

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 11, 2025, CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

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

Councilor Holloway made a motion to allow Councilor Stokes to participate remotely. Councilor Harris seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 4-0

CLOSED MEETING

Councilor Holloway made a motion to go into a closed meeting under Va. Code §2.2-3711 (A)(l) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointees (City Clerk Contract, city clerk, city manager, city attorney

performance evaluation process, Planning Commission, Economic Development Authority), Va. Code§ 2.2-371 1(A)(29) and (8) to discuss the award of a public contract where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the City's bargaining position and to consult with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters (Discussion of an unsolicited offer of real estate property); and Va. Code§ 2.2-3711 (A)(8) (Treasurer's and Director of Finance's duties) Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 6-0

Vice Mayor Joyner made a motion to reconvene the open meeting. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-1

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

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

Motion Passes 7-0

Vice Mayor Joyner made a motion to appoint Mr. Arnold Daye to the Planning Commission. Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

During the meeting, Councilor Holloway expressed a concern regarding a potential conflict of interest involving Mr. Daye, given that his wife serves on the city council. Holloway sought clarification from the City Attorney to ensure there was no conflict before proceeding. He questioned whether Mr. Daye could be selected without any issues. It was confirmed that there was no conflict of interest, as no personal benefit would result from the vote. Holloway also briefly considered the implications for future votes, including those related to the planning commission. However, after some clarification, Holloway acknowledged that the vote at hand was in the public's best interest, which resolved his concerns. He concluded that the issue of conflict was no longer a concern and expressed that his initial worry was alleviated.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-1

WORK SESSION

WS -1- Right of Way Vacation Request for 319 Maryland Ave..- Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Chris Ward presented a request for the vacation of a public right of way adjacent to 319 Maryland Avenue, identified as Parcel 0240510024030. The parcel in question is approximately 746 square feet and is located in an R-2 zoning district. The request was submitted by the West End Presbyterian Church of Hopewell, seeking to vacate this section of the public right of way, which is enclosed by two properties. Ward explained that, like other right-of-way vacation requests, the proposal was reviewed by various city departments to ensure there were no existing utilities or easements in the area. According to Water Renewal, Public Works, and Storm Water staff, there are no utilities or easements, and they have recommended approval for the vacation. Additionally, the right-of-way dead-ends and obstructs the church's ability to expand its facilities. As a result, the staff is recommending approval of the vacation request. Ward offered to answer any questions, but no further questions were raised, and the session concluded.

WS -2 - MOU for NOVA South - Tabitha Martinez, Recreation and Parks Director

Speaker Tabitha Martinez addressed the City Council regarding the Nova South agreement, which had been discussed at a previous meeting. She presented a modified version of the original Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for council consideration. Martinez emphasized that while staff still recommended the original MOA, the modified version responded to some of the Swim Team's requests. The key difference in the modified version was that the Swim Team would have access to four lanes instead of five on Tuesdays and Thursdays but would receive additional lane access on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. She highlighted the financial implications of these changes, with the cost of operating outside normal hours totaling \$1,162.80 per week. To make the modified MOA feasible, Martinez requested funding for an Aquatics Program Specialist, amounting to \$18,720 for the remaining four months of the fiscal year.

Martinez discussed the difficulties in balancing the needs of the swim team with the city's obligation to provide access to its facilities for residents. She expressed concern over the possibility of losing the Swim Team altogether if a middle ground could not be reached. Council members engaged in a discussion about the importance of preserving the Swim Team while ensuring the community's needs were met. Some council members felt that the process had not been handled with the level of communication and respect expected, particularly regarding reaching

out to Nova South for further discussions. The mayor expressed he would reach out to a NOVA representative for further information regarding the MOU.

Martinez also explained that hiring an additional Aquatics Program Specialist would help accommodate the extra hours required by the Swim Team. There was confusion around the details of the MOA and the costs involved, as some members believed certain budget details had not been adequately communicated. The conversation concluded with a sense of urgency to resolve the matter and bring Nova South back for further discussions to reach an agreeable solution that would balance both the Swim Team's needs and the city's obligations to its residents.

REGULAR MEETING

PRESENT:

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

Prayer by Evangelist Wright followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Councilor Daye.

Councilor Holloway made a motion to adopt the regular meeting agenda. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

Councilor Daye made a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

INFORMATION/PRESENTATIONS

1. HUD Earmark for Hopewell Community Center - Charles Bennett, Economic Development Director, Tabitha Martinez, Recreation and Parks Director

Charles Bennett addressed the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Council members to provide an informational update without requesting any immediate action. He explained that in two weeks, he and Director Martinez would return to request a letter of support for an earmark they are pursuing. This Earmark funding, which comes from the HUD Community Development Earmark Program, is targeted for upgrades at the Hopewell Community Center. These upgrades would include improvements to the air conditioning and ventilation systems, as well as updates to the locker rooms to improve accessibility. Bennett highlighted that the city's economic development plan emphasizes the importance of lifestyle and amenities, and the community center is central to this effort, serving all city residents. He mentioned ongoing collaboration with Director Martinez and the grant writers to ensure the project aligns with funding opportunities. If successful, the earmark funding would reduce the need for internal revenue sources to finance these improvements. Bennett also referenced the city's capital plan and how the proposed project fits into broader recreational goals. He closed by emphasizing the importance of the community center, sharing a personal anecdote about how it was where he learned vital life skills, like how not to drown. He then opened the floor for any questions, but none were raised.

2. Earmark Funding Request - Michael Crocker, Public Works Director (Water Department)

Michael Crocker addressed the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Council, following up on a presentation by Charles Bennett about a funding opportunity through earmarks. Crocker explained that earmarks offer a chance to use federal funding to replace local dollars for projects. He shared that the city is currently pursuing a water project, which would typically cost around \$2 million or less. However, this project would require 20% of the funding to come from the city itself. The project is planned to start by the end of 2026, and Crocker mentioned that, while they do not have a specific project ready yet, they will return in two weeks with a formal proposal that will need approval. He emphasized that the current discussion was informational only. A comment from the council mentioned additional federal funding opportunities, particularly through Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan's office. Crocker confirmed that the city's grant writer has been in contact with McClellan's staff. He also mentioned a pending earmark for a separate project, though he was unsure of its outcome. A discussion then shifted to the Heretic project, where Crocker explained that the costs have increased significantly since the initial estimate, likely exceeding \$2 million due to factors like COVID-19 and supply chain issues. The conversation also turned to the possibility of receiving principal forgiveness for loans to help fund projects in disadvantaged areas like Hopewell, with Crocker noting that such funding could be tied to the city's sewer rates. A final suggestion was made about conducting "spot audits" to assess whether Hopewell could qualify for such funding, but Crocker clarified that a full audit would be necessary for eligibility. He closed by reaffirming his commitment to pursuing these funding opportunities creatively and thanked the council.

3. Earmark Funding Request - Donald Reid, Police Department

Major Donald Reid presented a request for federally earmarked funding to enhance the city's public safety technology, specifically through a system called Flock. This system would provide full city coverage for gunshot detection and license plate recognition (LPR) and integrate with the 911 dispatch system, allowing officers to receive live call information and view nearby camera footage when responding to incidents. The project is designed to improve investigative capabilities, reduce response times, and address rising violence in the city. The funding request totals \$999,000, with the primary sources being COPS Technology and BURN Grant funding. Reid emphasized that this system would function as a real-time crime

center, integrating various technologies like body-worn cameras, drones, and shot detection and allowing for citizen and business-approved cameras to be added to expand coverage. He noted that the ongoing costs for maintaining this system would be around \$500,000 per year starting in 2029, but this amount could decrease if certain technologies, like the Raven gunshot detection system, are scaled back based on data-driven decisions. The proposal is aimed at significantly reducing crime and improving public safety, which would also positively impact housing and property values. Reid clarified that the council was not being asked for approval tonight but rather to provide the necessary support to pursue this funding when the opportunity opens. The council discussed the cost and benefits of the system, with members expressing support for the project's potential to reduce crime in the city.

PUBLIC HEARING

PH-1 - Community Development Block Grant 5-Year Consolidated Plan - Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Chris Ward shared with the council during the public hearing to solicit comments on the city's priorities for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program in preparation for the new five-year consolidated plan. He explained that as an entitlement community, Hopewell automatically receives CDBG funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) without needing to apply. The annual funding amount is typically around \$245,000. The CDBG program's mission is to create strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities with affordable housing. Ward highlighted that CDBG funds must meet one of three national objectives: benefiting low- to moderate-income individuals, preventing slums and blight, or addressing urgent needs like federally declared disasters. Over the past seven years, the city has received approximately \$1.5 million in CDBG funds. Historically, half of the funds have been used for emergency home repairs for low- to moderate-income homeowners, with about 15% allocated for public services. Other expenditures have included infrastructure improvements and city park upgrades. In the current year, the city funded a second emergency home repair provider. The city's current plan lists key funding goals, including owner-occupied housing rehabilitation, homelessness prevention, recreational facilities, employment training, and services for seniors and youth.

Vice Mayor Joyner made a motion to extend the meeting until the Finance meeting was finished. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 7-0

Mr. Ward continued his presentation on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) priorities, outlining some of the key funding areas of the city's current consolidated plan, which include services for victims of domestic violence, childcare, neighborhood cleanups, public infrastructure, and food banks. He emphasized that this meeting was the first step in soliciting public comments for the development of the new five-year plan and that further opportunities for feedback would be available through surveys, consultations with service providers, the city website, social media, and direct contact with the department. Ward clarified that no action was required from the city council at this time, as the focus was on informing them about the start of the plan's development and gathering input. He also invited questions from the council members.

When asked about the possibility of adding schools to the funding priorities, Ward explained that CDBG funds typically do not cover capital needs for schools but noted that the city has supported schools in other ways, such as funding the "HES Rocks and Rulers" program, which teaches high school students about entrepreneurship. He explained that while direct funding for school capital projects isn't possible under CDBG, the city could support educational programs that might help save resources for future capital projects. Ward also emphasized that emergency home repair programs have been very successful in Hopewell and should continue to be a priority in the new plan. He added that youth services would likely remain a key funding goal in the next five-year plan. No public comments were made during the public hearing, and the meeting moved forward with no further actions required at that time.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1- School Board Appropriation Resolution - Dr. Manker, City Manager

Dr. Maker introduced a discussion on the annual reappropriation of unspent funds for Hopewell Public Schools. The city had previously discussed the issue with the schools and had asked the City Attorney and City Manager to draft a resolution. The resolution sought approval to reappropriate unused funds back to the school system to be used for capital needs. Councilor Holloway expressed concern about the recurring surplus in the school system's budget, questioning whether it was necessary to continue reappropriating these funds when they are not being fully utilized, especially given the city's own pressing capital needs, such as those of the fire and police departments. Holloway pointed out that every year, a significant amount—around \$1 million or more—was rolled over and requested for the next year but often went unused.

In response, the City Manager explained that the surplus funds had historically been used to cover the school system's operating budget, not specifically for capital projects. However, the schools have recently presented a significant list of capital needs, including some urgent projects. The city provides more than the required local match for state funding to the school system each year, and the schools have asked for additional funds to address these capital projects. Despite the surplus, Dr. Manker emphasized the importance of ensuring that the funds were directed toward real capital projects, which were necessary for the school system's maintenance and improvement.

Council members debated whether to approve the reappropriation, with some expressing frustration over the recurring surplus and others acknowledging the need for capital improvements within the school system. The conversation shifted towards the importance of using the funds to address immediate capital projects, such as infrastructure repairs, which could prevent larger problems in the future. Councilors agreed that if the funds were reappropriated, they should be used for capital projects and not remain in a cycle of unused surpluses. Ultimately, the discussion reflected a balance between supporting the school system's needs and ensuring responsible use of city funds for essential capital improvements.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes

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

Motion Passes 7-0

R-2 - Opioid Abatement Agreement - James Gaston III, Deputy City Manager, Susan Fierro, Prince George

Mr. Gaston addressed the City Council regarding an opioid project in collaboration with Surry, Prince George, and Dinwiddie. He explained the concept of an "opioid GO Team," which would respond to opioid crises within 24 hours in the participating jurisdictions. Gaston emphasized that the funding for this project is not related to the direct opioid settlement funds the city is already receiving but rather comes from a separate pool of money that would be forfeited to the Commonwealth if not utilized. The application for the funding is due by April 1st, and Gaston sought approval from the City Council to allow the group to apply for and use the funds for the project.

Councilor Holloway then made a motion to approve the recommendation to enter into a cooperative partnership agreement with District 19 Community Services and surrounding localities for the purpose of creating a mobile overdose response unit and approving \$41,317 of opioid funding for the project, covering fiscal years 2026 through 2030. Councilor Harris seconds the motion.

Vice Mayor Joyner asked for clarification on the source of the \$41,000, to which Gaston responded that it is part of the opioid settlement agreement with the Commonwealth and comes from state funds. He further explained that there are three buckets of opioid-related funding: direct funding, which the city will continue to receive, and two additional funds that must be used in cooperation with other jurisdictions for initiatives like recovery courts or the GO Team. If these funds are not used, they will be returned to the Commonwealth. Gaston concluded by confirming that the other jurisdictions had approached Hopewell to collaborate and prevent the funds from going unused.

ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes

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

Motion Passes 7-0

FINANCE MEETING

1. Finance Committee Report - CFO - Stacey Jordan, Finance Director

Stacey Jordan opened the Finance Committee meeting by providing an update on the city's financial status for February. She reported that citywide revenues were trending 0.29%, or \$3.5 million higher, compared to the previous year, while expenses had increased by 1.2 million, or 4.5%. She noted that the next key due date for the city was June 2nd and referred the council to page four for a more detailed breakdown of the budget's trends, including areas where revenues were increasing, decreasing, or remaining consistent.

A discussion arose when a council member asked about the delay in receiving personal property tax bills, which caused some residents to pay later than usual. Stacey confirmed that the due date had been extended to March 7th, which contributed to the lower-than-expected revenue for February, but expected revenue to pick up in March as more payments were made.

The general fund for February showed a 6.5% decline in revenues compared to last year, amounting to \$601,000 lower than in 2024. This decrease was mainly due to the delayed receipt of personal property penalties and interest, which should be corrected by March. Expenses for the General Fund were 1.4 million, or 4.9%, higher than last year. She indicated that a key due date for this fund was in June.

Regarding the Enterprise Fund, Stacey shared that February revenues were 2% higher than the same period in 2024, while expenses had decreased by 3.6%, or \$957,000, primarily due to a reduction in emergency repairs. Similarly, the Schools Fund showed a small increase in revenues, up by 2.2%, or \$303,000, compared to last year, with expenses trending slightly higher at 0.04%, or \$1.9 million.

Stacey also reported that the city's accounts payable team had processed 1,114 invoices in February, totaling \$5 million, and that the sewer debt had been paid on

time. She projected a cash flow of approximately \$20 million by the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2025, based on current projections.

Stacey also addressed the progress of the Fiscal Year 2021 Comprehensive Financial Report (CFR), stating that the primary delay was due to the schools, which had not yet submitted all necessary documents. The city had submitted their part in October, and a consultant had visited the schools on the 19th, with plans to return the following week. She assured the committee that the city's finances were in good shape and that the delay was isolated to the schools' portion of the report. David, the city's finance lead, was confident that the city would meet the March 31st deadline for the report, as they had already completed their portion and were only waiting on the schools.

Stacey agreed to send an email detailing the outstanding items needed from the schools for the fiscal report, which she would follow up on with a broader email to keep everyone updated. She also mentioned a possible discussion at the budget presentation later in the meeting.

2. Treasurer's Report - Mya Bolling, Treasurer Department

Mayor Partin noted that no representative from the Treasurer's Office was present despite the fact that the extension had been made into the Finance Committee meeting. Stacey Jordan inquired if everyone had received the packet from the Treasurer's Office and reminded the committee that any questions regarding the packet could be directed to her or Ms. Bolling. With that, Jordan moved on to the next item on the agenda.

3. Revenue Report - Stacey Jordan, Finance Director

Ms. Jordan then began her revenue budget report. In the meeting, Ms. Jordan discussed the primary city programs and funds, which include General Government, Enterprise, Public Services, and Schools. The General Government budget covers the General Fund, Recreation, Economic Development, Capital Projects, Debt, and Grants, while the Enterprise Fund encompasses Regional Water, Sewer, Refuse, and Stormwater. Public Services include programs like Social Services, CSA, Healthy Families, and Special Welfare. The school's fund consists of its operational budget, textbooks, and cafeterias. She explained that revenue forecasting comes from various sources, including the Real Estate Assessor's Office, the Commissioner of the Revenue, state and federal departments, and schools. User charges are generated by departments such as

Refuse, Stormwater, and HRW, while transfers and grants are also included, subject to Council approval. The budget process for the upcoming fiscal year began in January 2024, with departmental budget requests, the first revenue forecast, and meetings with the City Manager. Public hearings and budget-related meetings will occur throughout March and April, culminating in the adoption of the budget ordinance by May 27th. Ms. Jordan shared that the city's real estate assessment came in at an 11% increase, which is favorable, especially considering it is not a reassessment year. She also mentioned that healthcare costs are expected to rise by 12%, and the city is working on implementing a class and compensation study. She emphasized the importance of adopting a structurally balanced budget, noting that if revenues are insufficient, expenses will need to be reduced. Tax rates are expected to remain flat for the Fiscal Year 2026, with transfers possibly inflating the total revenue figures, as they often represent movement between funds. She provided an overview of the revenue sources for the city, including real estate tax, public service corporations, state and local revenues, charges for services, and other miscellaneous taxes. Revenues will be allocated across various sectors, including the General Fund, Social Services, Schools, Debt, Capital, and Self-Insurance. Ms. Jordan also highlighted that while the budget currently allocates 2% to capital improvement, there is a push to increase this allocation in future budgets to better address the city's infrastructure needs. Council members expressed concern about the capital needs, particularly regarding roads, utilities, vehicles, and public safety equipment. Ms. Jordan acknowledged this and noted that department heads have been instructed to seek funding from sources beyond the General Fund for capital projects. She reported that the General Fund has grown moderately in line with inflation, with an expected increase in Fiscal Year 26. The revenue forecast for the General Fund in FY 25 was \$66.5 million, and for FY 26, it is projected to be \$69 million, reflecting positive growth. Real estate taxes have increased by 8% or \$2.8 million, primarily due to a reassessment year, which led to a boost in residential and commercial property values. The total revenue from real estate taxes will be approximately \$25.4 million, up from the previous year's \$22 million. Despite concerns raised about the tax rate increases, particularly for real estate, the city's response included the implementation of a cigarette tax that helped balance out losses in machinery and tools, as well as depreciation in personal property taxes. This has allowed the city to meet necessary funding increases, such as the 12% rise in healthcare costs and the implementation of a class and compensation study. Additionally, personal property taxes for FY 25 were assessed at \$7.5 million, rising to \$8.2 million in FY 26. Machinery and tools

taxes have decreased slightly from \$9.5 million in FY 25 to \$9.3 million in FY 26. Public service taxes are also slightly down from \$5.1 million in FY 25 to \$4.9 million in FY 26. Local sales taxes saw a slight increase, rising from \$2.7 million in FY 25 to \$2.79 million in FY 26. The city also noted that the business license tax revenue, which had been omitted from the FY25 budget presentation, was included in the FY26 revenue estimates, contributing approximately \$2.1 million to the total. This, combined with the \$675,000 in revenue from the newly implemented cigarette tax, explains the significant increase in "Other Local Taxes" from \$3.2 million in FY 25 to \$5.6 million in FY 26. The meeting also discussed non-tax revenues, such as user charges and fees, which represent the largest portion of non-tax revenues. For FY 26, user charges and fees are projected at \$2.7 million, with other revenues like grants, fines, and property use contributing additional funds. In the meeting, it was discussed that the General Fund transfers revenues to various other funds, which are then reflected as revenue in those respective funds. For example, schools will receive \$13.5 million, recreation and public services will each receive \$2.1 million, debt will receive \$1 million, and insurance will receive \$600,000, resulting in a total of \$19.4 million in transfers. The city's enterprise funds, including HRW (Historical Revenue), have remained consistent, with a projected revenue of \$16.5 million for FY 26, up from \$15 million in prior years. Miscellaneous revenues are expected to be zero, and this excludes capital, focusing solely on user charges. For the enterprise funds, sewer revenues for FY 25 were \$3.79 million, and in FY 26, they are expected to decrease slightly by about \$3. For refuse services, user charges are projected to increase to \$8.3 million, up from \$7.09 million in FY 25, while the use of money remains consistent at \$5,000. Stormwater revenues are expected to experience a small decrease, with a slight drop of \$745, aligning with past collections within the system. The overall revenue projections for stormwater services were kept in line with actual revenue receipts, totaling \$745,000 instead of an inflated projection of \$904,000. During the meeting, the discussion focused on the funding for various public services, including social services, CSA, special welfare, and healthy families. For social services, the transfers are projected at \$1.1 million, with a 17% contribution from the General Fund and state funding expected at \$2.9 million. The CSA will receive \$1 million in transfers, with state funding of \$2.8 million. Healthy Families, which is a grant-funded program, will not receive transfers but will have grant funding of \$143,000 and state funding of \$461,000 for FY 26. It was also clarified that last year's funding for Healthy Families was allocated through the General Fund. For debt revenues, which are supported by food and

laundry taxes, HRW, sewer rates, and General Fund transfers, the transfers are expected to remain steady at \$1.1 million for FY 26, with estimated revenue from the meals tax at \$2.5 million. The school funding from the state has not yet been finalized, as the state budget for 25-26 is still pending. Historically, the city has contributed around \$13.5 million to schools annually, and the local match requirement for FY 24 was \$8.6 million. Additionally, the city contributes an extra \$5 million beyond the local match for school assistance. The General Fund's projected revenue for FY 26 is now expected to total \$71.87 million, up from the initial \$69 million due to increases in real estate tax revenues. A breakdown of all the funds includes a total of \$215.6 million, but after accounting for transfers and capital, the effective budget is \$183.2 million. The implementation of the FY 26 budget will begin on July 1, 2025, and finance staff will prepare for budget rollovers and distribution by June 30, 2025.

4. Budget Presentations - Dr. Manker, City Manager

During a budget discussion led by Dr. Manker, the City Clerk's Department's budget was reviewed. Dr. Manker explained that no additional funding was requested for the department but emphasized that the Clerk manages the Council's budget. The detailed budget was presented, which includes individual allocations for each council member, travel and transportation costs of \$10,500, and a communication budget of \$3,000. The mayor suggested reducing the travel and communication expenses, citing the need for cuts due to a tight budget season, and recommended rolling the savings into the Capital Improvement Fund.

However, Councilor Holloway and Vice Mayor Joyner disagreed with the mayor's proposal. Councilor Holloway emphasized that the city had a balanced budget, pointing out that the surplus from the real estate reassessment helped cover costs like health insurance and class compensation. Holloway stressed the importance of travel and communication expenses, particularly for new council members, to access valuable information through conferences. Vice Mayor Joyner also argued against reducing the travel budget too much, suggesting that the amount allocated was excessive. However, it should be reduced to a reasonable amount, given that no one spent close to the full amount in the previous year.

The conversation continued with a suggestion to lower the travel allocation to \$2,500, with the idea that online courses or bringing in experts to the city could provide more cost-effective ways to acquire necessary information. Several council members voiced their opinions on balancing the need for education and travel with

fiscal responsibility. Ultimately, a consensus emerged to reduce the budget for travel and public transportation to \$2,500, with further adjustments and discussions needed as the budget process progressed.


Mayor Partin has two request options for Dr. Manker. The first option is to calculate the cost of \$2,500 per counselor, which would include savings. The second option involves estimating the total cost of attending one conference, including expenses for lodging, per diem (daily allowances for food and other expenses), and other associated costs. The total figures for both options need to be provided and brought back for review. The final information is expected to be presented at the next budget meeting on the 20th.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,



Brittani Williams, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor