

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 27, 2024 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday August 27th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to allow Councilor Pelham to participate in the meeting remotely, Councilor Denton seconds the motion. No discussion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 4-0

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to go into closed session 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 to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby, Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Pelham-	Abstain
Councilor Holloway -	Absent

Councilor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Absent
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes
Councilor Denton -	Yes

Motion Passes 4-0

Councilor Denton makes a motion to come out of closed session, Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 4-0

Reconvene Open Meeting

CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA CODE § 2.2-3712
 (D): Were only public business matters (1) lawfully exempted from open-meeting requirements and (2) identified in the closed-meeting motion discussed in closed meeting.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 4-0

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to appoint Malaki Tunstall to the recreation commission as a youth member, Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 4-0

WS-1- Zoning Ordinance Amendment Request for Group homes allowable use in B1 district - Chris Ward, Director of Development

Director Chris explains what this zoning amendment is referencing and he is not asking for any action tonight. The B1 covers portions of zone 1 and 2 and B1 does not allow group home. A public hearing was held at the planning commission and he goes over a map that shows the B1 district and reminds council that when adding a use to that district that use will be allowed anywhere through out that district. The city is in full compliance with city code as it relates with group homes and the map shows all areas in the city where group homes are allowable by right. When staff reviewed the request, they looked at guidance documents, and the downtown vision plan and comprehensive plan does not support a reduction in density. Group homes are already permitted by right in all residential zoning districts. Mr. Ward mentions that single family dwellings are not in alignment with the density requirements for the B1 therefore staff is recommending denial of the request to add group homes and assisted living to section A of article 9A which is the B1 downtown central business district. He mentions at the public hearing held on July 11th; the property owner expressed his opposition to the request to add group homes as an allowable use to the B1. The department has not received any other public comments. He opens the floor for any questions. Councilor Pelham asks how many group homes does Hopewell have in residential areas, Mr. Ward answers he does not know a total number. He lets Councilor Pelham know he can

provide that at the next meeting that number to her and he can provide a map that shows a general area and which ward they are located in. No further questions were asked.

WS-2- Legislative Agenda Discussion – Dr. Manker, City Manager

Dr. Manker begins explaining this work session is from last year and is really just to open the floor for discussion to see what items council is interested in adding to the agenda. Councilor Joyner sent out an email earlier asking for feedback and she received some responses but she opens the floor for discussion with council. Dr. Manker mentions this is more informational unless there is some discussion that council would like to have at this time. Vice Mayor Gore asks at this time is there anything that anyone would like to see removed that can be annotated for their discussion on Thursday. Councilor Pelham asks would the question be if the granted runs out will the city pick up the bill and is there any legislation to be put on the agenda about the youth? Dr. Manker responds saying she can reach out to the delicate but the project safe grant was rewarded to real life through the state so to her understanding those funds will carry them through and there has been no conversation about the city picking it up. There should be enough funding to go into the next year. Dr. Manker added in the last budget council approved legislative services to be outsourced this year which is tied to the communications job profile and that was removed and she mentions they did not put out the RFP for that and just so they could go into the legislative agenda this season with legislative services so in the meeting Friday they will be reviewing those RFPs with the committee to make a selection and bring it back to council for recommendation.

After work session, there was a brief recess until 7:30.

Vice Mayor Gore opens the meeting back to order. Roll call taken.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Pelham-	Present
Councilor Holloway -	Absent
Councilor Joyner -	Present
Councilor Harris -	Present
Mayor Partin -	Absent
Vice Mayor Gore -	Present
Councilor Denton -	Present

Chief of Police does the prayer for the opening of the meeting followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to allow Councilor Pelham to participate remotely, Councilor Harris seconds the motion. No further discussion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 4-0

Dr. Manker makes a recommendation to remove R6 from the agenda which is the adoption of the city financial policies and move it to the next agenda meeting. Councilor Joyner makes a motion to remove R6 and table it until the next regular agenda meeting, Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

Councilor Denton makes a motion to approve the consent agenda, Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Pelham-	Abstain
Councilor Holloway -	Absent

Councilor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Absent
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes
Councilor Denton -	Yes

Motion Pass 4-0

INFORMATION/PRESENTATIONS

Ginger Holland begins her presentation on the rivers and road festival by letting council know when the festival will take place. It will be September 6 through the 8th. She then turns the floor over to Heather Lyne with the Hopewell Downtown Patronship. Heather hands out her presentation to council for their review as she goes over it from the computer. They go over details of what is offered with the festival and some of the highlights that are included. She goes over many activities and performances that will take place during this festival as well. She goes through each day with council with everything that will be offered to all who attend. There were postcards mailed out to all residents and businesses to send a survey to complete if they attended the festival.

Mr. David Foley steps up to introduce himself as the partner in charge of the City's FY20 audit and he is here tonight to give an update on where they are in the process. He mentions they have been working closely with Jack and his team. The He mentions the goal is to be able to issue an unmodified opinion on the city's financial statement. He speaks on their progress and mentions they are close to getting the audit testing completed. He mentions they are very close to concluding with the cash in the reconciliations. He tells council the cash and reconciliations were the big reasons why there was disclaimer of opinion issued for 2018 and 2019. He mentions they had a few outstanding questions that they sent back to Hack and his team for further clarification. If they can get those two items addressed, they will be able to finish their work on cash and conclude on cash which is a huge step in getting towards the goal of an unmodified opinion. He believes they are a few weeks to tie up and finish the audit testing and then at that point they can move towards pulling together a draft and issuing a draft opinion for the city. The goal would be to have a draft and the opinions issued by the end of September. He lets council know once the draft is issued and management had a chance to review it and respond to any findings that they have then they can work towards issuing the final document for 2020 and once they get 2020 done, they will be able to jump right into FY 2021.

Councilor Joyner that he promised an opinion by August 15 and did not make the deadline, so she is concerned. She mentions being held hostage and they are trying to get their first time clean audit by December of 2025. She understands the obstacles but they have had the information since February, with regard to future audits, what sort of time frame should it take generally speaking an audit should take 90 days. Mr. Foley agrees that a clean audit should take 60 to 90 days to complete.

Councilor Pelham asks are the dates provided going to be changed in a few weeks or are these final deadlines. The answer was he thinks this are final deadlines and should not change. She asks is there someone in Hopewell dedicated within his company to finish this. The answer is yes there is someone who is dedicated to get this done, himself included.

Vice Mayor Gore asks when did they begin testing. The answer is they started initial test work in February and so on since they have been receiving information. She then says it appears that the information has been sitting, so she asks where the gap is because it appears they have been waiting but what would they say is causing the hold up. Mr. Foley stated they did not receive all information in February and throughout testing they worked on testing in some areas while pre audit work on other areas.

Councilor Pelham asks have they received FY 19 through 23 all the information you need from Rob Bobb, treasurer and finance offices to do what you have to do. The answer is currently they have information for FY20 and that is it. She asks when would it all be given from all the years following 23. If Robert Bobb is finished where is that information. Is Robert Bobb done with 21, 22, and 23. He states he does not have the information for those years yet. Jack responds they will upload 21 if they would like them to but they have not completed 20 yet so that is why 21 has not been uploaded yet. She asks is 18 and 19 clean or not. The answer they are not engaged to go back to reaudit 18 and 19. In order for an unmodified opinion in 20 were all the balance sheets accounts that existed as of July 1st of 2019.

The Robert Bobb Group begins their presentation with Mr. Bobb speaking about the update he will be presenting. He speaks about Heather who will give a detail summary about their report. One of the areas of their report they were concerned with was the transition plan and he is happy to report the city manager has provided them with a very detailed transition plan that will be presented to the city

council for its review. It is in draft form now and they are working their way through it because there needs to be some way in which their work is transitioned into the city but they still have some significant issues that they want to cover tonight but he wanted to mention they were concerned early on about the pace of providing transition getting the city prepared for a transition report transitioning when they leave but they have a very comprehensive report and he has reviewed it and made his comments and it will be presented to the city council with his recommendation which is that they go through the transition report thoroughly to make sure that it meets the expectations that will continue to escalate and move the city forward. He mentions that September he hopes that they can have a much more detailed work session with city council as they transition their work and close out their work in October. He turns the floor over to Heather to begin her presentation. She started with what she has on the agenda. She mentions they want to start with the risks. She reminds council of two main goals which they are trying to get through which are to clean up the prior financial statements as the first one. Heather says the longer they delay the greater the risk, the longer the period of time that council does not have an automated control environment and she wanted to be clear because while they feel very bullish and strong on past financial statements that are being manually done, she does not feel bullish and strong on the future. Heather mentions they have committed to getting SOP's done and trained by the end of September. She mentions some departments are still not getting what they need to them in time to approve. They have gotten much stricter with putting policies in place.

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to extend the meeting until end of agenda is completed, motion fails for lack of a second.

There is discussion of what must be heard tonight with Dr. Manker before making a new extension meeting.

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to include Robert Bobb presentation and public hearings, R2, R3, and R7, Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Councilor Denton -

Yes

Motion Pass 5-0

Councilor Pelham asks what does it mean when you say Miss. Felton was doing admin work and working in treasury. Is she physically doing treasury responsibilities or is she doing MUNIS responsibilities just to the treasurer's office? Heather mentions Adriana is directly involved with that but says there are items that have to get done as part of the MUNICE implementation for bank reconciliations manager and other items that had previously signed out in the treasurer's office. Adriana chimes in and mentions with the security items with the rolling back of permissions that were rolled back budget had to be overwritten which is one of the biggest concerns. Vice Mayor Gore cautions not to get involved in personnel matters during this conversation. Councilor Pelham asks bank reconciliations, who made that decision about the security about it being done late. Heather mentions she will answer when she gets to that part of the presentation. Heather gives positive updates with the significant progress that has been made. They are about 50 percent done with the approvals. They are experiencing delays and feedback that have been inconsistent. Heather goes over next steps for SOPs and mentions they had hoped to get through their final review a couple days ago which she thinks is EMS so that they can clean that up for approval. She believes they have another session set out for the 27th for that. She mentions they will send that out for approval once documented. Once SOPs are done, they will go back to match the revise the process flows to match the SOP documents. Heather then goes over the tentative training schedule with council.

Councilor Joyner states that anyone who read the report from 8/16 it was a damning report. The report painted a picture that training had not been done, things were left undone, and a week later things had been addressed. She received great pause when she read that report because she is looking at a 2.4-million-dollar investment, and if they don't follow this to the T, they risk that investment. She states they just received this report and she goes over a concern on page 19 of the report. She questions how they go from one week everything not good and then a week later everything is going great. She mentions she is very concerned and she doesn't think that is a great report. She wants to know how is the city going to move forward when Robert Bobb Group is no longer holding their hands.

Vice Mayor Gore asks Dr. Manker if she has a plan to transition the transition plan to the assistant city manager? Dr. Manker mentions that she does and mentions the plan is in draft form. Mr. Bobb provided some comments in which she is working on but as she works on those edits, she is also walking him through who the people are, why it's the process, why it was decided. Vice Mayor Gore mentions prior to whoever does the roll back assuming it is the IT director, with the new SOPs in place who is the ultimate authority to roll back these types of things? Dr. Manker mentions she does not think there is a roll back person that is dedicated to be able to roll back. Vice Mayor Gore mentions there needs to be clarity as to what's going on and then also the plan to address it. She is not sure what the time frame regarding that would be but she believes that needs to be somewhat expeditiously worked on to have a response to council. She mentions a concern she raised is particular staff members and for clarity in the next presentation she wants to know which departments are responsible for hold ups.

Councilor Joyner clarifies she has ultimate confidence in RBG, her comments was lacking confidence in some of the city admin to move forward without the RBG help.

PUBLIC HEARING

Dr. Manker goes over the cigarette tax ordinance for the second reading of the ordinance that will take effect Jan 1 of 2025 at 40 cents. It will take 6 months of implementation. She mentions they need council to approve it at the second reading. Vice Mayor Gore opens the floor to the citizens for comments.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to approve the ordinance on second reading, motion is seconded by Councilor Harris.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

Director Ward begins his presentation for the conditional use permit for address 3421 Oaklawn Blvd. He mentions this was presented last month as a work session, this is the first reading that he is asking for action, because only 5 are present he will need all 5 to vote unanimously. The request is to allow this property to be used as a single-family dwelling. He shows council a map view of the property and discussed further about the comprehensive plan. He mentions staff identified that proper driveway does not exist at this location and the application and some aerial photographs were showing vehicles parked in the grass. Staff recommends approval of the CUP with the following conditions. First condition being the applicant will complete an admin resubdivision to combine lot 25, 26, and 27 into this one lot equating the parcel and the second condition would be that the applicant improve the existing overgrown gravel driveway that's located in the rear yard with a new top dressing of gravel. Mr. Ward mentions he will add to this that the applicant has already improved the driveway. Planning commission voted 3-2. He opens the floor for any questions.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to approve the recommendation by the department of planning for the conditional use permit with the conditions stipulated, Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

Director Ward begins his next presentation for the conditional use permit request to construct a single-family dwelling on a non-conforming lot. The address for this CUP is for 3104 St. Charles. This property is located in Ward 5. He shows a map of the general location and then an aerial view of this property. He gives a detail of the dimensions of this property and provided images to council for the view. Staff recommends approval of the CUP request with conditions attached. Director Ward mentions all conditions. Planning Commission voted 5-0 recommending approval. He opens the floor for questions.

Councilor Denton asks will this be for rent or for sell, the answer is it will be for sell.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve the CUP application with the conditions recommended by staff, Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to amend the agenda to allow communications from citizens, Councilor Harris seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Mr. Mark speaks and states he appreciated the upcoming festival and he is one of the members of one of the organizations that financially supported and backed the festival. He continues to mention that over a year ago he spoke to council about the roads in Hopewell are not safe for motorcycle riders as an avid motorcycle rider,

he tries to avoid Hopewell roads and he lives in Hopewell. He speaks about how the parking lot in city hall has been resealed and painted, meanwhile our roads out there still have potholes around manhole covers. He is not sure if it is council or VDOT, but he would like for someone to fix it. He then mentions he appreciates holding RBG accountable but not to forget these issues were created by city employees.

Rick Ralston in Ward one speaks to council about business in downtown Hopewell. They spoke about the unhoused individuals have become borderline untenable. He mentions one in particular was very belligerent and very intimidating. He would like to see the city do something to help these people.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R2 – Allocation of funds for Winston Churchill Road Repairs- Director Campbell speaks on Winston Churchill Dr and a critical failure of roadway and storm drain infrastructure. He mentions they have had the road closed every sense and hopefully they are going to have the project wrapped up in the next two weeks all the bills will be coming due. He is asking council to allocate funds per the finance committee recommendation enabling payment for services rendered in the amount of \$1.2 million. He opens the floor for any questions.

Councilor Denton makes a motion to approve the request for Winston Churchill Repairs using FY 24-year end savings.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

R3 – School Division Rollover or Purchase Order from FY24 to FY25 Dr. Manker states the finance director from the school is here to request to have those funds rolled over to complete the project and pay those invoices. The finance

director speaks in reference to this request. She is requesting to roll purchase order from 24 to 25 which would include reappropriation of \$155,900 from their fiscal year 24 budget to the FY 25 budget.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to approve and reappropriate amount funds in the amount of \$155,900.00, Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Pass 5-0

R7 CSA budget adjustment for other purchase services – Director Jordan speaks in reference to the CSA budget adjustment for other purchase services. She is requesting to adjust the budget for FY24 from 4.3 million to 4.75 million. The additional funding of 108,000 will come from the preliminary FY 24 general fund balance.

Vice Mayor Gore asks is she doing this because this department has gone over ever year and never gone in front of council to adjust the budget. So, the intent it to correct the budget but where are the dollars coming from? The answer is they extra money is coming from the preliminary FY 24 numbers that were presented, and for next year they will develop the budget for the CSL and make sure to try to project it out as far as that revenue.

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to approve the increase in budget appropriations for Fiscal Year 24 for the CSA fund 015 from 4.3 million to 4 million 750, Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Pelham-	Yes
Councilor Holloway -	Absent
Councilor Joyner -	Yes

Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Absent
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes
Councilor Denton -	Yes

Motion Pass 5-0

Meeting automatically is adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,



Brittani Williams, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor