

MINUTES OF THE MAY 12, 2026, CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell Council was held on Tuesday, May 12, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

John B. Partin, Mayor
Rita Joyner, Vice Mayor
Michael Harris, Councilor
Susan Daye, Councilor
Lovenia Rapole, Councilor

Vice Mayor Joyner motions to add an item to the closed agenda regarding the resignation of a school board member who has provided a letter of resignation. Councilor Rapole seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-0

Councilor Rapole makes a motion to go into closed meeting under Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(3), (8), and (29), to discuss the acquisition or disposition of real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, 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 (real estate contract discussions); § 2.2-3711(A)(1) and (8), to discuss personnel matters (Beacon Theater Board, Library Board, Wetlands Board, Brightpoint Community College, Salary Supplements). Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-0

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to reconvene the open meeting. Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-0

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

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

Motion Passes 5-0

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Michael Rodgers reported several administrative updates to Council. He announced that Kyle English has been designated as the City's new Public Information Officer following the departure of Ginger Holland. In addition to assuming public information responsibilities, Mr. English will continue his work supporting business recruitment and development efforts alongside Economic Development Director Charles Bennett. Mr. Rodgers also advised that responsibility for coordinating the City's special events will be transferred back to Tabitha Martinez and the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Rodgers also provided an update on the Hopewell Water Renewal Operations and Maintenance (O&M) contract. He explained that while the City had hoped to have the contract award completed by the meeting, the process required additional evaluation. Staff identified two qualified vendors, negotiated with both, and requested revised proposals to ensure a fair and consistent comparison before making a final recommendation. He noted that finalizing the O&M contract, along with the associated supplemental agreement governing the relationship between the City and its industry partners at Hopewell Water Renewal, remains a high priority. Mr. Rodgers stated that both items were nearing completion and expressed optimism that they would be ready for Council's consideration by the next meeting. He acknowledged that these efforts would become part of incoming City Manager Vincent Jones' responsibilities beginning the following day and thanked staff, including Water Renewal Director Matthew Ellinghaus, for their continued work to bring the projects to completion.

Crime Summary Report – Gregory Taylor, Chief of Police

Police Chief Gregory Taylor presented the May Crime Summary Report, covering crime statistics through May 4, 2026. He reported that violent crime had decreased by 39%, property crime had declined by 4%, and total major crime was down 12% compared to the same period in the previous year. Chief Taylor clarified that the three arsons reported during the year did not involve structures but instead consisted of isolated incidents involving trash and debris that met the reporting criteria for arson. He also noted that the reported forcible offenses involved known acquaintances rather than random offenders.

Chief Taylor reviewed long-term crime trends using 2022 as the benchmark year, when the city began expanding its public safety technology initiatives. Compared to 2022, violent crime has declined by 33%, property crime has decreased by 27%, and total major crime has fallen by 28%, demonstrating continued progress in reducing crime throughout the city.

Providing an update on opioid overdose incidents, Chief Taylor reported that the city had experienced one fatal overdose and three non-fatal overdoses in 2026, for a total of four incidents. He noted that this remains the lowest five-year total at this point in the calendar year.

Chief Taylor also discussed narcotics enforcement activity. He explained that in 2023 the Police Department investigated 55 narcotics incidents resulting in 53 felony arrests and six misdemeanor arrests, with a total of 50 individuals arrested. In 2024, officers investigated 49 incidents, resulting in 48 felony arrests and six misdemeanor arrests, with 46 individuals arrested. During 2025, 29 narcotics incidents resulted in 28 felony arrests and three misdemeanor arrests, with 27 individuals arrested. He noted that 2026 statistics are still being compiled. Chief Taylor emphasized the Department's continued participation in the regional One B Task Force, which includes Hopewell, Petersburg, Dinwiddie, Colonial Heights, and Chesterfield. Over the past three years, the task force has executed approximately 40 search warrants within the City of Hopewell, with a Hopewell investigator assigned full-time to assist with regional narcotics investigations.

Chief Taylor reported continued reductions in verified shots-fired incidents, noting that there were 64 verified incidents during the same period in 2024, 54 during 2025, and only eight reported so far in 2026. He advised that Neighborhood Watch meeting dates, times, and locations remain unchanged from previous reports.

Regarding staffing and recruitment, Chief Taylor stated that the Police Department currently has two vacant dispatcher positions, with one application under review, and four vacant police officer positions, with four applicants progressing through the background investigation process. He also outlined upcoming recruitment efforts, including participation in the Virginia Law Enforcement Foundation recruiting event in Ashland on May 17 and Transition Assistance Program recruitment events at Fort Lee on June 11 and August 11.

Chief Taylor announced updates to the Department's community policing assignments, introducing Officer Cory Taylor as the community policing officer for Ward 3 and Officer Tiffany Shira as the community policing officer for Ward 7.

In closing, Chief Taylor highlighted several recent and upcoming community engagement activities. He recognized the successful completion of the Citizen Police Academy on May 7 and thanked Vice Mayor Joyner and Councilor Rapole for participating in the graduation ceremony. He also announced participation in the annual Tip-A-Cop fundraiser benefiting Special Olympics at Texas Roadhouse in Colonial Heights, a recruitment event at Green Top, a Business Resource Meeting hosted by Officer David at The Good Ship Brewery, and the upcoming Special Olympics Fishing Tournament at the marina on May 23. Chief Taylor concluded his presentation and offered to answer any questions from Council.

Proclamation for National Public Works - Monique Robertson, Interim Director of Public Works

Mayor John Partin expressed his appreciation for the City's Public Works employees, recognizing their dedication and the critical services they provide to the community. Speaking from his background as an engineer, Mayor Partin remarked that Public Works has always been one of his favorite departments because of the essential role it plays in maintaining the City's infrastructure. He commended staff for their willingness to respond to emergency situations, including sinkhole concerns, severe weather events, and natural disasters, noting that much of their work occurs behind the scenes and often goes unnoticed by the public. He also praised the department's exceptional customer service, recalling an instance on Good Friday when two Public Works employees volunteered their personal time to meet with residents regarding erosion concerns, providing education and guidance on potential solutions. Mayor Partin thanked the department for consistently going above and beyond in serving Hopewell's residents.

Mayor Partin then read a proclamation recognizing National Public Works Week, observed May 17–23, 2026. The proclamation acknowledged that public works professionals are responsible for the infrastructure, facilities, and services essential to protecting the public's health, safety, and well-being. It recognized the importance of maintaining streets, stormwater systems, streetlights, walkways, public buildings, grounds, solid waste systems, and other critical infrastructure, while emphasizing that these services are made possible through the skill, professionalism, and dedication of public works employees. The proclamation also highlighted the 2026 National Public Works Week theme, "Rooted in Service, Powered by Community," which celebrates the longstanding commitment of public works professionals and the innovations that strengthen communities and improve quality of life. Noting that 2026 marks the 66th anniversary of National Public Works Week, sponsored by the American Public Works Association, Mayor Partin officially proclaimed May 17–23, 2026, as National Public Works Week in the City of Hopewell and encouraged all citizens and civic organizations to recognize the invaluable contributions of public works professionals. Following the presentation, he congratulated the department and thanked its employees for their outstanding service to the community.

Interim City Manager Michael Rodgers delivered farewell remarks during his final City Council meeting, expressing a mixture of gratitude, nostalgia, and optimism as he concluded his service to the City of Hopewell. He described his time as Interim City Manager as one of the most rewarding experiences of his career, noting that although his tenure was brief, he hoped it had been meaningful and impactful for both the organization and the community. Mr. Rodgers reflected that he accepted the position understanding the challenges it would present while also

recognizing Hopewell's tremendous potential. He described the City as a community built on the dreams, efforts, and aspirations of its residents, stating that every initiative undertaken during his tenure was intended to help build a stronger future for Hopewell.

Mr. Rodgers expressed his sincere appreciation to the Mayor and City Council for their unwavering support and guidance throughout his tenure. He credited Council's leadership with helping the city navigate important municipal responsibilities and highlighted collaborative efforts to strengthen public safety, invest in infrastructure, and promote community engagement. He also thanked City staff for their professionalism, dedication, and tireless work behind the scenes, recognizing the contributions of frontline employees, planners, engineers, and all departments that work together to provide essential services to the community. He stated that it had been an honor to work alongside such a talented and committed team.

Mr. Rodgers also thanked the residents of Hopewell for their involvement and engagement, noting that public input helped shape the City's priorities and contributed to the progress achieved during his tenure. He emphasized the importance of listening to residents' concerns, understanding their perspectives, and working collaboratively to develop solutions that benefit the entire community.

Reflecting on his participation in the recent National Day of Prayer observance, Mr. Rodgers spoke about the importance of maintaining civic decorum during public meetings. He stated that respectful dialogue is essential to fostering collaboration, ensuring that all voices are heard, and creating an environment where differing viewpoints can be expressed without hostility or fear of reprisal. He emphasized that focusing discussions on issues rather than personal disagreements leads to more productive decision-making and strengthens democratic principles. Mr. Rodgers encouraged both elected officials and citizens to continue modeling respectful interactions in public forums to promote meaningful community engagement.

In closing, Mr. Rodgers expressed confidence in Hopewell's future and welcomed incoming City Manager Vincent Jones, stating that new leadership would bring fresh perspectives, ideas, and energy to the organization. He shared that he would leave Hopewell with lasting friendships and valuable experiences, adding that the city would always hold a special place in his heart. Mr. Rodgers thanked Council, staff, and the community for the trust they placed in him, their kindness, and their spirit of cooperation, stating that it had been an honor and privilege to serve as Hopewell's Interim City Manager.

Prayers and Pledge of Allegiance

Prayer by Reverend Boggs, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States by Mayor Partin.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Ed Hauser Ward 5, addressed City Council during public comment, expressing concerns about several issues discussed at the previous Council meeting. He questioned statements regarding audit findings involving alleged fraud, asking why no warrants had been issued if fraudulent activity had been identified. Mr. Hauser also challenged comments made about the recruitment of Finance Director Stacey Jordan, stating that former City Manager Dr. Kendra M. Minter was responsible for recruiting Ms. Jordan to the City and noting that he believed her contribution had not been acknowledged during the previous discussion.

Mr. Hauser further commented on recent recognition given to the current City Council for progress made in completing the City's financial audits. He stated that, in his view, previous City Councils played a significant role in initiating the audit process and helping move the effort forward, and he believed those contributions should also be recognized. At the same time, he commended Finance Director Stacey Jordan for her leadership in bringing the City's audits back into compliance, stating that she deserved significant recognition for her efforts and dedication.

Finally, Mr. Hauser criticized a city-funded retreat that he stated cost more than \$17,000. He questioned the expenditure of public funds for the retreat while contrasting it with restrictions placed on citizens during Council meetings, expressing concern about the City's priorities and use of taxpayer resources.

Rick Davis Ward 1, addressed City Council regarding concerns about a reported ammonia release that occurred over the weekend. He stated that on Friday evening, after receiving a call from a neighbor, he went outside and detected an unusual odor. Drawing on his background and hazardous materials training, he believed the odor to be ammonia and said he was later informed by personnel associated with AdvanSix that the substance involved was ammonia. However, he expressed concern that residents had not received clear or timely information regarding the incident, including the amount released, the concentration of the chemical, or the potential impact on surrounding neighborhoods.

Mr. Davis explained that the wind carried the odor into his neighborhood, located across the creek from the facility, and that the smell was strong enough to cause physical discomfort. He noted that one of his neighbors became ill after being exposed to the odor, and he observed that by the time emergency personnel advised residents to shelter in place, the odor had already spread throughout the area and was detectable even on his front porch. He stated that the delayed

communication left residents uncertain about the severity of the situation and whether additional precautions were necessary.

Mr. Davis urged the city and the facility to improve transparency and public communication during chemical incidents. He remarked that alarms often sound for relatively minor events at the plant, yet residents received little information during what appeared to be a significant chemical release. He also referenced the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, stating that information regarding the chemicals stored at the facility, including safety data and associated precautions, should be available to the public. He requested greater access to this information so residents can better understand potential risks and respond appropriately during future incidents.

Laura Greenwood Ward 6, addressed City Council to report on the Citizens Oversight Committee meeting held on April 30, 2026. She stated that nine committee members were present, while two members were unable to attend, noting that one of the absent members participated by telephone to speak with the City Council members who attended the meeting. Ms. Greenwood added that several other Council members either were unable to attend or chose not to participate.

Ms. Greenwood stated that the committee conducted a question-and-answer discussion during the meeting, with the City's financial audits serving as a primary topic of conversation. She said that one of the Council members in attendance indicated there had been unaccounted-for funds that were later documented through receipts and invoices. Ms. Greenwood expressed her opinion that such actions would be improper if receipts were created after the fact to account for previously undocumented funds. She referenced statements previously made by the City's independent auditor, David Foley of Robertson Farmer Cox, regarding deficiencies in the City's internal controls, explaining that internal controls consist of the policies and procedures used to ensure the reliability and accuracy of financial reporting. She asserted that inadequate internal controls contributed to the issues identified during the audit process.

Ms. Greenwood further stated that she had contacted a retired federal prosecutor, whom she considers knowledgeable on such matters, to seek his opinion regarding her concerns. She noted that he was currently out of the country and that she intended to discuss the issue with him upon his return. Ms. Greenwood concluded by encouraging City Council to carefully consider the matters she had raised regarding the City's financial practices and internal controls.

Mark Burrows Ward 3, addressed City Council to reflect on his own role in recent public discourse and to encourage a more respectful dialogue within the community. He acknowledged that he has often spoken passionately and, at times, emotionally during Council meetings, recognizing that some of his remarks may have been viewed as blunt or controversial. Mr. Burrows stated that his comments stem from his deep concern for the community and the frustration he has experienced when feeling unheard or dismissed. While accepting responsibility for his words and tone, he emphasized that passionate advocacy should not be equated with promoting hatred or intimidation.

Mr. Burrows made clear that he does not condone hate speech, threats, harassment, or offensive remarks directed toward public officials, private citizens, or their families. He stated that

although public frustration may be understandable, allowing anger to escalate into cruelty or dehumanization undermines the community's ability to address issues constructively. He urged residents to reject hateful rhetoric and maintain respect for one another, even during periods of significant disagreement.

Mr. Burrows also stated that he would not allow criticism or attempts at intimidation to discourage him from continuing to speak on issues he believes are important. He distinguished between holding elected officials accountable and engaging in intimidation, asserting that respectful disagreement and passionate advocacy are essential components of public participation. He concluded by encouraging the community to engage in honest and respectful dialogue, emphasizing that while differences of opinion are inevitable, maintaining civility and mutual respect is critical to preserving a healthy democratic process. He urged an end to hateful online rhetoric, stating that communities are strengthened when people can disagree without resorting to personal attacks or division.

Darling Thompson Ward 6, addressed City Council with concerns regarding the continued collection of the City's vehicle decal fee. She questioned why residents are still being charged for decals that have not been issued for more than three years. Ms. Thompson recalled that the Commissioner of the Revenue previously appeared before Council to recommend eliminating the fee, noting that the amount collected at that time was approximately \$44,000. She argued that residents should not continue paying the \$20 fee when decals are no longer being provided. Ms. Thompson compared the relatively small amount generated by the decal fee to the larger appropriations Council has approved for various economic development projects, including funding for the Bank of America property and the marina, stating that Council should similarly be willing to eliminate what she viewed as an unnecessary financial burden on residents.

Ms. Thompson also expressed concerns about the conduct of Council meetings, specifically referencing comments made by the mayor following citizen remarks at a previous meeting. She stated that she considered those comments disrespectful and believed citizens should be allowed to speak during their allotted time without receiving responses from Council unless they are also given an opportunity to reply. Ms. Thompson asserted that expectations for civility and respectful conduct should apply equally to both Council members and citizens.

In closing, Ms. Thompson stated that residents have repeatedly appeared before Council to voice their concerns but often feel that their input is not heard or meaningfully considered. She emphasized that City Council serves at the will of the citizens and encouraged Council members to provide greater transparency by explaining their positions when they disagree on issues rather than simply voting in favor of agenda items. Her remarks concluded as her allotted speaking time expired.

Regular Business

R-1 (Public Hearing) Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 City Budget – Stacey Jordan,
Deputy City Manager

Finance Director Stacey Jordan presented the first public hearing and first reading of the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Operating Budget. She reminded Council that the proposed budget had previously been introduced during an initial presentation in April and was further discussed during two public town hall meetings held to gather community input. Ms. Jordan explained that the City's budget encompasses numerous governmental functions, including general government, judicial administration, recreation, economic development, capital projects, grants, the marina, perpetual care, enterprise funds for regional water, sewer, refuse, and stormwater, as well as social services, Children's Services Act programs, Healthy Families, public schools, and the City's debt service obligations. She noted that personnel costs are developed by the Budget Office and Human Resources, while individual departments, capital projects, and Hopewell City Public Schools prepare their own budget requests.

Ms. Jordan outlined the major priorities of the proposed FY2027 budget, explaining that the City's goal is to maintain current service levels while funding essential capital needs and building reserves when revenues permit. She highlighted the continuation of the City's classification and compensation study, noting that implementation was completed for Public Safety and Parks and Recreation during FY2026 and that all remaining departments are included in the FY2027 budget. She also reported that employee health insurance costs increased by approximately 6%, or \$293,000, with the City absorbing 82% of the increase to reduce the impact on employees. The proposed budget also includes a 2% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for City employees, annual step increases for Police and Fire personnel, and comparable salary adjustments for state-supported departments, including Social Services and constitutional officers.

Reviewing revenues, Ms. Jordan reported that the proposed General Fund budget totals \$72,183,583, an increase from the FY2026 adopted budget of approximately \$70.5 million. She explained that decreases in certain revenue categories reflect more realistic projections for cigarette tax collections, while increases in fines and forfeitures are largely attributable to school zone enforcement. She also noted that changes in federal revenues were related to grant activity and that increased transfers reflected Social Services funding aligned with the state budget. She identified real estate taxes as the City's largest revenue source, followed by machinery and tools taxes, other local taxes, and state revenues.

Ms. Jordan reviewed major General Fund transfers, including \$1.2 million for Social Services, \$13.5 million for school operations, \$962,000 for the Children's Services Act and Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT), \$2.5 million for Parks and Recreation, \$570,000 for capital projects, \$50,000 for the Economic Development Authority, \$600,000 for self-insurance, \$1.1 million for debt service, and \$398,000 for Healthy Families. She explained that several of these transfers reflect state funding adjustments, organizational changes, or revenue trends, including stronger-than-expected meals and lodging tax collections.

Ms. Jordan also highlighted funding recommendations for outside agencies. She reported modest increases for the Appomattox Regional Library due to additional state aid and explained that \$30,000 previously budgeted within Public Works for Beacon Theatre maintenance had been transferred directly to the Beacon Theatre, increasing the City's total contribution to \$180,000. Additional proposed appropriations included \$5,000 for Historic Hopewell, \$2,000 for the Kiwanis Club, and an increase for Feed More from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

Turning to the overall budget, Ms. Jordan stated that the proposed all-funds budget totals \$222,707,646, with the largest expenditures supporting Hopewell City Public Schools, the General Fund, Hopewell Water Renewal, and the sewer operating fund. She explained that the largest General Fund expenditure includes transfers, followed by Police, Fire, and Public Works, reflecting the City's continued investment in essential public services.

Ms. Jordan then reviewed significant departmental budget changes. She explained that City Council's budget reflects lower healthcare costs, while the Clerk's Office budget increased because of salary, benefit, and health insurance adjustments. The City Attorney's budget also increased due to personnel-related costs. Within the City Manager's Office, management consulting expenses were reduced, while the Deputy City Manager's salary was transferred from the Finance Department to the City Manager's budget. Additional changes included combining two vacant positions into one within Voter Registration while increasing funding to support additional elections, increased postage costs within the Treasurer's Office for delinquent tax notices, higher information technology service contract costs, continued funding for state-supported positions within the Circuit Court and Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, annual Police and Fire step increases, funding for three previously unfunded police officer positions, and the addition of a new Neighborhood Planner position within the Planning and Development Department.

Ms. Jordan concluded this portion of her presentation by reviewing the proposed operating budgets for major departments. She reported the following proposed FY2027 operating budgets: City Council – \$196,644; Clerk's Office – \$240,659; City Attorney – \$788,870; City Manager's Office (including Economic Development and Communications) – \$2,031,896; Voter Registration – \$548,687; Police Department – \$12,060,397; Fire Department – \$8,150,746; Public Works – \$6,655,199; Parks and Recreation – \$2,652,812; Planning and Development – \$1,641,735; and Finance Department – \$2,436,552. She summarized the primary factors driving each department's budget changes, including personnel costs, healthcare, classification and compensation adjustments, additional staffing where applicable, and organizational restructuring. Before proceeding to the Enterprise Funds section of the budget presentation, Ms. Jordan paused to ask whether Council had any questions regarding the information presented to that point.

Mark Burrows, Ward 3, thanked Finance Director Stacey Jordan for her work in bringing the City's financial audits up to date and for the transparency she provided during the budget presentation. He stated that he appreciated her efforts and expressed hope that the City's improved financial standing would help position Hopewell for future success.

Mr. Burrows also discussed his experience attending a recent Citizens Oversight Committee meeting, where Commissioner of the Revenue Day provided additional information regarding the Commissioner's request for approximately \$25,000 to install a security barrier. He explained that he had previously questioned the request during Council meetings but had not received sufficient information to understand its purpose. After receiving an explanation from Commissioner Day, he stated that the need for the security barrier and its associated cost became clear and, in his opinion, was easily justified. Mr. Burrows emphasized that greater transparency and explanation during the budget process would help both Council and the public better understand the necessity of requested expenditures.

Mr. Burrows concluded by asking two questions regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 budget. He inquired whether the Fire Department's proposed budget included funding for the additional personnel requested by the Fire Chief and also asked whether funding had been included for upgraded radio equipment previously requested by either the Sheriff's Office or the Police Department. He thanked Ms. Jordan for her presentation and requested clarification on those budget items.

R-2 (Public Hearing) Conditional Use Permit request from Ross Bauschatz, agent for the owner, to construct a residential duplex on nonconforming Parcel #073-0835 in the R-3 Residential High-Density District located on Dublin St. – Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Planning and Development Director Chris Ward presented the first public hearing and first reading for a Conditional Use Permit request for Parcel 073-0835, located on Dublin Street in Ward 2. He explained that the applicant, Ross Otz, submitted the request on behalf of the property owner, R. Bennett, seeking approval to construct a residential duplex on a nonconforming lot zoned R-3 Residential.

Mr. Ward explained that while the R-3 zoning district permits duplexes through a Conditional Use Permit, the zoning ordinance requires a minimum lot width of 50 feet and a minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet. Although the subject property meets the required 50-foot width, it contains only 5,000 square feet, making it nonconforming with respect to total lot area. The applicant proposes constructing a two-story duplex, with each unit containing three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and approximately 1,200 square feet of living space. The proposed design includes a brick front porch and foundation with vinyl siding, and floor plans and architectural elevations were presented for Council's review.

Mr. Ward advised that the proposed structure would be larger than the average residence in the immediate neighborhood but noted that the use is compatible with the surrounding area. He reported that six of the eleven surrounding properties on the block are already duplexes, many of which are located on similarly sized 50-foot-wide lots. He further stated that the proposed duplex complies with all applicable R-3 setback requirements, making the requested Conditional Use Permit necessary only because of the lot's reduced square footage.

Staff recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit subject to several conditions, including: installation of minimum 12-inch roof eaves on all roof edges; construction of separate asphalt or concrete driveways for each dwelling unit; installation of a brick foundation on all sides of the building with appropriate foundation landscaping; and construction of the duplex in substantial conformance with the architectural plans presented to Council.

Mr. Ward concluded by reporting that the Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval by a 3-0 vote following its public hearing on April 2, 2026, and noted that no public comments had been received regarding the request. He then offered to answer any questions from Council.

Councilor Harris makes a motion to approve the conditional use permit request to construct a residential duplex on a non-conforming parcel 073-0835 in the R-3 residential high-density district located on Dublin Street. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

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

Motion Passes 5-0

R-3 (Public Hearing) Solicit public comments on the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and Funding priorities – Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Chris Ward presented the first public hearing of the annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) process, explaining that the hearing was intended to solicit public input regarding the CDBG program and establish funding priorities for the upcoming program year. He noted that the City's Citizen Participation Plan requires two public hearings each program year. This first hearing begins the public participation process, while a second hearing will be held after the CDBG Committee reviews submitted applications and develops funding recommendations for City Council's consideration.

Ward provided an overview of the Community Development Block Grant program, explaining that it is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with the mission of creating strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities while expanding access to quality affordable housing. He stated that the City of Hopewell is an entitlement community, meaning it automatically receives annual CDBG funding from the federal government without having to compete for grants. However, he emphasized that the funding comes with federal requirements and that every funded activity must meet at least one of three national objectives: benefiting low-to-moderate-income persons, preventing or eliminating slums and blight, or addressing an urgent community need, typically resulting from a natural disaster.

Ward reviewed the City's recent funding history, explaining that Hopewell had historically received annual allocations in the low \$200,000 range. For the current program year, however, HUD increased the City's allocation to \$263,796, representing a significant increase over the previous year's allocation of \$239,391. Since 2020, the City has received approximately \$1.6 million in Community Development Block Grant funding to support eligible community improvement projects.

He also outlined HUD's spending limitations for the grant, explaining that no more than 20 percent of the annual allocation may be used for program administration and no more than 15 percent may be spent on public service activities. The remaining funds may be invested in eligible capital improvements and community development projects such as housing rehabilitation, infrastructure improvements, utility projects, public facilities, and parks.

Ward reminded Council that the City's recently adopted five-year Consolidated Plan identifies the community's priority needs, goals, and eligible project types that guide future funding decisions. He explained that organizations seeking CDBG funding are expected to submit applications that address one or more of those identified priorities and advance the goals established in the Consolidated Plan.

Concluding his presentation, Ward announced the beginning of the required 30-day public comment period, which would officially begin the following day. During this period, residents are encouraged to submit comments regarding the CDBG program and recommend community funding priorities. He advised that the Consolidated Plan and related CDBG information are available on the City's website and that citizens may contact the Development Department or reach out to him directly with questions. Ward concluded by informing Council that staff anticipated returning at one of the next two Council meetings with the proposed Annual Action Plan, including a recommended budget and funding allocations for the upcoming program year, and then offered to answer any questions from Council.

Following his presentation, Chris Ward clarified that no action was being requested from City Council during the public hearing, explaining that staff would return at a future meeting with the proposed Annual Action Plan and program budget, at which time Council would be asked to take formal action. During Council discussion, Mayor Partin asked whether Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds could be used to assist the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority with replacing or upgrading its camera system. Ward responded that he did not believe such an expenditure would qualify because public housing authorities already receive funding directly from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through a separate funding stream. He explained that the City's CDBG program is generally intended to support eligible community development activities and nonprofit organizations that provide services benefiting Hopewell residents, rather than funding public housing authorities.

After the Mayor explained that he and City Manager Vincent Jones had attended a recent Housing Authority meeting where the Authority's CEO indicated she was unaware of receiving any CDBG funding, Ward acknowledged that while the Housing Authority may not currently receive CDBG funds, it does receive HUD funding through other federal programs. He stated that he could not immediately determine whether the Housing Authority would even be eligible to receive CDBG funding but committed to researching the matter. Ward noted that, during his experience, he had not encountered a housing authority applying for or receiving CDBG funds in Hopewell, although he recognized that this was the first entitlement community in which he had worked. He concluded by agreeing to investigate the eligibility requirements, determine whether the Housing Authority could participate in the City's CDBG program, and report his findings back to Council. Mayor Partin confirmed that no Council action was required on the public hearing and then initiated a discussion regarding whether the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority could utilize Community Development Block Grant funding to address deficiencies with its security camera system. He explained that he and City Manager Vincent Jones had attended a Housing Authority meeting the previous evening where concerns were raised about the condition of the camera system. The mayor stated that the Housing Authority's CEO indicated the agency was not receiving any CDBG funding, prompting questions about whether the City could partner with the Housing Authority to fund needed improvements. Mayor

Partin further explained that, during the discussion, it was mentioned that some localities coordinate their Community Development Block Grant programs with their local housing authorities and, in some cases, include advisory representatives to foster collaboration. He stated that this information led him to explore whether Hopewell could similarly work with its Housing Authority to address improvements that would ultimately benefit the broader community. While recognizing that Ward was uncertain about the eligibility requirements, Mayor Partin expressed appreciation for his willingness to research the issue and provide Council with additional information at a future meeting.

R-4 Resolution to Un-restrict EDA funds – Charles Bennett, Director of Economic Development

Charles Bennett presented a resolution on behalf of the Hopewell Economic Development Authority (EDA) requesting that surplus funds remaining from several previously approved City support agreements be reallocated to the City's Legacy Business Grant Program. He explained that the request was primarily an accounting and housekeeping matter, as the funds had not been fully utilized for their original purposes. Bennett noted that he and Mr. English serve as staff liaisons to the EDA and were bringing forward the Board's request for City Council's consideration.

Bennett explained that the Legacy Business Grant Program was established by City Council to support long-standing local businesses by assisting with expansion and capital improvement projects. He stated that eligible uses include items such as new business signage, restaurant equipment like ovens and refrigerators, parking lot improvements, and other investments that help established businesses remain competitive and continue serving the community. He emphasized that while economic development efforts often focus on attracting new businesses, the Legacy Business Grant Program demonstrates the City's commitment to supporting existing businesses that have contributed to Hopewell's economy for many years.

He advised Council that the proposed resolution would reallocate surplus funds from previous support agreements, including funding associated with the 509½ East Cawson Street project and the CW Harris acquisition, into the Legacy Business Grant Program. Bennett stated that the total amount available for reallocation was approximately \$19,000, which would provide additional resources for future grant awards. He concluded his presentation by offering to answer any questions from Council.

During the discussion, Bennett responded to Council's interest in expanding the grant program's eligibility. After a councilmember suggested reviewing the program to allow additional building improvements and other eligible expenses, Bennett confirmed that the Economic Development Authority already planned to evaluate the program at a future meeting. He explained that the program had not been substantially reviewed in approximately six or seven years and that the EDA had received feedback from prior grant recipients, particularly from the period during the COVID-19 pandemic when the program was most actively utilized. Bennett stated that the Authority intended to update the program to make it as beneficial as possible while recognizing that the current funding level remained relatively modest. With approximately \$19,000 available, he estimated that grant awards would likely be limited to \$4,000 to \$5,000 per applicant,

although additional funding could be pursued in the future if the program continued to demonstrate success.

Bennett also agreed to Council's request for a future presentation regarding the Economic Development Authority's operations. He stated that EDA Chair Vars Marks would be happy to appear before Council later in the summer to provide an update on the Authority's recent organizational restructuring, efforts to reduce costs by bringing services in-house, and strategies to generate additional revenue and support economic development initiatives throughout the City.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Mayor Partin seconds the motion

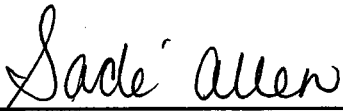
ROLL CALL

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

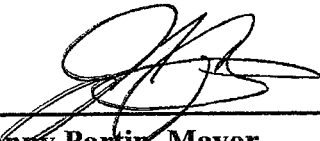
Motion Passes 5-0

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,



Sade' Allen, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor