), and \$31,202 in remaining COVID-related CDBG (CV) funds that must be spent by September of next year or be forfeited.

Ward outlined specific recommendations for each funding category. From the annual allocation, 20% (\$49,000) is reserved for program administration, and 15% (\$37,000) is designated for public service projects. Four public service applicants were considered: Hebron, Healthy Families, The James House, and Pretty Purposed. Three are returning recipients, while Pretty Purposed is a new applicant recommended for funding after previously being denied due to application issues. For housing rehabilitation, which traditionally consumes the bulk of CDBG funds, Ward recommended allocating \$100,000 to Project: Homes for five emergency repair units and \$40,000 to Rebuilding Together for two additional units. The remaining \$17,000 of annual funds is proposed for the Hopewell Economic Development and Tourism project, aimed at constructing a land connection for the Riverwalk, an initiative also proposed for larger funding from the unspent pool.

Ward then addressed the \$258,000 in unspent funds, recommending their full allocation to the Riverwalk project, citing potential recapture risks due to increased federal scrutiny of the CDBG program. Regarding the leftover COVID funds, which are not subject to the public service cap, Ward proposed granting the \$31,202 to Catholic Charities for homeless outreach. This initiative aligns with eligible COVID-related use cases and reflects past successful program partnerships in Hopewell.

In total, the draft budget for all CDBG funding sources amounts to approximately \$534,202. Ward also noted the city is beginning the process of developing its new Five-Year Consolidated Plan for HUD, covering 2025–2030. While he does not anticipate significant changes in priorities from the previous plan, the draft includes updated goals and project categories. Ward emphasized that public input is welcome throughout the 30-day comment window, and feedback can be submitted online, by mail, or in person. A formal public hearing will follow. With no questions from the Council, the presentation concluded.

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT:

John B. Partin, Mayor
Rita Joyner, Vice Mayor

Michael Harris, Councilor
Ronnie Ellis, Councilor
Susan Daye, Councilor
Dominic Holloway, Councilor

Prayer by Apostle Wyche followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Mayor Partin.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to adopt the regular meeting agenda. Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

Councilor Holloway addressed the council to express strong concern over the removal of his requested agenda item without a direct explanation. He emphasized that such an action contradicts established council rules, asserting that a councilor's request should not be unilaterally removed. Holloway framed his remarks with a call for unity and peace, but warned that disregarding procedure invites conflict, referencing scripture to illustrate the seriousness of division. He cited his right to raise a point of personal privilege, which, according to state guidance he reviewed, cannot be subject to a vote when it involves expressing discomfort or personal matters impacting his duties. He reiterated that his intent was to represent the best interests of his ward and the city, and raised unresolved concerns from previous discussions. His central question remained: whether a councilor's absence is automatically interpreted as a "no" vote. Holloway challenged the overruling of his point of information and questioned the legality of procedural decisions made without proper justification or adherence to rules, stating that his role as councilor includes upholding both the voice and the rights of his constituents.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	No
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-1

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

seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	No
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-1

INFORMATION/PRESENTATION

1. Quarterly Financial Budget - Stacey Jordan, CFO

Stacey Jordan presented the third quarter financial report for the City of Hopewell, offering a detailed overview of the city's financial performance across multiple areas, including the General Fund, Enterprise Funds, Schools, Departmental Budgets, and various financial operations. Citywide, revenues are trending \$2.3 million higher in Fiscal Year 2025 compared to the previous year, while expenses have increased by approximately \$2.6 million, or 2.26%. The General Fund is showing an 8% decline in revenues, primarily due to delayed personal property tax collections, while expenses have risen slightly by 0.5%. Projections for the end of FY25 estimate total revenues at \$68.75 million and expenses at \$65.49 million, resulting in a projected surplus of about \$3.2 million.

Enterprise Funds are performing well, with revenues up \$2.4 million due to timely billing and expenses down by \$84,000, mainly due to fewer emergency repairs. School revenues, however, have decreased by \$536,000, attributed to lower federal funding and reduced charges for cafeteria services, partially offset by a slight increase in state funding. School expenses have increased marginally by \$4,000.

Departmental spending is currently trending at about 60%, slightly below the target of 75% for this point in the fiscal year. Specific departments such as the City Assessor and City Manager's Office exceeded expectations due to consultant costs, while Economic Development and IT reflected lump-sum payments that should balance out by year-end. Overtime expenditures were reported across multiple departments including Police, Fire, Public Works, and others. Accounts Payable

has processed over 1,295 invoices totaling \$5.3 million, and \$215,000 was paid toward sewer-related debt service. The city is projected to have approximately \$24 million in the General Fund bank account by the end of the fiscal year, not including investment accounts.

Jordan also provided an update on the city's audit progress, noting that the FY21 audit was completed with two unmodified (clean) opinions, a milestone praised by the council. Audits for FY22, FY23, and FY24 are scheduled to be completed in June, September, and December, respectively.

During the meeting, a council member raised a question about ongoing paving projects, specifically in Manchin Hills, Appomattox Heights, and Danville. Jordan confirmed multiple projects are underway, partly funded by VDOT money that must be used by the end of the fiscal year. She agreed to provide a list of those projects to the council. The presentation closed with appreciation for the financial progress made and the importance of celebrating the city's audit accomplishments.

2. Fiscal Year 2021 ACFR Presentation - Stacey Jordan, CFO & David Foley

David Foley, a partner with Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, presented the results of the City of Hopewell's FY2021 financial audit during the council meeting. He began by outlining the three main components of the audit: the financial statement audit to ensure compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP); a review of internal controls over financial reporting in accordance with Government Auditing Standards; and a federal compliance audit for entities expending more than \$750,000 in federal grant funds, conducted under Uniform Guidance.

Foley reported that the city received an unmodified (clean) opinion on its FY21 financial statements, the second consecutive year of such a rating, confirming that the financials were prepared in accordance with GAAP. However, the audit also identified material weaknesses in internal controls over financial reporting, similar to those found in previous years. These recurring issues are primarily related to untimely or incomplete reconciliations, such as bank reconciliations and reconciliations over receivables, including taxes and enterprise fund balances.

Additionally, the audit's federal compliance component revealed no instances of noncompliance or significant deficiencies in the management of federal grant programs by the city or the school system, which resulted in a clean report for that section as well.

Foley informed the council that the FY2022 audit had already begun, with a substantial amount of information uploaded to their portal, and emphasized ongoing collaboration through monthly update meetings with city management. The goal is to complete the FY22 audit by the end of June.

During the Q&A portion, the Vice Mayor raised concerns about the persistence of internal control weaknesses and asked if there was a plan to address them. Finance Director Stacey Jordan responded that most issues stem from a historic lack of reconciliation and that the finance team is now conducting one-time reconciliations, particularly related to cash, which should resolve many of the findings.

Another issue discussed involved the Beacon Theatre's financial reporting. It was noted that the third-party management has not provided data in a sufficiently detailed format to complete accurate financial statements. However, steps are being taken to improve communication and financial oversight, and Jordan mentioned that the Economic Development Authority (EDA) audits were recently completed, which should help in aligning financial reporting moving forward.

Mayor Partin concluded the discussion by recommending that now that the FY21 audit is complete, the city should proceed with a diagnostic bond rating analysis, as was done following the FY2020 audit, to evaluate the city's financial position and anticipate improvements as they catch up on outstanding audits.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Reverend William Avon Keen- representing the National Movement for Civil and Human Rights and serving as the State President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, addressed the Hopewell City Council. He opened by acknowledging council members, introducing his affiliations, and the national leadership of his organizations. Reverend Keene expressed that he was honored to be in Hopewell, a city with which he has historical ties, particularly through civil rights work alongside Dr. Curtis Harris. He recalled having marched in Hopewell in the past and highlighted the city's legacy of progress, noting it once served as a model for others, including hosting a Black police chief and being recognized for its school system.

Reverend Keene stated that his presence was prompted by growing national concern regarding civil and human rights issues affecting Hopewell. Emphasizing the principles of equality, justice, and democracy, he warned against the

resurgence of racism and injustice in the country. He quoted Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., reminding the council that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" and urging that silence in the face of issues that matter is unacceptable.

Drawing from his background as a firefighter and member of the International Association of Firefighters, he referenced rules around conflicts of interest, implying that public officials should maintain ethical standards and abstain from involvement where conflicts arise. He concluded with a call for unity and reasoning among citizens and leadership, urging the city to live up to its legacy of fairness and justice. As his allotted time ended, he offered to answer any questions and stated that he was invited to speak in Hopewell. He added that he hopes the issues prompting his visit are resolved so that a return visit will not be necessary.

Councilor Harris makes a motion to allow Mr. Keene two more minutes to finish his conversation. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

Reverend William Avon Keene returned to the podium to expand on his earlier remarks, emphasizing the importance of civic engagement and justice. He introduced the acronym L.O.V.E., which stands for Lead, Organize, Vote, Every time let out our Voice Elect, underscoring a message of proactive participation in democracy. Reverend Keene expressed his hope that he would not have to return to Hopewell, reiterating that his presence stemmed from deep concern over the current atmosphere in the city.

He shared his extensive background in civil rights activism with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), highlighting his involvement in voter registration drives, sit-ins, and marches, including historic events such as those on the Edmund Pettus Bridge and in Washington, D.C. He stated that his concern lies

in what he perceives as a growing trend of individuals being fired without cause. According to Reverend Keene, such actions create distrust and unrest, and he warned that firing someone without cause effectively *creates* a cause, igniting broader issues.

He urged city leaders to carefully consider the implications of their decisions, particularly in light of the national attention Hopewell is receiving. Stressing the principle of equal protection under the law, Reverend Keene illustrated his point with simple examples: if laws prohibit theft or murder, they must apply equally to all people regardless of their background or status. He concluded by reinforcing that justice must be consistent and impartial, and he thanked the council for their time and attention.

William McGhee- President of the Richmond Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), addressed the Hopewell City Council with a firm yet encouraging message rooted in both historical reflection and civic responsibility.

He opened by honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Reverend Dr. Curtis Harris, noting their past efforts in Hopewell to secure justice and equality. Minister McGee cautioned that the city must not regress to the era of racial animosity and injustice that Dr. King fought against. "You don't want to go back," he repeated, emphasizing that the city has made great strides forward and should continue progressing rather than risk reversing that progress.

He offered a personal connection to the city, sharing that he has four grandchildren enrolled in Hopewell schools. He proudly compared their educational experience to schools in North Chesterfield, noting that Hopewell's schools performed better based on test scores, something he emphasized as a point of civic pride and evidence of the city's growth.

However, Minister McGee also voiced deep concerns about the perception, and potential reality, of secretive or racially motivated decision-making within city leadership. He warned that when decisions are made without transparency or clear justification, it breeds suspicion and undermines public trust. "Your decisions have to be done in the light," he insisted, calling for honesty, accountability, and openness from the council.

He concluded by reiterating his core message: Hopewell has made real progress, but it must stay on a path of integrity and justice in order to truly move forward and not fall back into the shadows of its past.

Janice Denton - a resident of Hopewell's Ward Five and former city council member, delivered a passionate and emotional statement in defense of the previous city manager. Reflecting on her time on council from 2017 through the end of 2023, Denton expressed deep concern over what she described as unprecedented levels of hostility and division within the council during her final two years. She stated that she witnessed more hate than ever before, pointing specifically to the targeted efforts of some council members against the city manager. According to Denton, certain individuals even campaigned on the promise of removing the city manager and then spent the next two years relentlessly working to discredit her.

Despite these attacks, Denton highlighted the city manager's accomplishments, including her successful collaboration with the Robert Bobb Group and progress on important initiatives such as financial projects. She emphasized that the city manager has been responsive and effective in her role, helping to guide the city in a positive direction. Denton expressed her disbelief and disappointment at how such progress has been met with persistent animosity by some members of the council. She concluded her remarks with a strong declaration of support, vowing to continue standing up for the previous city manager and fighting what she sees as unjust treatment, stating firmly, "I will fight this as long as God gives me breath."

Debbie Randolph - a resident of Ward One and a former council member, began her remarks by referencing the famous quote, "Government is of the people, by the people, and for the people," emphasizing that true governmental strength comes from listening to and engaging with citizens. Drawing from her 25 years of involvement with the city, Randolph expressed her deep embarrassment and disappointment over the council's recent conduct, particularly in the last several meetings where she felt the public was unjustly denied the right to speak. She asserted that regardless of whether council members wanted to hear from the public, they are obligated to give citizens the opportunity to express their concerns. Randolph warned that when residents are not provided clear explanations, they are left to make assumptions, something she believes is detrimental to good governance.

She went on to highlight her professional background in compliance, noting her experience with extensive federal regulations and asserting that such complexity does not excuse public officials from doing their jobs properly. Randolph also

referenced her familiarity with Robert's Rules of Order from her time on council, raising a specific procedural concern: why Rule 36, which states that someone who was absent from a vote cannot motion to reconsider it, was seemingly disregarded. She called on the council to provide an explanation for that decision. Concluding her statement, Randolph expressed at least some relief that the council allowed public comment during the current meeting, underscoring the importance of transparency and civic dialogue.

Mark Burroughs - a resident of Ward Three, expressed his deep dissatisfaction with the conduct of certain members of the city council during his remarks. Acknowledging that he may not be as eloquent as previous speakers, he nonetheless delivered a forceful statement calling for the immediate resignation of what he referred to as the "corrupt and cowardly four" members of the council. He accused them of betraying their constituents by voting in alignment with personal motives rather than public interest, asserting that they have repeatedly demonstrated a lack of fitness, competence, and integrity to lead the city forward.

Burroughs also called for the resignation of the city attorney, referencing the attorney's own admission of not being legally competent to advise the council. He further announced that he would be filing a formal complaint against city employee Arnold Day, citing disrespectful and sexist remarks allegedly made during a public meeting. Specifically, he condemned Day's use of the term "girl" to insult a male citizen, interpreting the comment as both demeaning and indicative of a belief that being female is inferior. Burroughs stated he would be submitting a FOIA request to ensure that Day is held accountable, ideally resulting in termination.

In closing, Burroughs urged the five officials in question to recognize that the most meaningful act of service they could perform would be to step down from their positions. He added a pointed observation about the grass around the government building being 14 inches tall, an apparent code violation, and criticized council members for inattentive behavior during meetings, urging them to "knock it off" and stop embarrassing the city.

Travis Burroughs- Identified himself as someone who is neither well-spoken nor comfortable speaking in public, shared that despite his reservations, he felt compelled to address the council. He expressed strong frustration and anger toward certain members, describing their conduct as "disgusting" and calling them "crooked" and "atrocious." He criticized them for nodding along with a prayer while allegedly acting in opposition to its values, accusing them of hypocrisy.

Burroughs went on to say that the best course of action for those members would be to resign immediately, stating he did not want to see them in office any longer. He referred to their presence as a “cancer to Hopewell,” alleging that their motives were self-serving and detrimental to the city. Concluding his remarks, he said he hoped they would distance themselves from the community entirely and even expressed a hope that four of the council members would one day be held accountable to the point of facing arrest.

Becky Anders - shared that she has lived in Hopewell for almost five years. She expressed concern and frustration about the presence of homeless individuals around the library, stating that she has witnessed unsanitary behavior, such as people using the bathroom outside near the facility. She described the situation as “disgusting” and urged the council to take action, saying that the homeless individuals should leave Hopewell and go elsewhere. Her comments sparked some response from the audience, but others defended her right to speak, noting that she had remained polite while others shared their views and deserved the same courtesy in return.

Stephen Smith – Mr. Smith stated that he has been attending council meetings for about six months and consistently hears complaints about financial issues. He expressed frustration over what he perceives as poor decision-making by the council. Drawing a comparison to his own household, he said that when faced with a choice between buying work boots or paying bills, the bills come first, emphasizing that priorities must be set correctly. Smith criticized the council for not doing the same, accusing them of failing to prioritize the city's needs responsibly. He concluded by suggesting that the State of Virginia should get involved, asserting that if people aren't doing their jobs or can't make decisions, they should be removed from their positions.

Sha'rah Fuller - a resident of Ward Five, addressed the council and fellow citizens, emphasizing her ongoing efforts to promote and support the city's neighborhood watch meetings. She noted that she has consistently reminded both the public and council members about these meetings and has invited all council members, the city attorney, and the city manager to attend. Although she understands that the presence of two or more council members would constitute a public meeting, she still asked that at least one attend. She commended Mr. Gaston for consistently attending every ward's neighborhood watch meetings, even if only briefly, and doing so on his own time. She also gave credit to Mr. Crocker and Mr.

Gomes for attending and engaging with residents directly, rather than relying on what she called the "Facebook misinformation highway."

Fuller then shifted to a deeply personal matter, recounting how she had to withdraw her 12-year-old son from Carter G. Woodson Middle School due to threats and harassment from another parent. Despite the disturbing behavior, including daily drive-bys and verbal threats, she explained that the law provided no protection unless a specific, actionable threat was made. This forced her to make a difficult decision for her family's safety. She expressed frustration that she had to escalate the matter to state-level officials, as she felt the city was failing to protect its citizens. She compared the city's misplaced priorities to sending a firetruck to smoke while ignoring a nearby fire.

Fuller voiced strong support for City Clerk, Brittani Williams, saying she has done a great job, and lamented how little recognition neighborhood watch leaders like herself and others, Debbie Randolph, Larry Sears, and Halima Shepherd Crawford, receive. She urged the council to be present, listen to residents, and see things from the community's point of view.

While she acknowledged that being a council member is not easy, Fuller stressed that elected officials must rise to the challenge. She invoked the metaphor of diamonds being created under pressure, urging the council to surround themselves with those who challenge them to grow rather than those who foster complacency. She concluded passionately, asking the council to "please be better."

Ed Houser - a resident of Ward Five, began his remarks by acknowledging that his tone would be more restrained than at the May 1st meeting, though he admitted that what he witnessed during that session left him deeply disturbed. He expressed strong disapproval of the actions taken by four council members who, in his view, denied their constituents the opportunity to be heard. Houser emphasized that council members are elected to serve as the voice of the people, and when they silence or ignore public input, they are no longer representing their community but rather acting in self-interest.

He specifically condemned the terminations of Brittani Williams and Concetta Manker, describing them as unjustified and rooted in personal vendettas rather than legitimate reasons. Houser praised both individuals for their dedication to the community and efforts to raise standards in Hopewell. He accused the four council members of conspiring together to remove them without cause, and although he refrained from explicitly stating what he believed the underlying motive was, he

made clear that the optics were troubling. He concluded by stating that many citizens of Hopewell no longer believe those four council members represent them and called on each of them to submit their resignations immediately.

Wayne Parson - a resident of Ward One, addressed the council during only his second appearance at a city council meeting. He focused primarily on concerns regarding a city paving project, questioning the logic behind beginning the work in Mansion Hills. Parsons pointed out that the only traffic in Mansion Hills comes from its own residents, and one of the streets being repaved is essentially just a circular drive around a house. He added that a section of that area had already been newly paved just a year ago by a contractor who had also installed curbs and gutters, work which has now been milled out again for resurfacing.

In contrast, Parsons noted that major roads like City Point are in much worse condition and significantly more in need of repair, citing the damage they do to vehicles and the frequency of realignment issues. He expressed frustration that Mesa Street is in a similar state but is not receiving attention.

Parsons also raised deeper concerns about the operations within Public Works, accusing the department of being a financial burden to the city and filled with inadequacies. He alleged that certain individuals are acting on personal agendas rather than in the best interest of Hopewell's residents. He claimed to have spoken with two members of the council about these issues but received no response. Finally, Parsons stated that a former state senator had even sent the mayor a letter recommending he speak with him, but he had still heard nothing, despite living just a block away.

Jasmine Gore - former Mayor and immediate past Vice Mayor of Hopewell and representative of Ward Four, addressed the council. Initially not planning to speak, she was compelled to do so after hearing remarks from former colleagues.

She began by expressing disappointment over divisive rhetoric circulating in the community, particularly literature using the phrase "taking the city back." Gore emphasized that after dedicating 12 years of her life to public service, becoming the first African American to represent Ward Four, such language was disheartening and did not represent the values Hopewell should uphold.

Gore commended Dr. Manker, applauding her role in keeping the city's audit on track, and acknowledged Mr. Gaston, the former assistant city manager, who resigned because his position was about to be defunded, highlighting that his

departure should not be overlooked in discussions focused on recent terminations, such as those of Dr. Manker and Brittani Williams.

She then raised serious concerns about conflicts of interest, alleging that some council members had voted for salary increases that benefited themselves and their family members. She stressed the need for transparency and proper review of such decisions.

In closing, Gore supported Councilor Holloway's stance regarding procedural issues, affirming that motions made under points of personal privilege do not require a second or vote and cannot be blocked. She further criticized the removal of Holloway's requested agenda item from the meeting, stating that doing so violated both Robert's Rules of Order and the council's own governance rules. Gore encouraged Councilor Holloway to persist in demanding accountability and addressing abuses of power in a public forum.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to waive the rules and extend public comment by one speaker. Councilor Harris seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

Darlene Thompson - a resident of Ward Six, delivered a passionate statement directed at the city council. She opened by saying that "disgusted is not even the word" to describe her feelings about the current state of city leadership, accusing council members of blatant disrespect toward the citizens of Hopewell.

Thompson accused certain council members of misleading the public during their campaigns, making promises such as "giving the people what they want" but failing to follow through once elected.

She alleged that the council has "swindled" millions of dollars from the city and its residents. Specifically, she referred to an overassessment of taxes, claiming that last year's budget was inflated by \$7.2 million, which she said was deliberately done by increasing the tax rate without conducting a proper reassessment of property values. According to Thompson, this resulted in residents being overcharged on taxes for three years, amounting to millions of extra dollars extracted from the community.

Thompson contrasted this financial burden on citizens with what she viewed as selective prioritization of spending by council members. She cited that while \$258,000 in COVID relief funds remains, citizens still can't get basic services like leaf pickup, whereas a project like the Riverwalk, reportedly championed by Mayor Partin, gets funding.

She also referenced past criticisms involving allegations of favoritism or racism, comparing a case where a council member was investigated over \$700 for helping someone with a repast, while the council allegedly mishandled millions of public dollars without accountability.

Thompson ended her remarks with a strong call to action for citizens to continue attending meetings and stay engaged, warning that complacency allows mismanagement to persist. Her final words emphasized that the council's actions are "affecting our pockets," referencing costs like sewage, trash collection, and increased real estate taxes, and concluded in frustration as she noted the perceived inaction and "stone faces" of the council.

Councilor Holloway raised a pointed concern regarding Councilor Ellis's conduct in a previous session. Specifically, Holloway questioned whether Ellis acted in the best interest of the public when he voted against allowing public comment related to Dr. Manker, despite the presence and concerns of city employees, directors, and constituents. Holloway argued that Ellis's dismissive response, reportedly a loud "Nope," indicated a failure to represent the public's voice, suggesting the vote may have been driven by personal interest rather than civic duty. In response, the City Attorney clarified that while he is knowledgeable about the Conflict of Interests Act, he is not legally authorized to determine whether a conflict exists; that authority lies with the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council. Because of this, he could not answer Holloway's question directly.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to add to the agenda to allow Councilor Holloway to ask Councilor Ellis if he was acting in the best interest of the people on May 1st. Councilor Harris seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	No
Councilor Ellis-	No
Councilor Daye-	No
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner-	No

Motion Fails 4-2

Councilor Holloway addressed the audience with a passionate appeal, urging the public to observe and recognize where each city council member stands. He stated unequivocally that the issues at hand stem from racism, describing the situation as both disgusting and sad. Holloway specifically called out four council members, accusing them of orchestrating a coup, including the questionable hiring of the current city attorney. He claimed that the attorney's contract nearly included an additional \$6,000 in compensation for dog-sitting services for his Great Danes, an offer that he emphasized was not extended to the previous, qualified city attorney. Holloway framed this disparity as further evidence of racial discrimination. Despite the severity of his allegations, he ended his remarks with a call for unity and peace, while also acknowledging that he and others are prepared to engage in what he described as a "spiritual warfare session" to combat the injustice.

Councilor Holloway raised a point of information, requesting clarification from the city attorney regarding the legal status of Dr. Manker as city manager. He asked whether, based on previous council actions and statements made during the February and May 1st meetings, Dr. Manker was still legally the city manager, citing Robert's Rules and the potential need for reconsideration under Rule 36. The city attorney began to respond, asking whether Holloway was seeking a parliamentary opinion on the validity of the May 1st vote. However, before the exchange could continue, Holloway's allotted speaking time expired. Despite his insistence that the question still stood, the presiding officer moved the meeting forward, instructing Ms. Jordan to proceed with the public hearing, asserting that the question would not be answered as Holloway's time had ended.

PUBLIC HEARING

PH-1- Proposed Budget FY26- Stacey Jordan, CFO

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to remove the protestors from the meeting.
Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	No
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Abstain
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 4-1

Speaker Stacey Jordan presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Operating and Capital Budget to the City Council. The purpose of her presentation was to provide an overview and highlight key components of the upcoming fiscal year's financial plan. The total proposed operational budget amounts to \$222,772,514, encompassing all funds necessary to sustain city services. For capital projects, \$650,000 has been identified for allocation, which is significantly lower than the \$10.5 million in total capital requests received. Additionally, \$250,000 has been set aside for reserves. Overall, the budget reflects a \$1.9 million increase across all funds, representing a 0.90% rise compared to the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. The proposed General Operating Fund is recommended at \$70,518,068.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to remove Mr. Burroughs from the meeting.
Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	No
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Absent
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 4-1

Ms. Jordan continued her presentation on the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget, highlighting an overall budget increase of 2.2% to 3.2% over FY25. She explained that the baseline budget remains consistent with the previous year, incorporating a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for employees and implementing a class and compensation study specifically for Public Safety and Parks & Recreation departments. An additional \$500,000 has been allocated to address increased healthcare costs. Funding for schools remains steady at \$13.5 million, consistent with FY24 and FY25, and there has been no need to withdraw from the city's undesignated fund balance to balance the budget. Furthermore, no tax rate increases have been proposed.

The overall proposed revenue and expenditures for all funds total \$222,772,514, with the General Fund accounting for \$70,268,068, a \$1.9 million increase from the previous year. Jordan provided a breakdown of General Fund transfers, totaling \$20,893,554, which support schools, CSA, recreation, capital projects, economic development, debt service, and other services. Key budget highlights include funding for new positions such as an Aquatics Program Manager, an Assistant City Attorney, and three firefighters. The city also plans to continue refining the budget and exploring potential additional revenue sources to support the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which currently includes limited funding. The total five-year CIP request received amounts to \$47,380,775.

Jordan stated that the May 20 meeting marks the first reading of the city and schools' budget, with final adoption scheduled for May 27. A resolution supporting the budget will also be reviewed. Council members asked clarifying questions regarding funding allocations and pending updates, such as a list of pump stations. It was confirmed that the \$250,000 contribution to the rainy-day fund is included in the budget. No members of the public spoke during the hearing, and since there were not enough councilors present to approve the budget on first reading, it will be taken up for approval at the next meeting.

PH-2 - Conditional Use Permit request for accessory dwelling unit 219 S.16th -
Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward presented a request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) related to a property in Ward One, zoned R-2, owned by applicant Esteban Perez. The request seeks approval to convert an existing accessory structure on parcel #024-0890 into an accessory dwelling unit (ADU). The property is already undergoing rehabilitation, including both the primary and accessory structures. Visual aids, such as maps, aerial views, and elevation drawings, were shown to provide context and illustrate the planned renovations.

Ward explained that the R-2 zoning district does allow accessory apartments with an approved CUP and noted that the property has sufficient space to meet off-street parking requirements. According to zoning ordinances, the CUP requires that the accessory unit be occupied by a family member of the property's primary resident, specifically someone who is 55 years of age or older or disabled. Once vacated, the unit may only be occupied by another qualifying family member, and it cannot be used as a general rental property.

Staff analysis supported the request and recommended approval with conditions, including requirements for paved driveway surfaces (asphalt or concrete), tree canopy coverage of 20%, foundation plantings, and architectural consistency with the proposed design. An additional written comment from a citizen requested off-street parking and fencing as conditions, which was included in the staff report.

The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval (3-0), adding two more conditions: that the ADU must remain unoccupied until a certificate of occupancy is issued, and that the unit must be occupied only by the qualifying family member, not sublet to anyone else. No one signed up or came forward to speak during the public hearing, and the session was closed without public comment.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to approve the conditional use permit request for accessory dwelling unit 219 South 16th Ave. as presented. Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Absent

Vice Mayor Joyner-

Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

PH-3 - Rezoning request for Parcel #0420165 and #0420170, Cypress St. B3 to B4 - Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward presented a rezoning request, also referred to as a zoning map amendment, for two parcels located on Cypress Street, specifically parcels #042-0165 and #042-0170, which comprise Lots 7R and 9R in Block 4 of the Highland Park Subdivision. The applicant, Lewis Stevenson, is requesting that the zoning of these properties be changed from B-3 (commercial) to R-4 (residential). The properties are located in Ward Six. The existing B-3 zoning presents development challenges due to setback requirements, which would only allow for a narrow four-foot-wide buildable area. However, the parcels meet the R-4 zoning requirements in both lot width and square footage.

Ward explained that a previous attempt to rezone the properties in the early 2000s failed because residents opposed townhome construction but supported single-family development. In alignment with that earlier community preference, the current applicant has proffered that the lots will be used for single-family homes. Additional proffers include standard requirements such as roof overhangs, a tree canopy, a paved driveway, foundation plantings, and brick exteriors on all four sides.

City planning staff support the rezoning, noting that the proposed R-4 zoning is more compatible with surrounding properties and that the B-3 zoning limits feasible development. The proposed rezoning also aligns with the City's Comprehensive Plan, which identifies this area as suitable for traditional neighborhood revitalization and medium to high-density housing. The Planning Commission echoed the staff's recommendation and also supports the rezoning along with acceptance of the applicant's proffers. No public comments were received, and no one came forward to speak during the hearing. The public hearing was closed without further discussion.

Councilor Ellis makes a motion to approve the rezoning request for parcels #0420165 and #0420170, Cypress St. B3 to R4 as presented, and accept the applicant's proffers. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Absent
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

PH-4 - Right of Way Vacation Request 319 Maryland Ave - Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward presented a request to vacate a portion of public right-of-way located adjacent to parcels #024-0510 and #024-0430, associated with the address 319 Maryland Avenue in Ward Two. The area in question is approximately 5,870 square feet and is zoned R-2 residential. The specific portion of right-of-way requested for vacation was highlighted in red on a map shown during the presentation. Ward noted that this particular right-of-way is an interior parcel whose original purpose could not be identified through research, suggesting it may have been planned but never utilized.

The applicant for the vacation is West End Presbyterian Church. The presence of this unused right-of-way currently impedes the church's potential expansion plans. All relevant city departments reviewed the request, and no objections or concerns were raised. Based on this, city staff recommends approval of the vacation request. No one signed up to speak on the matter, and no audience members came forward during the public hearing. The hearing was subsequently closed without further discussion.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to approve the right-of-way vacation request of 319 Maryland Ave. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

Mayor Partin expressed a positive outlook regarding the right-of-way vacation request, highlighting the encouraging development that both a church and a school in Hopewell are experiencing growth. He noted that the potential need for expansion by these institutions is a good sign for the community and emphasized that such matters coming before the council reflect positive progress for the city.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Absent
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

Charles Bennett offered historical context regarding the right-of-way vacation discussed in the previous public hearing. He shared that, according to Reverend Bill Hill's book, the parcel in question was originally owned by the City of Hopewell and acquired in 1942. At the time, there was a tower on the property, and the right-of-way existed to provide city access to that tower. Bennett recounted a compelling story from Hill's biography about how the church was able to purchase the property from the city to build a gymnasium for local children to roller skate. Notably, the materials and permits for the gymnasium were secured just before the federal government halted all new construction projects in the U.S. due to World War II, making it a significant and almost miraculous event in local history. This, he explained, is the origin of the right-of-way in question.

PH-5 - Real Estate Exchange 15 Reverend CW Harris St - Charles Bennett, Economic Development Director

Charles Bennett addressed the council regarding a significant historical preservation project involving a land exchange. The action under consideration formalizes a process that began on August 31, 2023, when the City of Hopewell entered into a support agreement with the Hopewell Economic Development Authority (EDA) to purchase a historic site on Reverend CW Harris Street, formerly the Harry James School, originally built in 1942. Of particular importance is the preservation of an even older structure on the site, dating back to 1916, where Reverend Samuel Perry began teaching 80 African American students in a YMCA building due to the absence of formal education for Black children at that time. Under the current proposal, the City of Hopewell will officially receive ownership of the historic schoolhouse. Restoration efforts are already underway,

including asbestos removal funded by a Virginia Brownfields Grant. Plans include replacing windows and making other improvements to establish the site as a public historical destination celebrating African American educational history in Hopewell. In return, the EDA will receive the adjacent land behind the school, formerly a ball field, to connect with the rest of their property for future development. The exchange involves no additional financial transaction, as the monetary transfer was completed in 2023. The deed and relevant documentation were attached to the public hearing notice, and no one from the public signed up or requested to speak.

Councilor Harris makes a motion to approve the deed of a boundary line adjustment and combination between the city of Hopewell, Virginia, and the Economic Development Authority of the city of Virginia EDA for the tax ID #0480340 and tax ID #480339 as presented. Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Absent
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 - Approval of 700 S. 6th Ave. - Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward presented a subdivision request for the property located at 700 South Sixth Avenue, identified as Parcel #0610161. The site, situated at the corner of South Sixth Avenue and Elm Street, is currently zoned B-3 and spans 4.55 acres. The proposal involves subdividing the vacant portion fronting Elm Street to facilitate the construction of a new food distribution warehouse for Rio Suarez Foods LLC, with Delta Citation, LLC as the applicant. Ward displayed maps showing the general location and aerial view of the property, explaining that the submitted final plat has undergone thorough staff review and complies fully with

the city's subdivision ordinance. As such, the decision before the council is ministerial, with no legal basis for denial. Staff recommended approval, and Ward made himself available for any questions.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to approve the subdivision plat as presented. Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Absent
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

Reports of City Manager: Michael Rogers

Michael Rogers, in his second week on the job, addressed the council to provide an update on his initial assessment period. He noted that he is actively meeting with council members and department heads to understand key priorities, ongoing issues, and major projects across the city. Rogers emphasized that he is identifying urgent matters that need immediate attention to prevent further complications, as well as longstanding items requiring action. He committed to returning soon with a comprehensive list of projects, complete with timelines and tasks. Rogers also highlighted three key areas of focus: progressing the city audits, addressing deficiencies identified in those audits, and acting on recommendations from the Robert Bobb Group. He concluded by stating that his next update would include a clear action plan to move the city forward.

CCR-1-6 - Re-Allocation of Ward 1,2,4,5,6, and 7 Councilor Funds -

Vice Mayor Joyner, Councilor Harris, Councilor Ellis, Councilor Daye, Councilor Stokes, and Councilor Holloway

Attorney Bessette addressed the council to explain a procedural option for voting on a group of upcoming resolutions. He noted that, if the council agreed, they could vote *en bloc*, all at once, unless any member preferred to vote on a specific

item separately. The resolutions in question involve reallocating discretionary funds (such as communication and travel allowances) into each member's ward fund. This follows Mayor Partin the previous month, when he redirected his discretionary funds to support a nonprofit project. The reallocation would allow council members to use an increased ward fund balance for approved projects before the fiscal year ends on July 1. Members would still follow standard application procedures to distribute the funds appropriately.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to approve the ward 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 reallocations of communications and travel funds to ward funds as presented in the resolutions. Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

Council discussed whether to vote on all the proposed fund reallocation resolutions *en bloc* (together) or wait until absent council members, specifically Councilors Stokes and Holloway, were present. Attorney Bessette clarified that all council members had previously requested the preparation of these resolutions, suggesting they intended for them to move forward.

It was noted that if the vote passed during this first reading, members would immediately gain access to the reallocated funds, giving them additional time to utilize the resources before the fiscal year ends.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Absent
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes


Motion Passes 5-0

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

Sade' Allen

Sade' Allen, Deputy City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor