

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 08, 2025, CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday, April 08, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

John B. Partin, Mayor  
Rita Joyner, Vice Mayor  
Michael Harris, Councilor  
Ronnie Ellis, Councilor  
Susan Daye, Councilor  
Yolanda Stokes, Councilor (Late)  
Dominic Holloway, Councilor (Absent)

**CLOSED MEETING**

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to go into a closed meeting under Va. Code § 2.2-3711 (A)(1) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointees (City Clerk Contract, Economic Development Authority, The Architecture Review Board, Historic Preservation Committee, Hopewell Redevelopment Authority) and to consult with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters. Va. Code § 2.2-3711(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 Discussion of an unsolicited offer of real estate property. Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

Mayor Partin-	Yes
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**Motion Passes 5-0**

Councilor Daye makes a motion to reconvene the open meeting. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 4-0**

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

**Motion Passes 5-0**

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to direct the city manager to execute a nonbinding letter of intent between the City of Hopewell and Emerson Ventures LLC to lease commercial space in the 200 North Main Street building, the commercial space is estimated to be available in the spring of 2027 following the historic preservation renovation of the building. The motion has been seconded by Councilor Daye.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 5-0**

Councilor Ellis makes a motion to extend the meeting until the last item of business CCR1. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 5-0**

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS**

**Sharah Fuller-** Sharah Fuller introduced herself as a resident of Ward Five and clarified a brief mix-up where she initially said she lived in Ward Four. She is the Neighborhood Watch Captain for Ward Five and expressed gratitude to the councilors who have taken time to speak with her, specifically mentioning fruitful

conversations with Councilors Ellis and Harris. Fuller discussed ongoing efforts to build and strengthen Neighborhood Watch groups in Wards Four, Two, and Six before the arrival of warmer weather, which tends to bring increased community activity with children out of school. She encouraged residents from all wards to reach out and participate in meetings, noting that ward captains are accessible and residents are welcome to attend meetings in other wards if their own is not currently active. Fuller also highlighted a recent meeting where Fire Marshal Mr. Gomes spoke about fire safety, emphasizing the importance of functioning smoke detectors and understanding burn regulations. She promoted community awareness programs like the Ride Saver initiative and reiterated that she and others, including Larry Searce and Debbie Randolph, are available for community outreach. Additionally, she announced an upcoming event on Saturday, believed to be called "Happy Hopping's," featuring a car seat safety check organized by the Hopewell Police Department, Sheriff's Department, Parks and Recreation, and Healthy Families. Fuller urged the public to attend, both to ensure child safety and to support city-sponsored community engagement efforts.

### **REGULAR MEETING**

#### **PRESENT:**

John B. Partin, Mayor  
Rita Joyner, Vice Mayor  
Michael Harris, Councilor  
Ronnie Ellis, Councilor  
Susan Daye, Councilor  
Yolanda Stokes, Councilor  
Dominic Holloway, Councilor (Absent)

Prayer by Evangelist Wright followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Vice Mayor Joyner.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to adopt the Regular meeting agenda.  
Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Councilor Ellis-	Yes
Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Yes

Councilor Holloway-	Absent
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Abstain
Mayor Partin-	Yes

**Motion Passes 5-0**

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

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 5-0**

**INFORMATION/PRESENTATIONS**

**1. FY 26 Budget Presentation** – Stacey Jordan, Finance Director

During the city council meeting, Stacey Jordan presented a detailed overview of the proposed fiscal year 2026 operating and capital budgets. She began by outlining the strategic "four-pillar approach" used in crafting the budget: budget assessment, sound analysis, historical trend review, and contingency planning. The total proposed operating and capital budget is \$233,528,338, with only \$200,000 currently allocated for capital projects, despite \$10.5 million in requests. This figure represents a 6% overall increase from the previous year. The General Fund is proposed at \$70,409,665—up by \$2.1 million (3%) from FY25—largely due to increased real estate reassessments.

Key areas of expenditure include the implementation of the Class and Compensation Plan for Public Safety, 3% salary increases for other city employees, and healthcare cost increases, which the city absorbed up to \$500,000.

There are also slight budget increases for IT needs, including email systems. Funding for schools remains unchanged at \$13.5 million, consistent with FY24 and FY25. Notably, there are no plans to draw from the unassigned fund balance and no proposed changes to the city's tax rates.

Revenue development was coordinated by a committee involving the city manager and financial leaders. Real estate reassessment significantly boosted revenues, offsetting declines in other areas like public service corporations and personal property taxes. Other increases came from sales taxes and state compensation board salary support.

The budget includes three new positions: an aquatics program manager, three firefighters, and a city attorney—no additional positions are proposed at this stage. However, further decisions may be made during the upcoming April 15th work session, where council members can review departmental requests and prioritize additional staffing or programs.

Council discussion emphasized concerns about competitive pay for the police department, to which Jordan confirmed the class and comp study for public safety is already factored into the budget. Questions also arose around transparency and clarity in budget allocation across departments. Jordan directed council members to use the detailed departmental request sections of their budget books for better understanding.

There was consensus on the need to better fund the city's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), currently underfunded, with \$200,000 set aside compared to \$47 million in five-year department requests. Council stressed the importance of capital investments, especially for aging infrastructure like sewer pump stations, stormwater systems, and school facilities. They urged prioritization of projects like the Riverwalk expansion to boost economic development and tourism and warned of potential federal and state funding cuts, suggesting the city maximize matching programs like VDOT's rotary paving initiative while available.

Future key dates include a budget work session on April 15, school and water presentations on April 22, a public hearing and first reading on May 13, and final budget adoption on May 27. The meeting concluded with acknowledgments and no further questions.

## **2. ATV and Dirt Bike Discussion** – Anthony Bessette, City Attorney

During the council meeting, Anthony Bessette provided an overview of a proposed

draft ordinance concerning the regulation of ATVs and dirt bikes in the city. Developed in collaboration with the Police Department and the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, the ordinance aims to align local regulations with state law while strengthening enforcement capabilities. The ordinance would do three primary things: (1) mirror the state code by making violations also punishable under the local ordinance; (2) authorize police to impound and potentially forfeit ATVs involved in violations; and (3) explicitly permit the police and Commonwealth Attorney to seek court approval for the destruction of an ATV or dirt bike following a conviction, particularly when a suspect flees from law enforcement.

Bessette explained that if a rider is found violating the ordinance but cooperates with police by pulling over, the offense is treated as a civil violation with a fine of up to \$500 and potential, but not automatic, vehicle impoundment. However, if the individual attempts to evade police, the situation escalates to a criminal matter, resulting in automatic impoundment and possible destruction of the vehicle upon conviction. Council members raised concerns about the ordinance addressing the behavior of the individual rather than focusing solely on the vehicle. Bessette acknowledged that while the ordinance targets vehicle enforcement, police discretion and repeated violations could influence more severe consequences for the individual offender. The ordinance is scheduled for a formal vote at the next council meeting, marking this presentation as the first reading.

### **WORK SESSION**

**WS-1 – Conditional Use permit on a non-conforming lot 219 S. 16th St – Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director**

Chris Ward presented the first of three work sessions to the City Council, focusing on a conditional use permit request submitted by Esteban Perez for the property located at 219 South 16th Avenue (Parcel # 0240890), in Ward One, zoned R-2. The request pertains to the rehabilitation of an existing accessory structure at the rear of the property for use as an accessory apartment, while the primary structure will be restored as a single-family dwelling. Ward explained that under the R-2 zoning regulations, such accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are permissible with City Council's approval of a conditional use permit. According to the city ordinance, occupants of the ADU must be family members over the age of 55 or disabled, and this status must be verified annually. Additionally, if the approved occupant vacates, the unit may not be used again unless replaced by another qualifying family member.

Ward emphasized that the property has sufficient space for off-street parking and

reviewed visual aids showing the property layout. He noted that the proposed accessory building exceeds the permitted height (over 20 feet vs. the 18-foot maximum) and would need to be modified. A citizen submitted a written comment requesting off-street parking and fencing as conditions of approval. Planning staff recommended approval of the permit with specific conditions: the occupant of the ADU must be a related family member to the primary structure's resident, an asphalt or concrete driveway must be constructed to serve both structures, and both structures must be rehabilitated in substantial conformance with submitted plans. The Planning Commission supported the application with a 3–0 vote, adding a condition that the ADU must remain unoccupied until a certificate of occupancy is issued post-rehabilitation.

During council discussion, concerns were raised—particularly by Councilmember Stokes—about the enforcement of occupancy regulations, especially regarding potential subletting. She recommended adding a clause to prohibit subletting of the ADU to prevent misuse, noting past experiences where such arrangements were exploited near public housing areas. Ward confirmed this could be added as a condition and stated that no action would be taken during the work session, but the suggestion could be included before the matter returns for a formal public hearing and vote.

**WS-2 – Rezoning Parcel #042-0165 & Parcel #042-0170 Cyprus St from B-3 to R-4** - Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

In the second work session of the evening, Chris Ward presented a zoning map amendment request for two parcels located on Cypress Street—parcels 0420165 and 0420170 (Lots 7R and 9R, Block 4 of the Highland Park Subdivision). The applicant, Lewis Stevenson, seeks to rezone these properties from B-3 Highway Commercial to R-4 Residential Apartment zoning. The parcels, located in Ward Six, are currently zoned for commercial use, but due to the B-3 district's setback requirements—a 40-foot front yard and significant rear yard—only a four-foot-wide strip remains developable on each lot. This makes them functionally undevelopable under their current zoning. Although a variance could be pursued through the Board of Zoning Appeals, this adds complexity, and the applicant instead seeks rezoning to a more viable residential designation.

The lots fully conform to R-4 zoning standards and were previously considered for rezoning in 2006 for townhouse development. However, at that time, city council denied the request due to community opposition and a lack of a proffer for single-family housing. In this current application, Stevenson has proffered single-family home construction, aligning with the council's earlier preferences. The proffers



include standard design and development conditions, such as 12-inch roof overhangs, concrete or asphalt driveways, foundation plans, and brick foundation facades on all sides.

Ward noted that staff supports the rezoning request for multiple reasons: the current B-3 zoning is impractical for development, the applicant's proffers meet the city's typical conditional use permit standards, the proposed R-4 zoning is compatible with adjacent properties to the north, and the comprehensive plan encourages medium- to high-density housing in the area as part of traditional neighborhood revitalization. No public comments were received, and the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the rezoning with the submitted proffers.

During council discussion, Councilor Stokes asked whether the rezoning would interfere with the planned Rendezvous housing development in the nearby area. Ward clarified that the Rendezvous site lies to the northeast and is unaffected by the proposed rezoning. Stokes also inquired whether any coordination occurred between the Housing Authority and Stevenson regarding the types of housing being developed—single-family homes versus multifamily units—but Ward confirmed there had been no such discussion. Stokes requested that a 20% tree canopy be maintained on the site, to which Ward responded affirmatively. No further action was taken during the session, but Ward noted that the issue would return for a public hearing.

### **WS-3 – Hopecrest Town Subdivision** – Chris Ward, Planning and Development Director

Chris Ward provided a brief update on the subdivision phase of the Hopecrest Towns development, a project previously approved for rezoning by City Council last year. The subdivision involves multiple parcels—1060735, 1060490, 1060285, 1060105, and 1060200—and covers an area of just over 28 acres. The applicant for the development is ABU M LLC, and the existing zoning designations are B-3 Planned Unit Development and R-4 Planned Unit Development. The proposed final development includes one multifamily building and 171 townhome units.

Ward presented maps showing the general and detailed locations of the parcels and explained that the subdivision plans had undergone thorough internal review by the Department of Development, Public Works, and the city's utility departments. The plans include a phased development schedule, which was also reviewed.

He emphasized that, according to city ordinance, if an applicant satisfies all requirements of the subdivision ordinance, City Council's approval becomes a ministerial duty, meaning it must be approved without discretionary judgment. Based on the staff's comprehensive review, the subdivision plan has been found to

meet all required provisions, and Ward indicated that it will return to council not as a public hearing item, but as a routine (R) item for formal approval.

During the session, there was brief lighthearted confusion over the ward location of the development, with Ward initially stating it was in Ward 6, then being corrected to Ward 7. With no further questions, the work session concluded.

**WS-4 – Treasurer and Director of Finance Ordinance** – Anthony Bessette, City Attorney

City Attorney Anthony Bessette presented a newly drafted ordinance that was developed at the council's request. The ordinance, a result of detailed collaboration between Bessette, the treasurer, Stacey Jordan, Director of Finance, and the Treasurer's Association of Virginia, aims to redefine and limit the duties of the city treasurer strictly to those mandated by the Virginia Code and the Virginia Constitution. Bessette explained that over the decades, various additional responsibilities had been assigned to the treasurer through council resolutions and ordinances dating back to the 1930s. This new ordinance effectively removes those accumulated additional duties, returning the treasurer's role to its statutory foundation. Furthermore, the ordinance formally establishes the role of the Director of Finance and the Department of Finance in the city's charter, clearly outlining their responsibilities and delineating the working relationship between the finance department and the treasurer's office. Bessette emphasized that this measure serves to clarify and modernize the structure of financial oversight in the city. With no questions from the council members, it was announced that the ordinance will be brought forward for approval in two weeks.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**PH-1 – Tax Rates** – Stacey Jordan, Finance Director

Stacey Jordan, the Director of Finance, conducted the public hearing regarding the adoption of the city's tax rate. She clarified that there would be no increase in the current tax rate, which will remain at \$1.17. However, under Virginia State Code §58.1-3321, the city is required to hold this hearing as part of a revenue-neutral calculation process following a property reassessment. This process determines whether the city will recognize the additional revenue generated by increased property values or reduce the tax rate to offset that gain. Jordan recommended that the city recognize the additional revenue resulting from the reassessment rather than lowering the rate. She explained that these additional funds are necessary to support several key initiatives, including a classification and compensation study, increased healthcare insurance costs, capital

improvements, and other essential funding priorities throughout the city. The public hearing was opened for the public to speak.

During the public hearing, Portland Jones, a resident of Ward Six, voiced strong concerns about the property tax assessments and the current tax rate of \$1.17 per \$100 of assessed value. He expressed confusion about how assessments are determined and how the tax rate is set, and he questioned the fairness and reasonableness of the process. As a single homeowner responsible for two households, he described the financial burden caused by both rising property values and the maintained tax rate. He noted a sharp increase in assessments on his properties, citing one that grew 57% in 2023 without him receiving prior notification, and another that grew an additional 7% this year, which he believed indicated previous over-assessment. He has requested a reassessment and is awaiting a review. Jones emphasized that such increases are putting many residents—particularly elderly citizens and single-income households—at risk of financial hardship, potentially forcing them to sell their homes. He urged the council to consider the impact on residents and to reduce the tax rate back to \$1.13 to provide relief.

Mr. Radcliff, a resident of Ward Four, addressed the council to express his frustration regarding the recent increase in his property assessment and the continued property tax rate of \$1.17 per \$100 of assessed value. He stated that his home's value rose by nearly \$47,000, which significantly increased his tax burden. He criticized the council for not implementing spending cuts to offset the impact of the rising assessments and argued that the tax rate should be lowered substantially. Radcliff emphasized that this is the second time he has experienced a significant increase, noting that his property taxes have jumped from \$2,000 per year to nearly \$2,934 at the current rate, which he described as "ridiculous." He concluded his remarks by calling on the council to make deeper budget cuts and relieve the financial pressure on residents.

Patty Ham, a resident of Ward Six, addressed the council to voice her concerns about the continuous increases in property taxes, which she says are placing a heavy burden on single-income residents like herself. Living on Social Security, she explained that the repeated tax hikes are making it increasingly difficult for her to manage financially. She highlighted the case of another elderly woman in a different ward who, due to high property taxes, can no longer afford to repair her heating system and is living without heat. Ham emphasized that many widows in Hopewell, surviving on a single fixed income, are struggling to maintain their homes while shouldering rising real estate taxes. She urged the council to consider the financial strain these tax increases are placing on vulnerable residents, particularly the elderly.

Darlene Thompson, a resident of Ward Six, passionately expressed her frustration with the city council over repeated increases in property taxes and what she perceives as a lack of responsiveness to citizens' concerns. She criticized the council for continuing to consider tax hikes despite already receiving substantial revenue from past overassessments and previous tax rate increases, from \$1.13 to \$1.17, which she claims brought in millions in additional funds. Thompson stated that each time she addresses council, she is redirected without resolution, and citizen input seems to be disregarded. She accused the city of mismanaging taxpayer dollars, citing examples such as funding for a Riverwalk project, additional staff for the attorney and economic development office, and new vehicles for city executives, including the city manager and her assistant, while basic resident needs like ditch maintenance and leaf pickup are neglected. Thompson also criticized the high compensation packages for city officials, particularly the city manager, and suggested that if the council does not begin prioritizing citizens' needs, residents may need to consider legal action or organizing a petition. She concluded by urging the council to reconsider its spending priorities and listen more attentively to those they represent.

Councilor Yolanda Stokes clarified during the discussion that there is no proposed increase to the property tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year. She confirmed this understanding with Ms. George, who reiterated that while property assessment values have increased due to this being a reassessment year, the actual tax rate remains unchanged. Councilor Stokes emphasized that the reassessments occur every other year, with the next one scheduled for 2028. She also noted that the additional revenue generated from the reassessed property values will be directed toward critical city needs, specifically increases in funding for public safety departments such as fire and police, as well as rising insurance costs. Stokes concluded by reaffirming that although revenue will rise due to increased assessments, there is no increase in the property tax rate itself.

Councilor Ellis expressed empathy and understanding toward the citizens voicing frustration over rising property taxes, acknowledging that their concerns are valid and deeply felt. As a relatively new member of the council, he admitted that making such financial decisions is extremely difficult. He emphasized that while the tax rate itself has not increased, the reassessment of property values has led to higher tax bills for residents. Ellis pointed out that the additional revenue generated is being directed toward critical needs, particularly raises for public safety personnel like police officers and firefighters, who are leaving the city at a concerning rate for better-paying opportunities elsewhere. He stressed that public safety comes at a high cost, and that keeping officers and firefighters in the city is vital, even if expensive. He explained that the city also faces

rising operational costs, such as fuel and vehicle maintenance, just as residents do, and noted that the city uses vehicle leasing programs rather than outright purchases to manage costs. Ellis acknowledged how tough these decisions are, reaffirming that while he personally dislikes the financial burden on residents, some expenses are unavoidable to maintain city services. He concluded by underscoring the gravity of the city's financial obligations and the limited options available for raising necessary funds.

Councilor Daye clarified that the City Council does not determine property assessment values, emphasizing that those valuations are handled by the City Assessor through the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office, and are outside the council's control. She pointed out that the council's responsibility is limited to setting the tax rate itself. In this case, she reassured the public that the tax rate is not increasing, reinforcing that the recent concerns stem from rising assessment values, not a decision made by council to raise the rate. Her statement aimed to provide clarity on the separate roles and responsibilities in the taxation process.

Dr. Manker, the City Manager, provided detailed clarification regarding the use of assessment-related revenues, emphasizing transparency and the city's efforts to support public safety. She explained that multiple sessions had been held with various council members—including Councilor Harris, Councilor Daye, the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and the CFO—to explore how to implement pay increases for police officers and firefighters. These discussions were productive and aimed at identifying solutions to address significant staffing shortages, with the police department currently 17 officers short and the fire and EMS departments down 14. As a result, the city has been relying on personnel from neighboring localities to maintain services. Dr. Manker highlighted that the current budget is balanced and that, for the first time, assessment dollars are being used specifically to strengthen police and fire services. She noted that these funds will allow for an increase in starting police officer wages to \$58,000—still behind neighboring jurisdictions, but a meaningful step forward. Additional public discussion and budget details are scheduled for April 15. She also expressed appreciation for Councilor Bacon's remarks supporting clarity around how these funds are being used.

Mayor Partin addressed the public to clarify the efforts City Council and administration are taking to responsibly manage the city's finances amid concerns about tax burdens. He emphasized that in two previous City Council meetings, the Council had already initiated steps toward identifying and implementing budget cuts. These include reviewing longstanding unfilled staff positions with the intent to freeze them and reallocating those funds to more critical needs. Additionally, the administration is pursuing expanded grant

opportunities, such as Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) funding for street paving—not only for major roads, but also for neighborhood infrastructure. Mayor Partin acknowledged the difficulty of the current budget situation, stating that he initially hoped for a tax decrease this year. However, a recent Notice of Violation from the Department of Environmental Quality regarding the city's sewer collection system and wastewater treatment plant has shifted priorities. With a consent order likely forthcoming, the city must be financially prepared to address any requirements imposed. He explained that investing in sewer system improvements may also serve as leverage to reduce the severity of the consent order and will demonstrate to state agencies and credit rating entities that the city is actively managing its infrastructure. This, in turn, supports the city's case to regain a bond rating, which would allow for more efficient borrowing for capital projects. Mayor Partin reiterated that the Council is committed to ensuring taxpayer dollars are invested back into the community—including in public recreation, utilities, and infrastructure—and that all avenues for savings and outside funding are being explored to protect residents and improve city services.

Vice Mayor Joyner concluded the discussion by addressing citizens' concerns about not seeing tangible benefits from city spending. She acknowledged and empathized with the public's frustration, particularly in feeling that little is being done directly for them. However, she pointed out that the city's current financial limitations stem largely from a history of poor financial management, specifically the loss of Hopewell's bond rating in 2017. This loss has severely restricted the city's ability to borrow money for vital capital projects like infrastructure, streets, and city services. While the city is now on a more positive financial trajectory, recovering from such a significant deficit takes time and discipline.

Vice Mayor Joyner emphasized that public safety is the top priority in the city's strategic plan, and salary increases for police and fire personnel are critical for retaining staff and ensuring long-term city stability. She stressed that the tax rate itself has not increased and remains lower than in neighboring small cities like Petersburg and Colonial Heights. However, reassessments have led to higher individual property taxes due to inflation—a reality that affects everyone, including herself. She reiterated that managing the budget is a difficult balancing act.

She also assured the public that the budget process is not yet finalized. Although a balanced budget exists, the allocation of funds is still under review. City Council is continuing to seek ways to fund capital improvement projects more effectively, including

looking for ways to create additional revenue, and those discussions will continue in the coming week.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to approve the tax rate as presented. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

**R-1 – Mid-Year Funding Reallocation, VDOT projects update** – Michael Crocker, Public Works Director

Michael Crocker addressed the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Council to provide updates related to the city's capital improvement plans under Public Works, particularly in the context of recent budget discussions. He acknowledged that while the department's capital program has been ambitious, current financial conditions have made it increasingly difficult to carry out planned projects due to rising cost estimates. As a result, he proposed a resolution to reallocate local funding previously designated for two specific projects toward street paving efforts instead. This reallocation aims to make better use of limited local dollars by addressing more immediate infrastructure needs. Crocker stated that the three deferred projects will be revisited and rescheduled for implementation at a later date when the city is in a stronger financial position to support their local funding requirements.

Councilor Harris makes a motion to approve the resolution for Mid-year reallocation of funding to the pavement management program. Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**CCR-1** - Mayor Partin addressed the council to revisit a topic previously mentioned, requesting the reappropriation of all Ward Three funds from the current city budget. He proposed reallocating these funds specifically to repair the pier at Weston Manor to ensure its safety and usability for families, citizens, and various recreational and aquatic activities. Following advice from Mr. Bassett, she explained that the recommended process would involve transferring the funds into the Ward Improvement Fund, from which he would then officially allocate them to the pier project.

Councilor Stokes makes a motion to amend the fiscal year 2024 budget to reassign ward three travel and communication funds to the ward 3 improvement funds, and Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

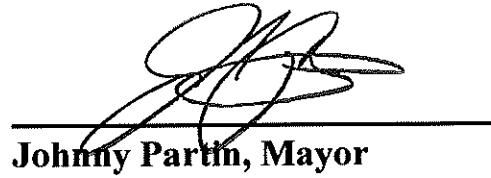


**ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully Submitted,

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

**Brittani Williams, City Clerk**

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

**Johnny Partin, Mayor**

