

July 13, 2021
Regular Council Meeting

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD JULY 13, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, was held Tuesday, June 13, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Patience A. Bennett, Mayor, Ward 4
 John B. Partin, Jr., Vice Mayor, Ward 7
 Deborah B. Randolph, Councilor, Ward 1
 Jasmine E. Gore, Councilor Ward 3
 Janice B. Denton, Councilor, Ward 5
 Brenda S. Pelham, Councilor, Ward 6

Excused: Arlene Holloway, Councilor, Ward 2

John March Altman, Jr., City Manager
Peter Eliades, Substitute City Attorney
Mollie Bess, City Clerk

Mayor Bennett called the meeting to order and welcomed visitors.

ROLL CALL:	Mayor Bennett	-	Present
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	Present
	Councilor Randolph	-	Present
	Councilor Holloway	-	Excused Absence
	Councilor Gore	-	Present
	Councilor Denton	-	Present
	Councilor Pelham	-	Present

CLOSED MEETING

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Randolph to go into Closed Session pursuant to Va. Code 2.2-3711(A)(1) for the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, recognition of public officers, appointees or employees of any public body?

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes
	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Randolph to come out of closed session.

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CERTIFICATION

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 closed meeting.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

REGULAR MEETING

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Randolph that Council appoint Mayor Patience Bennett to the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

Meeting called to order by Mayor Bennett. Prayer by Mayor Bennett, Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice Mayor Partin.

ROLL CALL:	Mayor Bennett	-	Present
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	Present
	Councilor Randolph	-	Present
	Councilor Holloway	-	Excused Absence
	Councilor Gore	-	Present
	Councilor Denton	-	Present
	Councilor Pelham	-	Present

SUGGESTED MOTION: To amend /adopt Regular Meeting Agenda

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Pelham that we amend the Regular Meeting Agenda to add Communications from Citizens to the Agenda underneath the Information/Presentations Section and to remove Public Hearings 1 & 2.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

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CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Partin, seconded by Councilor Pelham to adopt the Consent Agenda.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	no
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 5/1

PUBLIC HEARINGS

CITY CLERK: *All persons addressing Council shall approach the microphone, give name and, if they reside in Hopewell, their ward number, and limit comments to five minutes. No person shall be permitted to address the Council a second time until all others have been heard, and no one may speak more than twice on any subject in any one meeting. All remarks shall be addressed to the Council as a body, any questions must be asked through the mayor only, and there shall be no discussion without permission of the mayor. Any person who makes personal, impertinent, abusive or slanderous statements, or incites disorderly conduct in Council Chambers may be barred by the mayor from further audience before Council and removed, subject to appeal to a majority of Council. (See Rules 405 and 406)*

Reverend Danny Tucker approached the lectern to inform City Council and the public that the members of the Clergy in the City of Hopewell are planning a community tent revival at Colonial Square shopping center near Rosa's pizza. This event will begin on Monday, August 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. and will go Monday – Friday, each night a different pastor and church will be in charge of the worship services. The revival services will last as long as there are area churches signed up to serve. It is in hope that this will bring faith, hope and goodwill to the members of the community and the surrounding area. Citizen Chris Roscher also spoke up encouraging all citizens to take part in this special event. Councilor Pelham added that this was organized by the organization of Churches and Concerned Citizens.

Next citizen to speak was Elliott Eliades, Ward 3. Would like to plug for himself as a downtown property owners and others who are downtown property/business owners, they have been discussing Francisco Landing and they would really like to see that project proceed and would love to hear an update on it when appropriate.

PH-1 – FY 21-22 AMENDED SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET

City Manager Altman presented for the first public hearing, the Amendment of the FY 2021-2022 School Board Budget. The request before City Council this evening is that Council made commitments to schools with regard to funding new items as their budget related to the city's match for the 5% raise provided by the State, the additional special education positions, there was also additional change to some additional special education compliance officers contracts and the increased share of the health care costs for schools. Council also decided to fund the purchase of the Tyler Munis financial software system so that the schools and the City would operate on the same system. Those commitments totaled \$1,201,085, additionally there is another Resolution in your packet that dealt with the additional \$1,136,069 of funding that school have requested. The original thought was that you would budget and appropriate the \$1.2 million and then just

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budget the additional funding, the \$1.1 million and that would be budgeted and appropriated at a future date, pending Council's receipt of a written report from the school board containing the FY22 line item expenditures for the year dated up to December 31, 2021 and additional information regarding actual line item expenditures for fiscal years 19, 20 and 21. We appropriate funds at one time to all of our departments, which is how we handle schools. There is an amended resolution in your packet. This resolution (B) makes the entire proposed amendment an appropriation of the total of the \$2,337,154 and that would increase the schools budget total to \$63,611,845. We maintain the request in the second resolution for schools to provide the city with the actual expenditures for the FY22 with is our current budget year as of Dec, 31 and the actual year end expenditures for FY19, 20, and 21. That is the request before you.

Mayor Bennett opened the Public Hearing. No correspondence has been received and no comments were made.

Councilor Denton made a motion that City Council postpones taking action until the second meeting in August. Motion fails for a lack of a second.

Point of Information by Councilor Gore – Mr. Altman please clarify for the public the fact that this is to address the budget appropriation to correct something and what would be the impact if a decision is not made this evening. Mr. Altman answered that the action taken tonight would make the school boards budget request whole, a delay in the action tonight or no action would mean schools would have to move forward with reducing their budget the equivalent amount. Their school year starts in two weeks on July 26.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Randolph to defer action on the amendment of the FY21-22 School Board operating budget to a Special Meeting on July 20, 2021 at 6:30p.m.

Councilor Gore asked the attorney "Do you see there being any issues with us delaying this further knowing that we have to take action on this. Attorney said he saw no legal challenge by the school system.

Councilor Randolph stated that we needed more information and more communication before she feels we should approve this.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	Abstain
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 5/0

City Manager asked Councilor Gore to repeat her takeaways for him:

- 1) Give a written invitation to attend the Special Meeting to the School Board
- 2) Where is the School Board at with City Council's original ask
- 3) What are budgeting item in terms of priority that by their choice they can remove.

PH-2 – AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS

Mr. Altman stated that this is a Resolution amending the FY2021 City of Hopewell Operating Budget by budgeting \$4,999,465.50 of federal ARPA Funds to the General Fund and appropriating \$469,914 of those funds to Fund 71, Capital Projects.

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Staff recommends City Council budget \$4,999,465.50 of federal ARPA Funds in the General Fund and appropriate \$469,914 to Fund 71, Capital Projects to replace the funds used to provide a 2.5% COLA for employees and purchase an ambulance. Staff will work with the community and Council to solicit input to develop a plan to use the remaining funding. Once the plan has been developed Staff will request appropriation of the funds by City Council. Will come back at August meeting with updated information. We will get a total of just under \$10,000,000 from the ARPA in funding over this year and next. Those funds are obligated by 2024 and we have to spend them by 2026.

Mayor Bennett opened the Public Hearing. No public comments were made.
Mayor Bennett closed the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Gore to approve the Resolution amending the City's FY22 Budget in the amount of \$4,999,406.50 and appropriate \$469,914 to Fund 71, Capital Projects for the plotter scanner, the radio hose, fire engine lease, ambulance and the VDOT road paving.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 – DEQ GRANT APPLICATION – HOPEWELL WATER RENEWAL GREY WATER PILOT PROJECT

City Manager Mr. Altman stated this is a request for council approval and authorization to submit a grant application to the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund in the amount of \$1 million. The grant application is to support a grey water pilot project at the Hopewell Water Renewal facility. It will be a pilot program for a year and then with the data that has arrived from that we will know whether to move forward with it. Not city dollars will be put forth in the operation.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Pelham that City Council approve the application to the Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan fund in the amount of \$1 million to conduct a pilot study program and to allow the Hopewell Water Renewal chair, City Manager and Director for the Hopewell Water Renewal plant to meet and discuss the project with state legislatures and representatives of DEQ.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

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R-2 – DECLARATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY – COVID-19

This is a Resolution to end our Declaration of Local Emergency as it relates to COVID-19. On March 14, 2020 a local State of Emergency was declared in accordance with §44-146.21 the Code of Virginia. This Declaration stays in effect until the Hopewell City Council determines that all necessary emergency actions have been taken and takes appropriate action the end the declared emergency by a majority vote taken at an open meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Gore and seconded by Vice Mayor Partin that we approve the Resolution and the Declaration of Local Emergency in response to Corona Virus 2019 effective today, July 13, 2021

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

R-3 – CANCEL JULY 27 & AUGUST 24, 2021 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Due to July and August being heaving vacation months, adjustments of people going back to their workplace environments and school getting ready to start and in addition to the City Manager and City Clerk on vacation the week of July 19, it would be more effective to cancel the July 27 and the August 24 City Council Meeting. Asking Council to cancel the second City Council Meeting in July

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Mayor Bennett that we cancel the second City Council meetings in July and August, 2021.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	no
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	no
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	no
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Fails: 3/3

R-4 – SAFE IN OUR PARKS

This is not an action item. In light of the events that occurred on July 4 in the community Arlington Park, wanted to take let Council and the community know some of the steps that we were already taking and will put in place now and will be taking in regard to public safety in our parks for our community. While it would not have stopped what happened, we had already ordered and were awaiting the arrival of cameras for Arlington Park. Those cameras have arrived now and we will be installing them. We are going to look at how we can do that in all of our parks in the City. Beyond that our police department that police presence and patrol will be increased in the area so that there is a more visible show or presence.

Councilor Gore said we need some tangible goals and need to continue to take action to improve violence in the City.

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City Manager Mr. Altman introduced Kemi Okeowo, the new Public Information Officer to City Council and she spoke on her past experience.

COUNCILOR REQUEST

CR-1 – FORMAL CREATION OF THE CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

This item is for the formal creation of the City Council Finance Committee. We need to make a motion so that the City Attorney can create that ordinance and we can vote on it and the Finance Committee can continue operating in more efficient capacity, henceforth, forevermore.

Motion made by Councilor Pelham and seconded by Council Gore that task the City Attorney to create an ordinance to establish the City of Hopewell City Council Finance Committee.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

CR-2 – ESTABLISHING/REORGANIZING AN ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT FOR HOPEWELL

Have the City Manager and his staff research the issue and the idea of taking our Stormwater Program that is currently house under Public Works and to look at it more broadly and expand it more into an Environmental Engineering Department.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Parton and seconded by Councilor Gore to move to have the City Manager and his staff research the idea of the feasibility of reorganizing and expanding the Stormwater Management program in Hopewell into a separate Environmental Engineering Department and to bring additional recommendations back to City Council.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	no
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 5/1

CR-3 – AUDIT DEADLINE OF 9/11 AND ACCOUNTABILITY DISCUSSION

This request is regarding audits that were requested some time ago and from this learned about a compliance order. Deadline for this was September 2020. Need to get something done with the capers. Something needs to be done with capers to get us up to date.

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Mr. Altman stated that there was a request for documentation and those documents had been destroyed by schools. They have been working on trying to retrieve some of the information. We have completed our audit for 2017, once issue is schools is done, they will complete the 2018, then we will present the 2017 single audit and 2018 audit to Council and have a proposal for how we are going to complete. Would like to complete 19, 20 and 21 during this fiscal year. Would like to have 2018 done by December 2021 and 2019 and 2020 done by June 2022.

Councilor Pelham recommends hiring a full time financial director that oversee all finances.

CR-4 – COMMITTEE FOR THE SHILOH LODGE MUSEUM DISCUSSION

This is now an activated committee by the Historic Preservation Committee. Councilor Randolph that a grant that was applied for was approved through the John Randolph Foundation. That will be used to do the initial study on the Shiloh Lodge and see what they can come up. Talked about it being a museum, but since museums require a lot of money to operate, are looking at other alternative to add onto a museum, maybe a tea room or luncheon room. They originally had an areas that would serve food. Need to look at ways that it can fund itself.

CR-5 – COVID-19 EXPENDITURES

Follow-up on itemized list on what had been approved and the expenditures for the CARES money that Council had requested. Mr. Altman stated that report should be to council at the August meeting.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor to extend the meeting to finish to 10:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	no
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	no
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 4/2

CR-6 – FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE POLICY

Councilor Gore wanted it reflected in the notes that the policy is not included in the package.

Motion made by Council Gore and seconded by Mayor Bennett to support the City Attorney developing a draft Fraud, Waste and Abuse Policy for us to have on file to implement and to work with the City Manager on that. From her understanding the draft was developed and given to the City Manager for us to review to take action on. Ask of Mr. Altman to send out again to everyone and put on the next agenda as Unfinished Business to take action on.

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ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	no
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 5/1

CR-7 – COUNCIL RETREAT

Mayor Bennett would like to discuss and ask Council to take action authorize the City Manager along with personnel of his choosing to initiate/plan a council retreat and provide options to council. Timing will be determined by the governing body during discussion and the background is historically the purpose of a council retreat is to exercise an in-depth work session with discussion of items and topics currently at a location away from City Hall.

Recommend that each Council look at the strategic plan and pick your top three, make notes and submit to City Manager.

Motion made by Councilor Gore and seconded by Vice Mayor Partin that City Council provide the City Managers with at least three top priorities for the existing draft strategic plan no later than COB July 30, 2021 and for the City Manager to prepare options to give to Council in regards to setting up a City Council retreat.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

CR-8 – CITY-WIDE ISSUES WITH THE TRASH PICK-UP

Councilor Denton noted that she is receiving many, many calls from folks in her ward that are complaining that their trash has not been picked up. CVWMA and Meridian will be invited to attend our first meeting in August to respond to Council and public in reference to trash pick-up issues.

Motion made by Councilor Denton and seconded by Vice Mayor Partin to ask the City Manager to look into the trash pick-up situation and have CVWMA attend the August 10, 2021 meeting as well as someone from Meridian.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	–	yes
	Councilor Denton	–	yes
	Councilor Pelham	–	yes
	Mayor Bennett	–	yes
	Councilor Randolph	–	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	–	yes

Motion Passes: 6/0

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CR-9 – POLICE AND FIREFIGHTER STEP PAY RAISES

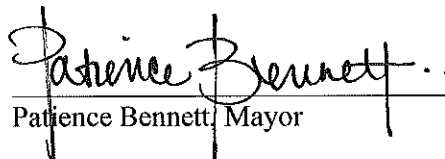
This request is after seeing that Prince George, Dinwiddie, Hanover, Henrico and Chesterfield all did step pay raises and increases for their public safety officers.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin to authorize our City Manager to look into what the other localities did and to present a recommendation back to City Council by the second meeting in November. The motion died for lack of a second.

This item will be placed on the next City Council Meeting under Unfinished Business

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.



Patience Bennett, Mayor



Mollie P. Bess, City Clerk