

MINUTES OF THE April 9, 2024 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday April 9, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to allow Councilor Harris to participate remotely. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

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| ROLL CALL | Councilor Harris | (Abstain) |
| | Mayor Partin- | Yes |
| | Vice Mayor Gore- | Yes |
| | Councilor Denton- | Yes |
| | Councilor Pelham- | Yes |
| | Councilor Holloway- | Yes |
| | Council Joyner- | Yes |

Motion Passes 6-0

CLOSED MEETING:

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to go into closed meeting pursuant to Va. Code Section §2.2-3711 (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 VA. Code section §2.2-3711 (a)(29) for discussion of the award of public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders, offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, and to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby, Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

Reconvene Open Meeting

Councilor Denton makes a motion to reconvene open meeting. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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| Councilor Harris | Yes |
| Mayor Partin- | Yes |

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| Vice Mayor Gore- | Yes |
| Councilor Denton- | Yes |
| Councilor Pelham- | Yes |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes |
| Council Joyner- | Yes |

Motion Passes 7-0

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

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

Motion Passes 7-0

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to appoint Mary French Elder, Susan Benton and Phillip Hughes to the ARB effective July 1, 2024. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

REGULAR MEETING

Regular Meeting:

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

Prayer by Evangelist Angela Wright, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag led by Councilor Denton

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adopt the Regular meeting Agenda.
Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion passes 7-0

Councilor Denton asks for item C7 in the Consent Agenda to be removed.

Councilor Holloway makes a point of information. Difficulty hearing his statement due to audio.

Mayor Partin asks Attorney Smith if a member of council have an item removed from the consent agenda or does it have to become a motion. Attorney Smith states that in its proper form it needs to be a motion because it is printed on the agenda. Her request is that she remove C7. That request needs to be in the form of a motion. Councilors are asking where she wants to move Item C7. Mayor Partin then asks the Councilors to let Councilor Denton read her information on the description of her action. Councilor Denton reads her statement.

A point of information was made by Vice Mayor Gore. She states she just wants clarity if Councilor Denton is asking to remove it entirely or to pull it out for a separate vote? Councilor Denton states she wants to vote on it separately.

Councilor Pelham asks what are the references she (Councilor Denton) is reading from. Is it a state regulation or your opinion? Councilor Denton gives Councilor Pelham a list of references to Councilor Pelham. Councilor Pelham gives the order/ process in which this is action is normally done. Councilor Pelham asks Attorney Smith a question pertaining to the rules. Attorney Smith answers it is her understanding this is common practice for the city council for Hopewell.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to remove C7 and to make it an R2 item. Mayor Partin Seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-1

INFORMATION/ PRESENTATIONS

1. **Finance Report- Robert Bobb Group**. Heather Ness gives a report on the progress to date and recent successes. She goes thru a few areas to update council: 2020 Audit Progress & 2021 Audit Package Submission, SOP and training progress, ERP Consultants, Industry Reconciliations and Dewberry Report, Progress on open issues and the Treasurer memorandum of Agreement Progress. Lastly, Items Needing Council Action.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Councilor Denton makes a motion to waive the rules to allow Ms. Randolph to speak on an item that's on the agenda. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-2

1. **Debbie Randolph-** Ms. Randolph stated her concern on the particular topic of the Protection of Legitimate Political Activities of Employees and Restrictions and that the vote taken was not legal. She states other actions she encouraged council to do, to understand whether or not it was a legal vote. Ms. Randolph gives her opinion on the item and how she would take the action on voting.
2. **Ed Howser-** He asks that the rules be waived for him to speak on an item on the agenda. Mayor Partin confirms its already been waived he can speak. He states this is about the ordinance that keeps popping up. He gives his ideas about the how and why the ordinance is existing.
3. **Sharah Fuller-** She talks about a program run by Nathaniel Garrett called Guys with Ties and gives some background on the program. Ms. Fuller talks about upcoming events being hosted at Harry E James and asks for the council support these young students. She states wanting to put together some family fun events in her ward and other wards. Ms. Fuller asks to get social media to post the city of Hopewell curfew information.

PUBLIC HEARING

PH1-CDBG Substantial Amendment- Chris Ward, Director of Development.

This is a proposed substantial amendment to the 2023- 2024 CDBG program year. Mr. Ward gives a quick background. In the Consolidated plan that we are required to have by HUD, Mr. Ward lists the following goals, Rehabilitation of Housing, adult and preschool literacy, household services including those for the elderly and disabled infrastructure improvements, recreation and homelessness prevention. Mr. Ward states every year we are up against a timeliness constraint. HUD requires that the city spend 80 % of its annual funding by May 2 of each year. For the program year, we received \$236,121.00. Eighty (80) percent expenditure means we need to spend 188,897.00 by May 2. Staff has come up with a proposal that was taken to the CDBG Committee two weeks ago. In order to meet our timeliness requirement, set by HUD, we are proposing the following: to defund Rebuilding Together of their 2023 funding which is in the amount of \$66,897.00. He states taking the money and reprogram it put it towards Westwood Park improvements. He also proposes reprogramming a portion of some unspent money from previous years of \$38,676.00 to also go towards the Westwood Park improvement project and then proposing to refund Rebuilding Together to continue emergency home repair. Mr. Ward continues to state they will either fund them out of next years program money or unspent funds. Rebuilding Together will be funded and their contract will be honored, it will come from a different funding source. CDBG voted 4 to 0 to go with staff's recommendation and Mr. Ward provided the total amounts so you know exactly what you're working with. In summary, it would be to defund Rebuilding Together of FY23-24 funds in the amount of \$66,897.00 and fund the Westwood Park improvement project with the same amount of \$66,897 and \$38,676 in unspent funds for a total of \$105,573.00 Westwood Park improvements. Mr. Ward concludes if you are able to approve the request from staff as well as the request from the CDBG committee this evening, we will be able to meet our timeliness requirement by May 2.

Rick Ballou- states the issue that Mr. Ward raised about the competency of the grantee, they didn't have trained people, they didn't have a plan, they couldn't execute money. How is that going and what have you done to remedy that? How do we know that this money, that you're going to reprogram and give to them is actually going to be used in a worthwhile way.

Chris Ward addresses the question by stating Rebuilding Together has been a subrecipient of the cities before, they know what they're doing overall as an agency. They have submitted at our request what we calling a remediation plan and that is how they are going to get back on track. We received that plan earlier this week. We are working thru them or working with them to get through this plan. Tonight, I'm only asking for the reprogramming of the funds for the park. We can come back later and make a decision. The CDBG has not decided exactly where refunding will come from, whether its next years money or unspent funds. We are not refunding Rebuilding Together this evening. All we are doing is re programming their money. Mr. Ward clarifies the information for Councilor Pelham.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to approve FY2023-FY2024 CDBG budget amendment request to defund the Rebuilding Together of \$66,897.00, re-allocate \$66,897.00 plus the \$38,676.00 in unspent funds from previous years to the Westwood Park improvement project. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1-Establish an AD-Hoc City Council Subcommittee to review and provide recommendations for the city of Hopewell Resource Manual-Dr. Manker

Dr. Manker brings before council, the HR subcommittee, recommended by Councilor Pelham as a way to review the HR manual. Tonight, you have a

resolution in hand that appoints two members from the council to create an Ad-Hoc committee so we can begin reviewing sections of the manual and then reporting that manual to the city council, for any changes or costs that will come to the council for those changes.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve the motion before us. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

A friendly amendment was made by Vice Mayor Gore to divide it up and bring it back to council. Friendly amendment was accepted by Councilor Joyner and Councilor Holloway.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

R-2- Protection of Legitimate Political Activities of Employees and Restrictions- Councilor Pelham.

Councilor Joyner motions to allow for the ordinance to be approved with the amendment that it will not take effect until January 1, 2025. Further discussion took place in reference to this ordinance amongst council.

Vice Mayor Gore states some information on the ordinance, why it is not currently in place and reference to Conflict of Interest and serving on City Council. Vice Mayor Gore then calls for the Vote.

Vice Mayor Gore withdraws the call to the vote, to allow Councilor Holloway to give a statement.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to extend the meeting to complete CCR1. Vice Mayor Gore seconds the motion.

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

Motion Passes 7-0

Vice Mayor Gore states she understands why some council would not want this ordinance to pass. She gives her opinion about this ordinance and why this ordinance is important to be passed. She briefly explains grievance process and conflict of interests that would take place if this ordinance is not in place.

Councilor Holloway gives details on things that were said when he was running for office and clears up a misunderstanding of a statement made from a citizen. He then states he wants to call for the vote and then asks for the repeat of the motion. Mayor Partin repeats the motion on the floor.

Councilor Pelham makes a substitute motion to approve the ordinance with an immediate effective date. Vice Mayor Gore seconds the motion.

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| ROLL CALL | Councilor Harris- | No |
| | Mayor Partin- | No |
| | Vice Mayor Gore- | Yes |
| | Councilor Denton- | No |

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|-------------------|-----|
| Councilor Pelham- | Yes |
| Council Holloway- | No |
| Councilor Joyner- | No |

Motion Fails 2-5

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve the ordinance with an effective date of January 1, 2025. No one seconds the motion. Mayor Partin calls for roll call.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-1

REPORTS OF THE CITY MANAGER

1. **FY25 Proposed Budget-Russell Branson, Interim Finance Director.** The discussion tonight is more of an information discussion and not for you to approve anything or to take any action. Branson provides City Council with an overview and highlights of the proposed FY25 Operating and Capital Budget and discusses next steps. He states that we've done a Revenue workshop expense Revenue Workshop that totals \$217 million dollars. That includes about \$29 million dollars that's moving around. There's \$618,000 that's been identified from the general fund available for Capital. We need approx. 3.9 million in that range to fund all the priority projects, and right now we have \$618,000.00. There's a proposed general fund operations of 66.7 million, that's an increase of about \$4.3 million over last year. Various increases throughout the department add up to that additional \$4 million dollars. Mr. Branson states we are looking for consideration of adjustments to the tax rates and that's what will be talking about on Thursday. He points to a

list of all the funds where the cost is equal to a total of \$217 million. He talks about some topics that will be discussed at Thursday’s budget meeting. He explains you don’t have to do all of these increases to balance the budget. He lists out the current taxes for discussion and lists out the City Managers Revenue Committee. Mr. Branson talks about the proposed budget expenditures and all funds, which shows the revenues are equal to the expenditures. The 4.5 million is a lot of little things. He goes over the items that were already approved by council. He states we need reductions over 6.2 million to fund all CIP projects. Mr. Branson states there’s about 4 million that we really want to fund and will talk on Thursday of a path forward in that. How do we get to those things that are milestones for things that are important. He walks thru next steps: April 11 2024 as a work session on Budget and Tax Rate discussions, April 16 2024 the Hearing to adopt Tax Rate Ordinance May 14 2024 Approval on first reading of City and School Budgets, May 28 2024 Approval on second reading of City and School Budgets (if needed).

CCR1- Expansion of the City Council Finance Committee- Mayor Partin

Mayor Partin states that Mr. Bobb and his team has made a recommendation for a couple of months and I think it’s a good idea to move forward with the recommendation to expand the finance committee from its current structure to include all members of city council and to include the Treasurer and Commissioner of Revenue.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to expand the finance committee to include all members of city council, the treasurer and the commissioner of revenue effective July 1, 2024. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Partin announces the meeting has been adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brittani Williams, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor