

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 24, 2023 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday
October 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: John B. Partin, Mayor
Jasmine Gore, Vice Mayor (Virtual)
Rita Joyner, Councilor
Michael Harris, Councilor (Virtual)
Janice Denton, Councilor
Brenda Pelham, Councilor
Dominic Holloway, Councilor (Late 6:14PM)

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to allow Vice Mayor Gore and Councilor Harris to participate in meeting by zoom, Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

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

Motion Passes 5-0

CLOSED MEETING:

Councilor Denton makes 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, seconded by Councilor Joyner.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

Reconvene Open Meeting

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

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-0

CERTIFICATION:

Immediately thereafter, council responded to the question pursuant to Virginia Code §2.2-3712 (D): Were only public business matters (1) lawfully exempted from open-meeting requirements and (2) identified in the closed-meeting motion discussed in closed meeting?

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-0

REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Partin calls the Regular Meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

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

Councilor Joyner- Yes

A quorum has been established

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

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

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda and seconded by Councilor Pelham

ROLL CALL

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

Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Councilor Joyner-	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

Councilor Joyner moves to makes a motion to extend the meeting until the completion of item R4 and seconded by Councilor Denton

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0

INFORMATION/ PRESENTATIONS

1. **Downtown Hopewell Updates-** Heather Lynn is the director of the Hopewell Downtown partnership and she begins her presentation with some updates going on in the organization and programs being able to offer Downtown Hopewell Partnerships as well as take you through a four-point approach that is used as a main street organization. We are locals supporting local; a grassroots non-profit organization that is accredited with the National Main Street Center. Their mission is to build a healthy, vibrant, and more prosperous central downtown for the Hopewell community. Heather Lynn details a fully revitalized downtown with minimal vacancies. A place where young people are proud to stay, families want to live and businesses desire to locate. The National Main Street Center with whom the Downtown Hopewell Partnerships is accredited began in 1980. They developed a trademark model on how to go about revitalization of a

historical district or neighborhood. Heather Lynn explains the four points that categorizes the work being done. We are working with a lot of little projects and programs that are puzzle pieces being put together. Ms. Lynn is excited to share some news that they have captured two (2) of the large state grant announcements the governor released in September and we are doing a pilot project that may have similarities to Homegrown for Hopewell, which was the business pitch competition from last year. Ms. Lynn states they are trying to do more of a tailored or targeted approach and round up new types of entrepreneur in the Hopewell community. Ms. Lynn states they have the funding for the made in Hopewell project that is focused on celebrating the manufacturing legacy. They are trying to connect with anyone in the small batch production space and she goes thru examples of what that may look like. They have funding to work on a local branding initiative that is celebrating the small-scale manufacturing identity but can also be a brand that's appealing to our larger industry. We want this to be a PR campaign about being proud about everything that is made in Hopewell. We want to do a trade show we're working with the brand center at VCU to work on all of this. Ms. Lynn has already met with the Hopewell Manufacturing Association to talk through how we can pull the trade show together. She states they want to give out micro business grants out to the crowds choice favorites. All this is happening next year. Ms. Lynn explains they will be doing citywide mailings trying to recruit and identify people that fall in this category. Ms. Lynn wanted to make aware another grant announcement her company was involved with and supported last year. They captured large resurgence grant for downtown this year they supported another application, there could only be one from Hopewell. They've been working with a group from Richmond, the RVA Street Foodies. The company has a couple of food cart businesses and are now coming to Hopewell. The company is going to be launching six new food carts, mentoring young people who want to start a culinary business. They also have quite a bit of commercial kitchen equipment, so we've been trying to bring that dream alive for a long time; another program just to be aware of and they want to be launching the carts at the plants, at schools and where sites can be found around the city. Ms. Lynn has discussed in the past on how more lodging options are needed, especially in the downtown area. We are not able to capitalize on people going to the Beacon Theater, visiting the historical sites or going to the River walk for an overnight stay downtown. Her company was awarded grant funds and are working on floor plans and a lodging study done on the Suntrust property. She expresses her excitement to be working with Mr. Elder and Economic Development on this project.

Ms. Lynn talks about being part of the launch of the Five and Dime project and how scanning the QR code will take you to the Five and Dime website where you can set up a login and check into your favorite destinations in Hopewell and surrounding areas. You can earn points towards Five and Dime merch! Ms. Lynn shares how very excited she is about the tourism initiative. She talks about Harvest Market celebrating the end of the Hopewell Farmers market season on this Thursday 5pm to 8pm. There are a lot of activities you can see some of them listed there; how we are working with business owners; and how we are working on food access and nutrition. We are making a nice festive event for the end of the market season. Next year the market launches in April and goes through the end of October for 30 weekly events with live music and 15 or more vendors. Next, Ms. Lynn talks about the success of two programs, Downtown Designs and About Facades, offering free architectural renderings through Virginia Main Street to downtown businesses and property owners. She points out two successful properties. Ms. Lynn walks parcel by parcel through some of the complex thought processes of another building and what they have been working on. RVA Street Foodies, is the company who has just received a grant and will be activating in spaces around Hopewell, bringing in income to Hopewell. Ms. Lynn again showing these are concepts that would love to see in downtown, bringing more activity and having people animating the spaces that we have. Ms. Lynn states there is data collected from BCU studies and EPA studies and working with the vendors at our street festivals and our markets. She outlines some of the challenges for the vendors. There have been a lot of meetings and strategy calls and applied for some funding in the past and feels they have a more solidified team. Painting the vision for what they are trying to make happen in downtown are big and hard but could be very impactful. Ms. Lynn states they are working with several universities and P hops and everyone in the food access is aware of what's trying to be done. Ms. Lynn details some projects and planning ideas for Hopewell in partnership with local businesses. She states she would love to have a conversation on bringing in new community members.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

1. **Shanique Watson**- speaks on hazardous housing conditions such as mold.

She has been a tenant for 7 years complaining about these conditions. She states her health was recently in jeopardy for two months. She was sent to a hotel to remediate the problem. She states her rights, health and her belongings were violated. She has been threatened to give into terms she didn't agree upon such as bribery and if she doesn't, would be in violation of her lease terms. Ms. Watson states she is asking for help because she is a disabled woman new to Virginia and her ancestors instilled in her you have to fight for what you believe in.

2. **Dorothy Flowers**- Spoke about a woman having 5 children was put on the voucher program. She discussed in detail the living conditions of a lady and her five children laying and sleeping on the floor, one of the children is autistic. There are no blinds on the windows so the mother had to put blankets up to the windows. She talks about the people's furniture has been thrown away. She states the mother's apartment has mold in the dishwasher and on the ceiling. Roaches are crawling everywhere while the kids are lying in the floor. Ms. Flowers tells of the mother, being told in a text message by the property manager to use some bleach and clean up the mold. Stating the mother is disabled too. In her description, the whole property has mold and people are being put in hotels, but they are not telling who those people are. Ms. Flowers tells of a test that was performed on where the mold was originating from and that there is no mold in the ducts, but the mold is coming from underground. She comments she knows the council will do the best they can but people shouldn't have to live like that. She explains they are taking people's furniture and throwing it away and offering the tenants \$2,500. No one is answering the phone and will not talk to the tenants at the office. Mayor Partin states Ms. Flowers is over her 3 minutes but Dr. Manker has been taking a lot of notes along with the lady that spoke previously. The City Manager and City Attorney are going to start looking at options on what can be done because this is a recurring problem and nothing unfortunately is being done to remedy it with the Housing Authority. Ms. Flowers adds she hopes somebody can do something because it's sad that people are living like this in the city of Hopewell; that some people pay taxes and they shouldn't be living or be treated like this. Mayor Partin agrees with Ms. Flowers.
3. **Shirley Hummel**- States that she wants council to vote for collective bargaining. She explains she wants to give our police as much as we can. We want to support them because they stand between us and big hairy problems. Ms. Hummel thinks the police are doing a splendid job and believes the police are working at a deficit. She hopes that we bring it up to

snuff so they will be happy to work here and they don't go else ware.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1- 519 Jefferson Avenue- Chris Ward. Presents a Subdivision application for 519 Jefferson Avenue. He states the property is under a half acre at 20,000 square feet. The applicant on this subdivision is Mr. Riley Ingram and he is serving as an agent for the owner. The owner being the James A Morgan living trust. The property is located in ward 5. The property is zoned R1A. Future land use is urban residential. The request is for you to review this subdivision. The property is a corner lot located along Jefferson Avenue with frontage on Portsmouth. The applicant is proposing to divide this property into 2. Both new lots would meet the minimum zoning requirements for the R1a district, a minimum of 10,000 total sq. ft. and a minimum of 75 sq. ft. road frontage. The subdivision ordinance states that if the two lots meet the minimum standards, then the subdivision should be approved.

Councilor Joyner moves to make a motion to approve the request presented.
Councilor Holloway seconded the motion

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0

R-2-Revenue Sharing Program Application- Mr. Campbell is asking for support for Richmond Street and Petersburg Street road reconstruction and drainage

improvements. This is for the 2025 Revenue share application. For the installation new curb and gutter driveway entrances, underground storm pipes and inlets, full width pavement reconstruction. The area has insufficient storm water facilities and the road is coming apart. The total local match for project funding during FY 2027 and FY 2028 will be \$3,540,318, with a total estimated value of work at \$7,080,635. The city has committed to and previously been granted Revenue Share Funds in Resolution. The current application requests an additional \$3,386,532 of which \$1,693,266 is the local match. This will fully fund the project. For VDOT to consider the City's applications for the Revenue Sharing program matching state funds in FY2027 and 2028, the application must include a resolution supporting the project and committing to the required local funding. Staff requests council action on October 24, 2023

Councilor Holloway moves to make a motion to accept the resolution as stated by Dr. Manker- to approve the VDOT Revenue Sharing Program for funding in FY2027 and FY2028 in the total amount of \$7,080,635. The City has to provide the total amount and the revenue sharing portion will be reimbursed. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0

Councilor Joyner moves to make a motion that we formerly add and update the project to the current capital improvement plan; to formerly add the Richmond street and Petersburg street improvements 2025 Revenue Share application to the city's current capital improvement plan. Councilor Denton seconds the motion as is. Dr. Manker requests to add a friendly amendment to approve the Resolution as

presented, friendly amendment accepted.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0

R-3-Grant Approval for project SAF- Major Reid. Requests approval to apply for a 2024 Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant. This is a \$250,000 Grant. Maj. Reid states we will work with Real Life and Project SAF to further enhance our capabilities with gun violence, not only here but also the Tri-cities. He states it is a reimbursement grant beginning on January 1, 2024 and go thru December 31, 2025. Part or all of this grant will be used to hire staff, coordinators, with Real Life to assist in furthering our footprint in the community and surrounding jurisdictions.

Councilor Holloway moves to make a motion to approve the request to submit a \$250,000 DCJS Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant application. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Councilor Joyner- Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

R-4 –Employee Bonus Payment Ordinance- Danielle Smith. Attorney Smith presents for consideration a proposed ordinance that mirrors Virginia Code 15.2-1508 which allows for payments of bonuses to city employees. The adoption of the ordinance would bring the city into compliance with the state requirement. Attorney Smith points to a couple of last minutes changes that were made to the information. She is requesting action tonight, the first reading or on November 14, 2023 meeting.

Councilor Holloway moves to make a motion to approve the ordinance as presented by the city attorney. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0

REPORTS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

Dr. Manker- Will ask council to consider any capital improvement projects that they would like to email me in consideration for the budget. I have asked staff earlier this week also to email me a list so I can have that prepared for council for their discussion to their council retreat.

REPORTS OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

Attorney Smith- No reports from the City Attorneys' office.

REPORTS OF CITY CLERK

Brittani Williams- Nothing to report from the City Clerks' office.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

Councilor Holloway- Would like to thank everyone for coming out. Thank each department for all your hard work that you do as always and again to the safety persons, our sheriffs' office and police department. Again thank you for all you. And even to the citizens, thank you for your comments and we are doing our very best to research information and get the city on the road. Thank you again.

Councilor Pelham- Relays the same sentiments as well. Would like to thank Ms. Heather for the presentation of downtown. It looks real pretty on the photos. I would like that to be a reality as the future moves along. Also, thank you to all the citizens for coming out and participating in this thing called government. I would like to announce that I will be retiring from Hopewell Public Schools on November 1, 2023 with 33 and 1 half years. I really enjoyed working with the children. Councilor Pelham talks about one of her students present at the council meeting, now he's participating in government. She remarks how it pleases her to see the kids grow up, stay in Hopewell and be a part of the activities they have and be a voice in how we want to shape Hopewell for them and their children. Thank you for giving me the opportunity and God Bless you all.

Councilor Denton-Comments that it's too bad it wasn't next Tuesday because we could come dressed up for Halloween. Maybe one of these years, it could fall on that day. We have one meeting in November, believes it is the 13th or 14th of November. Councilor Denton announces she is having a ward meeting for Ward 5 and because there is no place in her ward where she can have it, the high school has allowed her to have it there in the library. I know Dr. Manker is going to be there with all of her wonderful directors that can give you lots of information, I promise you. I will not say, except Welcome! This is a night for the citizens can come and hear what the City is doing from the people that make up our city. I hope Mike you are planning to come. We got snow coming and I know people want to know if they're going to have their streets plowed. Councilor Denton expresses it is a chance for, not a counselor, but you the people to ask questions to listen to learn more about your city in an informal climate. So, go home, mark your calendar for November 6 at 6 o'clock at Hopewell High school in the library. If we get too many people there we'll just go into the auditorium. So, I hope we'll just push out the walls. I look forward to seeing you then. Thank you

Councilor Joyner- Would like to thank everyone that is here in the chambers tonight and those that are watching online. She would like to say it is a privilege to serve as a counselor for the City of Hopewell. It's a rewarding experience and we're certainly trying to fix things that have been identified as trouble here in the city. As all of you know we have the Robert Bob Group here in our midst and they are going to be with us for quite some time. And I think that when they have done their due diligence and completed things then we will certainly be on an upward trajectory. That's certainly our goal. She would like to say thanks to Heather Lynn for a superb presentation today. That group does a great job in terms of a return on investment. The Hopewell Downtown Partnership does a fantastic job when you look at all the other groups that we support. She thanks those in my ward for the privilege of serving and hope you have a wonderful evening.

Councilor Harris- Expresses his apologies to all his constituents for his absence from the dais and hopes that you continue to pray for him to be assured

that he can get back. He applauds Councilor Pelham for her service to the City and to the Nation. Councilor Harris continues he definitely wants to applaud her and congratulate her on completing all of her service. But her service is not stopping her serving the City. Councilor Harris again wants to thank everyone for participating tonight and hopefully we can get something else done for our City. Thank you

Mayor Partin- Also congratulates Councilor Pelham on her retirement. Mayor Partin comments he is only 35 years behind Councilor Pelham. He will soon join her and they will have a grand retirement party. Also, Mayor Partin wants to remind everyone that this Thursday we do have the Harvest Festival and this Saturday we do have the City Point 5K so please come out and run it, walk it support it. It raises money for a lot of youth programs for the John Randolph Foundation and the Rec Center and also if you have seniors or students that are in college right now, scholarship season is open at the John Randolph Foundation and there are scholarships not just for college but also for students that want to go into trades. A lot of people don't know that. So, please pass the word out. Spread it. It's still open for another couple of months. Mayor Partin thanks everyone for coming out for tonight's city council meeting.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adjourn.

Vote: 6 Aye

0 Nay

Respectfully Submitted,



Johnny Partin, Mayor



Brittani Williams, City Clerk