

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 25, 2025 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

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

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to go into a closed meeting pursuant to Va. Code Section § 2.2-3711(A)(1) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointments (Planning Commission) §2.2-3711(A)(6) and (8) to discuss or consider the investment of public funds and to consult with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters (EDA Update on Beacon Theatre); and § 2.2-3711(A)(8), and (29) to discuss the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds (Discussion of an unsolicited offer of real estate property); and § 2.2-3711(A)(8) (Discussion of Code of Conduct), Councilor Daye 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 -	Absent

Motion Pass 6-0

Councilor Stokes asked how does code of conduct fall within the guidelines of being discussed in a closed session. The City attorney explains to her it will be about special legal matters.

After the motion took place, Councilor Holloway walked in, causing the roll call to extend to him to allow him to vote. He voted yes to closed meeting. Meeting was then put into recess for closed session.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to come out of closed session, and 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 Pass 7-0

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

Motion Pass 7-0

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to amend the agenda to remove R3 until the next budget meeting, and Councilor Stokes 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 Pass 7-0

The mayor opens the regular meeting with an attendance roll call.

PRESENT:

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

Pastor Wych then came forward with prayer, followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Councilor Stokes.

INFORMATION/PRESENTATIONS

1. BrightPoint Community College – Dr. Bill Fiege

Mr. Bill Fiege, the President of Bright Point Community College, addressed the Mayor, City Council members, and attendees, introducing his team, which included Elliot Alti, a member of the college board, and Carol Carr, an esteemed faculty member. He began by providing an overview of Bright Point Community

College, emphasizing that it is an open-access institution committed to delivering quality education to foster student success and community vitality. Fiege highlighted the college's mission and vision, noting that the college serves a diverse student body, with ages ranging from 14 to 102. The college serves over 12,000 students annually and offers a robust range of academic and workforce development programs across multiple campuses, including those in Midlothian and Chester. Over 80% of the students stay in the local community after graduation. Fiege outlined the college's 80-degree and certificate programs, spanning fields such as business, arts, communication, health sciences, IT, skilled trades, and more, alongside a variety of support services like tutoring and career coaching. The college also provides fast-track workforce training through a partnership with Reynolds Community College, offering programs in fields like truck driving, manufacturing, construction trades, and project management. Additionally, the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA) provides customized training, placement services, and emergency support to help students succeed. Fiege shared that Bright Point's collaboration with the Hopewell community is strong, with the college working closely with local schools, offering career exploration opportunities, and helping high school students gain career certifications before graduation. The college also provides affordable tuition at \$164.51 per credit hour, with financial aid available to students. He concluded by encouraging more collaboration with Hopewell and invited the council to visit the campus to explore the educational opportunities available. Lastly, he mentioned that there is an open seat for Hopewell on the college board and expressed his excitement for the ongoing partnerships between the college and the community.

Following his presentation, all council members thanked Mr. Fiege for his excellent presentation and let him know he did a great job.

Mayor Partin asked if there were plans in the future to discuss AI and potentially have AI courses. Mr. Fiege let him know that they are currently having a conversation about adding it to the program as a course and will eventually plan to have it as a career choice program.

2. Public Access Defibrillator Program – Tabitha Martinez, Recreation and Parks Director

Tabitha Martinez presented an exciting opportunity to the City Council, announcing that the city had been selected for a program through the Virginia Department of Health to secure Public Access Defibrillators (PADs). The program

aims to place Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public spaces, such as parks, athletic complexes, and the marina, to improve survival rates for sudden cardiac arrest. Martinez emphasized that the program is an essential step in fostering community preparedness and ensuring immediate emergency assistance when needed. Assistant Director Williams elaborated on the specifics of the program, noting that the grant would provide the city with eight new AEDs valued at \$1,559 each, along with six weatherproof, climate-controlled cabinets to house them. These cabinets are equipped with heaters to ensure the AEDs remain operational in cold temperatures. The city would also receive one wall-mounted cabinet and a portable AED for use during field trips and athletic events. Williams highlighted the urgency of having AEDs readily available, citing statistics showing that cardiac arrests occur outside hospitals approximately 350,000 times a year, with 20% happening in public locations. The city will incur several costs related to the installation and maintenance of the climate-controlled boxes for the AEDs. The installation will require trenching, digging, and mounting the boxes to buildings, which is estimated to cost \$9,654. Additionally, there will be minimal ongoing electricity costs to operate the boxes, as the heater inside only activates when the temperature drops below 40 degrees, meaning it won't draw significant power unless necessary. Security is another major consideration, as vandalism has been a concern in the parks. To address this, cameras will be installed around the AEDs to ensure their protection, with the total security setup costing around \$3,600. The presence of AEDs in these areas could potentially double survival rates when used before emergency medical services arrive. The AEDs will be strategically placed in high-traffic areas, including Mathis Park, Water Soccer Complex, Riverside Park, City Park, and Crystal Lake, which are frequently visited by both locals and tourists. The program will be rolled out in phases, beginning with these key locations. While the program has secured significant in-kind services valued at over \$21,000, the city will incur additional costs for installation, electricity, and security cameras to prevent vandalism. The installation of climate-controlled boxes is expected to cost around \$9,654, and security cameras for AED monitoring will add approximately \$24,000. The city will also face ongoing expenses for replacing AED pads and batteries, which will need to be replaced every two and a half years or when used. They explained that the pads and batteries will need to be changed anytime it is used or every two years for the pads and every 5 years for the battery. The pads are \$75, and the battery is \$225. Martinez concluded by discussing the timeline for the project, which has been slightly adjusted due to staffing and vendor schedules. The installation and training for public safety personnel,

including police officers, are expected to take place between January and March, with the full rollout anticipated for April. The police department is particularly supportive of the initiative, as the AEDs will be integrated into the city's CAD system, allowing officers to access them when needed.

After the presentation, they performed a demonstration for the audience as well as the council.

Councilor Holloway asked if the \$750 yearly subscription was for every year. The answer is that it will apply after 2029, and it is good for 4 years. He then asked about the warranty, and they explained that the warranty was only good for 2 years, but vandalism was not covered. If the heater, light, or water is getting in the box, the warranty will supply them with a replacement. He also asked about the lighting of where the box would be; it was stated they would be placed in lighted areas. Vice Mayor Joyner asked if the camera funding was a part of their budget, and Ms. Tabitha stated it was from salary savings. Councilor Stokes was concerned with a location further down City Point not having one of these boxes due to a body being found in that location. It was explained to her that if federal property, and they are unable to place a box in that location.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

- 1. Mark Burroughs** – Ask the council to waive the rules to speak on an item on the agenda. The council agrees to waive by roll call.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to waive the rules to allow citizens to speak on items on tonight's 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

1. **Mark Burroughs** - He expressed his dissatisfaction with the city council's performance, particularly regarding a proposed pay raise. They acknowledged that council members may not be paid enough for their responsibilities but argued that the council has a history of failing the city. The resident emphasized that, just as one wouldn't hire a mechanic or exterminator who isn't competent, they questioned whether the council members believe they have earned the raise. He suggested that many council members shouldn't even be in their positions and feels there should be a citywide vote for council members rather than having them elected by specific wards to ensure the entire city has a say in their leadership. He concluded by urging the council to earn the pay increase through their actions for the benefit of the city and its future.
2. **Wiley Radcliffe** - A resident of Ward Four for 59 years, expressed strong opposition to the proposed 80% raise for city council members. He highlighted his past objections to both the real estate assessment and cigarette tax, stressing that he is firmly against this significant pay increase. Radcliffe questioned what would happen if he were to ask his boss for an 80% raise, implying that such a request would be laughed at. He pointed out that, as taxpayers, the residents fund the salaries of the council members, making them accountable to the community. Radcliffe expressed concern over the town's struggles, such as losing businesses, and criticized the council members for receiving a significant raise while most people in the town are only receiving modest 2-3% increases. He concluded by stating that he believes the proposed raise is unreasonable and unjustified.
3. **Vanetta Taylor** - Vanetta Taylor, a lifelong resident of Hopewell, expressed her concerns regarding the proposed pay raise for city council members. While she acknowledged the need for competitive pay to attract and retain good leadership, she emphasized that, in her view, prioritizing public safety and providing a pay raise for the police department should take precedence. Taylor, who is a mother of a homicide victim, shared her personal experience with the police department, highlighting the difficulties she faced in getting answers and the lack of resources available for solving crimes in Hopewell. She argued that police officers are underpaid compared to surrounding areas, leading many trained officers to leave for better-paying jobs in nearby cities. Taylor stressed that this issue contributes to high turnover in the police department, which ultimately impacts the safety of the city. She urged the council to focus on improving the pay for officers to ensure they stay and are better equipped to protect the community, pointing out that her personal tragedy has made her acutely aware of the importance of public safety. She lets the council know she wants the safety of Hopewell to be a priority so no one has to suffer the way she did and do what she was forced to do, which was to close a casket on a child.
4. **Evelyn Britton** - Evelyn Britton, a resident of Hopewell, expressed her concerns regarding the proposed pay raise for council members. She acknowledged that everyone

feels they deserve more for their efforts but highlighted an issue she's experienced in Ward 7. Britton explained that despite her attempts to reach out to her council member, including emails, phone calls, and messages left with the city clerk, there has been no response. She noted that other residents in the same ward had the same lack of communication, which led her to feel that the council members did not care about their concerns. In contrast, she praised the responsiveness of council members from the other wards she resides in. Britton argued that before considering a pay raise, council members should demonstrate genuine concern for the city and its residents by addressing their needs and concerns. She urged the council to reflect on the current state of the city and reconsider voting for a raise if they have not shown commitment to improving the city's wellbeing.

5. **Ed Houser** - Ed Houser addressed the council, expressing frustration and seeking clarification about the recent decision to fire the city manager. He described attending a closed meeting where he witnessed some council members immediately leaving after the session, while others remained to discuss the firing. Houser questioned the rationale behind terminating the city manager without any explanation. He speculated that her termination could be related to her accomplishments, such as resolving nearly a decade's worth of financial issues the council had not addressed and her efforts to assist the homeless in the city. He raised concerns about whether her gender or race played a role in the decision, emphasizing that the citizens of Hopewell deserve a clear explanation for her attempted dismissal. Houser criticized the lack of transparency in the process, pointing out that three council members wanted the city manager removed but failed to provide any justifiable reasons. He also criticized one council member for not forming an opinion after only five weeks of working with the city manager, stating that this was insufficient time to make such a significant decision. He concluded by urging the council to get their act together and address these concerns.
6. **Travis Burroughs** - A resident of Ward Three for nearly four years, expressed frustration over the council's proposal for an 80% salary increase. He criticized the council for prioritizing their own pay raise while neglecting pressing issues in the city, specifically the deteriorating roads that he and his father have been requesting to be fixed for some time. He pointed out that the hazardous conditions of the roads remain unresolved, which he feels is a serious problem. Burroughs conveyed his discontent with the lack of action, even suggesting that it might take a personal accident, such as wrecking a motorcycle, for the council to take the issue seriously. He concluded by urging the council to focus on addressing the city's infrastructure needs before considering any increases in their own salaries.

7. **Darlene Thompson** - Darlene Thompson expressed strong disapproval regarding the proposal for a salary increase for the City Council, especially in light of the financial burden placed on residents. She highlighted that the city had recently raised real estate taxes, generating nearly \$5 million, and paid over \$2.7 million to the Robert Bob Group, which claimed the city was financially distressed despite receiving significant funds. Thompson also pointed out that other fees, such as trash collection and sewage, had been increased without input from the public. She argued that, given the city's current financial situation, the focus should be on reassessing property taxes and addressing residents' concerns rather than awarding pay raises to council members. She criticized the council for prioritizing their own interests, noting that they had failed to address key issues like the marina and had not supported residents effectively. Thompson concluded by demanding accountability from the council, questioning their ability to serve the community, and suggesting that steps should be taken to remove council members who were not fulfilling their responsibilities.
8. **L. Jenkins** – (Read into the record by the clerk) L. Jenkins emailed to revisit an ongoing issue regarding a drainpipe located near her residence on Hampton Avenue. She explained that during heavy rainfall, debris from uphill areas flows down and clogs the pipe, which had happened again a couple of weeks prior to the snowstorm. The blockage caused limited water flow, nearly leading to flooding in her backyard and house. Jenkins included a photo showing the pipe was half-blocked with debris and requested that someone come to her location to clear the drainpipe and its entrances to prevent water from accumulating at the bottom of the hill, where her house is located. She also asked for a discussion on affordable options to improve water flow at this site and provided her contact information for follow-up.

PUBLIC HEARING

PH-1 – Tree Board Ordinance – James Gaston III, Deputy City Manager

James Gaston III, Deputy City Manager for the City of Hopewell, presented a proposal to establish a Tree Ordinance, a Tree Board, and a citywide Tree Ordinance. He outlined that the Tree Board would consist of at least five members, including two tree experts or business owners, with a two-year term of office. The board would meet at least four times a year and elect a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The board's primary responsibilities would include organizing Arbor Day and other tree-related initiatives. Gaston emphasized the importance of the Tree Board and Tree Ordinance for securing grants from the Department of Forestry and Tree City USA. The city of Hopewell currently lacks the Tree City USA designation, which can be obtained by passing these measures

before March 1st, enabling the city to apply for grants for 2025. He mentioned that five volunteers who were previously part of the Tree Stewards were ready to join the Tree Board and had projects in mind. Gaston sought approval for the three items to move forward with the initiatives.

The mayor says the ordinance says it is self-funded, so if they take on this board and don't get grants, what is their liability? James answers that Public Works already does everything this ordinance is asking to be done, so he says, in essence, they are allocating funds for tree service; they are just designating what it is for. He mentioned he has looked into getting a tree arborist and is waiting to hear back, and the amount is \$105 for the entire package.

Councilor Stokes says her concern is whether there would be any admin responsibilities that the city would need to provide, and she was told no, there would be volunteers who would do all the work and would have no cost to the city.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to extend the meeting, and councilor Stokes 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 Stokes then asked about the \$500 per offense and asked Mr. James to elaborate. He lets her know there will be warnings before the actual fine, but it is more there to make sure owners maintain their trees. He stated that if it bothered her, it could be removed from the ordinance.

Councilor Holloway then mentioned he is also concerned with that portion of the ordinance because it creates a city-wide HOA, and that is not ok. He mentioned that James would definitely need to remove that section of the ordinance. James again let them know this was a template and it needed to be removed before he would agree to the ordinance.

Mayor opens the floor to the public for public hearing comment.

1. **Debbie Randolph**, a resident of Cedar Lane for over 30 years, expressed concerns about the proposed tree ordinance and the establishment of a Tree Board. She explained that her neighborhood has historic cedar trees, and though not in the historic district, the trees still require regular maintenance due to their age and placement under low wires. Randolph highlighted that many homeowners, like herself, take responsibility for maintaining trees on their property, including those between the sidewalk and curb, to avoid overwhelming the public works department. While she supports the idea of a Tree Board and seeking grants for new trees, she questioned the timing of allocating \$105,000 for an arborist, especially when there are more pressing issues like road maintenance. She raised concerns about the lack of clarity regarding how this ordinance would affect citizens, particularly regarding fines or restrictions on trees they've planted. Randolph also wanted more information on whether trees citizens have already planted would be grandfathered in and suggested further study and communication with residents to ensure they are well-informed about informal consequences and requirements related to the new tree policies.
2. **Mark Burroughs** - He expressed strong concerns about the proposed focus on tree maintenance in the city, emphasizing that while maintaining trees is essential, there are more pressing issues, such as deteriorating roads and a hazardous marina. He pointed out that the city had been urged for years to secure grants to fix these problems but had not yet done so. Burroughs shared his frustration over spending \$17,000 in the past two years to remove three trees on his property to protect a newly installed LED light pole, which the city had not adequately maintained. He questioned the city's priorities, particularly if residents were going to face fines for tree-related issues, and warned that he would resist such measures by challenging every ticket issued. He suggested that the city should focus on fixing issues like trash collection and other infrastructure problems before pursuing tree ordinances, especially given the availability of grant money for those needs.

Prior to the motion being made, the city attorney clarified that if there is to be consideration of the amendment discussed by Councilor Holloway, it should first be addressed through a separate motion. Additionally, because an ordinance is involved, the council will need to vote to waive the second reading, as outlined in Article Four, Section Eight, before proceeding with the vote.

Councilor Holloway mentions that before approving the ordinance, anything that's going to apply cost or punishment to the citizens needs to be removed.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to waive the requirement for two public hearings, and Councilor Daye second's the motion.

ROLL CALL:	Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
	Councilor Harris -	Yes
	Mayor Partin -	No
	Councilor Ellis -	No
	Councilor Daye -	Yes
	Councilor Stokes -	No
	Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Fails 4-3 (Needs a super vote to waive requirement)

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to establish the tree board by resolution, 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 -	No
	Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-1

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to appoint Stephanie Dayberry, Robin Maiorana, Janet Evans, Betsy Ameen, and Chris Lofstrom to the tree board, 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

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 – Veterans Memorial Circle Request for installation of the Robert Penn, Medal of Honor Monument – Lovena Rapole

Herbert Bragg, a member of the Veterans Memorial Circle Committee, presented a proposal to the City Council for the installation of a Robert Penn Monument at 15th Avenue Circle in Hopewell. He began by introducing the Veterans Memorial Circle, which is city-owned, and explained that Robert Penn, a resident, received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during the Spanish-American War. The monument would serve as a tribute to Penn's bravery and his contributions to the country. Bragg shared the history of the committee, which includes the Hopewell American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 637, and the Wonder City Garden Club, all of whom have contributed to maintaining and improving the circle. He also recognized the leadership of Levia Oli, the committee's facilitator, and Vice Mayor Rita Joiner for her role with the National Registry of Historic Places. The committee outlined the benefits of the circle, emphasizing that it honors the sacrifices of veterans, provides comfort to those who have lost loved ones, and serves as a space for communal remembrance. Bragg also highlighted the importance of the circle as a site that acknowledges Hopewell's contributions to World War I and history. The monument itself was made possible through fundraising efforts, with 70% of funds provided by the VFW. It will honor Robert Penn, who was born in Hopewell, served in the U.S. Navy, and was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1898. Bragg also provided details about Penn's history, including his death in 1912 at the age of 39. The presentation concluded with details about the site of the monument, additional tributes to Robert Penn in other locations, and the accomplishments of the committee, including sidewalk improvements by the City of Hopewell's Public Works Department. Bragg proposed potential dates for the ceremony, either Saturday, April 12th, or April

19th, 2025, and invited the Council's approval to move forward with the installation of the monument.

All councilors thanked Mr. Bragg and thought that this was a really great thing for the city and appreciated his presentation and his effort in making this happen.

R-2 – Mid-Year Re-Allocation – Dr. Manker, City Manager

Dr. Manker presented to the City Council a request for the mid-year savings allocation, following a budget practice established in the previous year. The city has been reviewing mid-year savings to reallocate those funds to existing capital projects potentially. Dr. Manker referenced a Finance Committee meeting held the previous Tuesday, where the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) discussed the salary amounts and savings and their potential allocations. Dr. Manker formally requested a vote from the Council to begin reallocating these funds. The recommendation included reallocating \$203,000 from the general fund salary savings to the forensic audit, with the remaining balance directed to the City Attorney's office. Additionally, Dr. Manker proposed reallocating \$339,000 from the enterprise funds to the HR for a rate study and legal fees related to the HWR Commission Agreement, which is tied to the fourth agreement to a 1995 study. After presenting the recommendation, Dr. Manker opened the floor for discussion.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to approve the reallocation of the general fund salary savings of \$203,000 to the forensic audit, with the remaining balance directed to the City Attorney's office. Additionally, \$339,000 from the enterprise funds will be reallocated to the Hopewell Water Renewal (HWR) for the rate study and legal regarding the Hopewell Water Renewal Commission Agreement, fourth amendment, 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

COUNCILOR REQUEST

CCR-1 – Salary Increase for Hopewell City Councilors – Councilor Holloway

Councilor Holloway began by addressing the citizens and clarifying some confusion regarding communications he had received. He shared that many citizens had reached out to him about a particular issue, and after much discussion, he decided to bring it before the council for clarification. He emphasized that this was a topic for discussion, not a vote, as he was still seeking clarity on the matter. Holloway mentioned that he had been trying to get proper clarification but had not received sufficient responses, which led him to raise the issue for a public conversation. He also expressed his agreement with citizens, particularly Ms. Taylor, who had raised concerns about salary increases for public safety employees, including police officers, fire department staff, and EMS personnel. He reiterated that he had previously requested salary increases for these departments and hoped that the city council would approve them. However, he noted that a salary study was currently being conducted, and he anticipated that its completion would guide future decisions on this matter. Councilor Holloway acknowledged that, while some citizens have expressed frustration about the city's progress, especially regarding streets and infrastructure, there are limitations on what the city council can control. He explained that grants the city applies for are restricted by specific stipulations on how the funds can be used. This means that even though the city receives grant funding, it cannot always be applied where residents might expect, such as for road repairs. Holloway also emphasized that city council members often use their ward funds to support local organizations and community events, which helps build up their respective areas. Finally, Holloway clarified that the issue he was raising, which appeared to involve a potential salary increase for council members, could not be implemented immediately. According to the city attorney, such a change would require approval

during the next municipal election, scheduled for 2026. He clarified that this was not a proposal for an immediate pay raise but was instead intended as a topic of discussion for future consideration. Holloway concluded by expressing his desire to communicate this process to the citizens and make sure they were informed about the necessary steps for such a proposal to move forward.

Councilor Harris says for the record he is not in favor of increasing the salaries of himself or other councilors at this time. In his opinion, there is no need for any further discussion about it.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to table this discussion until the city has a bond rating again, Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

Councilor Ellis says he feels the same as Councilor Harris, and he knew nothing about this until it made it to the agenda. He says he likes the participation and being held accountable. He says he was voted in to make the best decisions for the city, and sometimes he may not vote right, and he will appreciate any feedback he receives.

Councilor Stokes says it is nice to see the participation on this matter. She was not in favor of the raise for many reasons.

ROLL CALL:	Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
	Councilor Harris -	No
	Mayor Partin -	Yes
	Councilor Ellis -	Yes
	Councilor Daye -	Yes
	Councilor Stokes -	Yes
	Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-1

CCR-2 - The Use of ATV and Dirt Bike Discussion - Mayor Partin

Mayor Partin asked the city attorney if they received the ordinance regarding the ATV discussion. It was confirmed that the city attorney does have the ordinance and is currently reviewing it. The city attorney then spoke up, stating that the police had sent over the ordinance as it existed in the city of Baltimore, Maryland. Mr. Bassette shared his findings after researching ordinances adopted by other cities in Virginia, specifically Virginia Beach and Hampton, which have similar ordinances in place. He noted that the ordinance in Baltimore is much more complex. If the police department is aiming to introduce a similar ordinance to Baltimore's, it would require significant research and time. However, if the intention is to adopt an ordinance similar to those in Virginia Beach and Hampton, the process could be completed much more quickly. Mr. Bassette explained that since it is an ordinance, it would require public notice, a public hearing, and two readings, unless the council votes to dispense with one of the readings. Based on the timeline, the earliest the council could vote on adopting the ordinance would be two regular meetings from now. At this meeting, the council could vote to schedule a public hearing to take place at the meeting two weeks later. He further mentioned that he would continue working with the police department to clarify their needs and determine if a more straightforward ordinance, like those in Virginia Beach and Hampton, would be sufficient. If so, drafting and creating that ordinance could be accomplished within the given timeframe.

Mayor Partin says we want something that gives police officers something to enforce getting these guys off the streets. He gives an example of a woman walking her dog who was almost hit by an ATV driver.

Councilor Holloway says it is quite ridiculous that the police are using a Maryland ordinance and not using Virginia statutes.

Councilor Stokes asked about the bike lanes and how the ordinance would affect it. The city attorney says that the adoption of the ordinance would not affect the use of bike lanes because the use of motor vehicles of any kind is a bike lane violation.

Councilor Harris says he takes issue with the police saying there is nothing they can do because on his street, it has a sign that says no through traffic for trucks, and he sees the trucks all day long. So, he has an issue with police saying there is

nothing they can do.

The city attorney gives more profound insight on what is being discussed and the legal options that are currently in place, and what still does not exist in Hopewell.

The mayor asked if there was a consensus to hold the public hearing on March 25th. The majority council gave a consensus.

He then asked if there was a consensus that the city manager speak to the police chief about this issue. The majority council gave a consensus.

CCR -3 – Request the addition of a 10K option to the City Point 5K –
Mayor Partin

Mayor Partin discussed the city's long-standing 5K event, which has been in place for nearly 20 years. He proposed the idea of expanding the event by adding a 10K option to promote sports tourism and boost the local economy. He explained that adding a 10K would not be expensive, as seen in other races that include such options by simply adding a sign to mark the loop for participants. The mayor suggested piloting the 10K this year to gauge its success. If it proves successful, the city could continue offering the 10K option, but if it does not perform well, they could revert to the traditional 5 K. He emphasized that the addition of the 10K could attract more participants, particularly serious runners training for half marathons, and help generate additional revenue for the city.

Councilor Holloway asked if doubling would entail more cost and more spacing for parking. He says doubling will increase more attention and more people, which would require police and fire to shut more streets down.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to charge and authorize the city manager and her staff to explore the option of adding a 10k, a 15k, and a special race, Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

Councilor Harris asked about any options for the handicaps. Mayor Partin says he thinks they have a special run.

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 Holloway makes a motion to adjourn. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,



Brittani Williams, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor