

**MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 13, 2025, CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**

A SPECIAL meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Monday, January 13, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

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

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to allow Councilor Holloway to participate remotely; Councilor Stokes seconds the motion.

<b>ROLL CALL</b>	Councilor Harris-	Yes
	Mayor Partin-	Yes
	Councilor Ellis-	Yes
	Councilor Daye-	Yes
	Councilor Stokes-	Yes
	Councilor Holloway-	Abstain
	Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**CLOSED MEETING:**

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to go into a closed meeting pursuant to Va. Code Section § 2.2-3711(A)(7) Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such

consultation or briefing in an open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body and § 2.2-3711(A)(1) Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; followed by an open session to discuss the repeal of the recently adopted conflict of interest policy, Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 7-0**

**Reconvene Open Meeting**

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to reconvene an open meeting. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 7-0**

Councilor Daye makes a motion to end all legal action, appeals, and demurs to Ronnie Ellis, and Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

Councilor Holloway would like to publicly commit to constituents that they are in the middle of court litigation in which the city was filing suit by Councilor Ellis in regard to conflict of interest matters. He mentions that members of the council

agreed to stop all litigation, and he is not in favor of stopping these litigations. He mentions council thinks this is a conflict but truly believes in the right to privilege to grandfather him in against the city ordinance and state statutes. He believes it is improper, and there are legal matters, and by stopping litigation, legal matters are still in place. He states there is still a standing ordinance and standing state law by the Commonwealth of VA that says this is a provided conflict of interest, especially in the seat as an employee to be a boss to his boss. He believes it is conflicting, and he will be going live and doing a press release and release recording from certain closed session meetings and other recorded conversations.

Councilor Stokes mentions this was a difficult place to be in, but from her standpoint and all that has been presented, nothing prevented Councilor Ellis from sitting as a counselor. She states he has a right to serve as a counselor, and the issue becomes his employment. It is an employment matter, and federal law, state law, and local law allow for hiring and firing at will, and to take away the at-will status from city government is unfair to the constituents. He has won, he is sitting on council, and now the decision regarding his employment needs to be decided.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 4-2**

Mayor Partin states for the record that Councilor Ellis has excused himself from this vote and did not participate in any closed meeting discussion.

**SPECIAL BUSINESS**

**SB 1 – Repeal of recently adopted conflict of interest policy**

Mayor Partin states they have the opinion of the AG and asks if there is a motion to repeal the policy.

Councilor Daye makes a motion to repeal the recently adopted conflict of interest policy, and Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

Councilor Holloway asks the city attorney if this motion fails and continues to be in place if the ordinance is still in place, and if they would be violating any laws. The city attorney responds the state statutes form the basis for the policy that was adopted by resolution, and even if you don't have the policy, you still have to abide by the state statutes. She mentions that there are a lot of complex state statutes and opinions of the attorney general with respect to the conflict-of-interest policy. The AG's office now advises the city that any questions about whether or not the conflict-of-interest policy is affected or applies to a specific individual is done by case by case. Those questions should be put to the commonwealth attorney. She mentions that her opinion does not really matter. It is the commonwealth attorney's opinion that forms the basis. Councilor Holloway asks if he has a fault of a basis of something they are voting on, and he is against it; that vote has to then become moot and wait for the commonwealth attorney's opinion at that point. The city attorney mentions that, yes, you should get the CW's opinion before going forward with a vote. Councilor Holloway asks, and at that point, his opinion would then become public record. The answer was yes. He asks if there is something out of line or something against the law should it be taken to court; the city attorney says she would think you would go to the CW office first, and he will advise on whether or not the law has been broken. Councilor Holloway yields the floor.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 4-2**

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to adjourn. None are opposed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully Submitted,

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**Johnny Partin, Mayor**

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**Brittani Williams, City Clerk**

**THE MEETING WAS NOT PROPERLY CERTIFIED AND WILL BE RE-HEARD AT A LATER DATE.**