

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2024, 2024 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A SPECIAL meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday August 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

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

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to allow Councilor Holloway to attend virtually. Councilor Harris seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL	Councilor Denton	Yes
	Councilor Pelham-	Yes
	Councilor Joyner-	Yes
	Councilor Harris-	Yes
	Councilor Holloway-	Abstained
	Mayor Partin-	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 Finance Committee Report - CFO – Stacy Jordan, Finance Director

Mrs. Jordan opened her presentation with the citywide FY24 preliminary revenue and expenses chart. Mrs. Jordan expressed the cities surplus, cost recovery, rebates, and donations. One of the key components of this section was highlighting the increase in machinery and tools due to billing. Also, the miscellaneous budget for \$24,000,000 but only received \$1,000,000 was mentioned. To that statement Councilor Pelham asked, “Why budget that much money for that amount if you’re not continuing?” A follow up question was asked by Vice Mayor Gore concerning past dues and grant monies. Vice Mayor Gore asked if that information “could be broken down further, then communicate that information to the board.” Mrs. Jordan then proceeded into the general fund preliminary for FY24 explaining a \$7,000,000 surplus. In addition to the five full time positions totaling \$542,000, Mrs. Jordan stated gave a brief breakdown of each item: Economic Development, Fire Department, Public Works, and the Draft Financial Policy. The city manager, Dr. Concetta Manker referred back to the \$7,000,000 surplus and how those funds are “earmarked towards the water department so, it is actually \$2,000,000.” On the topic of the full-time positions, Councilor Joyner inserted a statement outlining how the “city shouldn’t be allocating dollars to positions that can’t be supported next year.” Mayor Partin made comments concerning Rick Newman’s positions request. Dr. Manker also made comments concerning the positions request.

Stacy Jordan turned the floor over to Charles Bennett.

Mayor Partin asked Charles Bennett about a loan for the marina. If the general revenue side loans money to the enterprise for marina. It could assist the city over a certain timespan because it would pay dividends. Charles Bennett explained how the spaces in the marina are at a leasing capacity.

Charles Bennett turns floor back over to Stacy Jordan.

Vice Mayor Gore thought it to be wise for city to pay itself, first. Versus making any hasty decisions during mid-year budgeting. Secondly, Vice Mayor Gore spoke about the importances of a legal assistant in the attorney’s office, and the Winston Churchill project, and the issues with the schools. Adding, that the city should add to the savings fund before further decisions. Stacy Jordan moved forward with comments concerning the general fund’s draft financial policy with a reserve of

\$9,000,000. However, the citywide FY24 preliminary was reverted back to by Mrs. Jordan to explain to the council what funds were actually available. There have been some “overbudgeting” per Mrs. Jordan. Councilor Joyner asked Mrs. Jordan to “drill down” or alleviate some the line items that could cause that budget result. Stacy Jordan reminded the council of how the fiscal year was still in the midst of closing and that the EOY (end of year) funds showing \$7,189,506 is what is expected. Not currently obtained. Mrs. Jordan moved into the Enterprise fund where she showed the loss in revenues due to the poor collections and un-budgeted expenses. Dr. Manker reminded the council of a September 10th meeting where she would bring a proposal for a data integration “in-house.” However, logistically things must be worked out. The discussion proceeded into the school’s preliminary fund where Stacy went over the \$6.3 million increase in April via grant monies. The city manager needed clarification on what items should be placed onto the agenda for the next meeting (Aug. 27th). Revenue estimates were next per Debra Reason, Commissioner of Revenue for the city of Hopewell. Machinery and tools have increased from \$8 million to \$10 million.

Charles Bennett commented per the rebates stating, the rebates for 2023 and 2024 are in the enterprise zone which he manages and the rebates “burn off” yearly. Investments four years are beginning to subside.

Stacy Jordan went into food and beverage estimates for 2023 the numbers stood at \$2,787,406. While 2024 numbers are \$2,100,000. Transient occupancy in 2023 \$1,030,844 decreased to \$600,000. Business licenses increased from \$1,856,731 to \$1,880,000. She opened the floor for open discussion and questions.

R-2 Treasurer’s Delinquent Tax Report – Shannon Foskey, Treasurer

Shannon opened with information pertaining to last month’s session that discussed who’d be responsible for “shutting down any delinquent businesses.” Shannon Foskey explained and assured the council that persons involved in that process would be that of the collaboration of the Sheriff’s department and treasurer’s department. Shannon would like to have citizens be directed to the treasurer’s office when wanting to address concerns of the city. Pertaining to the presentation of where the city currently resides in delinquency, Shannon reiterated to the council that the \$3,842,655.82 has been managed by TACS (Taxing Authority Consulting Services) where a partnership was established in November 2023. TACS are currently conducting garnishments and liens on the personal property taxes. Shannon continued with explaining how TACS is “doing their part” bringing

in \$1,086,874.58. Concerning the delinquent amount with business licenses from 2019 into 2023, the city stood at \$504,368.56. Virginia Auction was mentioned by the treasurer's office stating, "they've been knocking on doors of delinquent businesses, thus collecting over \$5,000 since last month and \$3,148.38 since last week (w/e Aug. 16th). The real estate delinquency in 2022-23 totaled \$918,273.70. Delinquency notices have been issued totaling 800 advising the citizens to either pay by November to avoid future collections. Shannon Foskey stated that if those payments aren't made, they will be going to Jason Dunn (Real Estate collection official). Councilor Pelham asked "Who was Virginia Auction?" Shannon Foskey hasn't updated the report from Jason Dunn because the treasurer's office hasn't received the pertinent documents. But the treasurer's office will receive those documents Wednesday (Aug. 21st). Vice Mayor Gore asked, "We're those the monies collected since Dunn and Anderson began with the city of Hopewell?" Shannon Foskey said there is a meeting that will be conducted with the treasurer's office and the city attorney's office pertaining to the contract of Sands Anderson. Councilor Harris asked Shannon Foskey to expound on her comments pertaining to how to better streamline the communication process via the citizens issues. Councilor Joyner explained how the numbers per real estate properties discussed aren't included with the numbers given by the treasurer's office, and how they're "outside the scope." Councilor Denton made remarks per Councilor Harris' remarks and how she's gotten several calls from the trash department. Councilor Denton assured the audience and citizens that calls from citizens have been and should be taken seriously. Councilor Pelham wanted to know would those contracts from Sands Anderson and Jason Dunn renegotiated every five years. Finance Director Stacy Jordan communicated to the council the Sands Anderson typically deal with the bond council not, delinquencies. Vice Mayor Gore asked the treasurer's office for a "break down" meals and lodging. Also, Vice Mayor Gore is petitioning the bill by year and collected by year from the treasurer's office. Vice Mayor Gore wanted to know information on businesses created during Covid-19 that were not paying on licenses or registered businesses, and who is monitoring that?" Vice Mayor Gore continued with asking for the practices of the payment plan options. Shannon Foskey mediated to the council of the application process to which the treasurer's department can determine who is eligible for a payment plan. If a citizen states they need to have a stop removed, then to have a stop removed, a 20% down payment must take place for that stop to be removed. Next steps, Foskey continued, will be a 3-month payment option. If that payment is not made within that window, it will be sent to TACS. Councilor Joyner's remarks

referred back to the meals and lodging remarks made by Vice Mayor Gore concerning the delinquencies and how the she'd like to see a "break down" of those numbers.

The floor was turned over to Neika Hart

Neika Hart continued her presentation concerning the weekly cash flow report. Neika Hart conveyed how state federal funds deposited into various accounts. Councilor Joyner asked about the "\$21 million begin a "rainy day" fund or funds from the general fund?" Councilor Pelham asked Neika Hart to explain how the payroll is displayed. Asking "is it that payroll is less on these odd weeks because people get paid differently? Or is it everybody doesn't get paid at the same time? Also, Councilor Pelham asked the city manager "would any debt services dropping off anytime soon?" Vice Mayor Gore proceeded to ask about grant money being "broken out" as well?" Neika Hart conferred to the council that the miscellaneous accounts shouldn't rollover into a particular month and that the treasurer's office will class those funds out. We, the treasurer's office can't allow the funds to sit into Munis. She opened the floor for open discussion and questions.

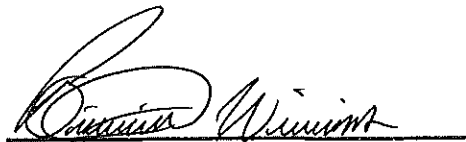
Councilor Denton motions to adjourn, no discussion

Yes- 5

No- 0

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,



Brittani Williams, City Clerk



John Partin, Mayor