

**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 11, 2025 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

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

Councilor Daye makes a motion to allow Councilor Holloway to participate virtually. Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 4-0**

**CLOSED MEETING**

Councilor Holloway moves 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, HRHA, Economic

Development Authority, Va. Code Section § 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 (Potential contract for data integration). Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 5-0**

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

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

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 closed meeting?

**ROLL CALL**

Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes

Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes
Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes

**Motion Passes 6-0**

Councilor Holloway motions to reappoint Jesse Spruill to the Board of Zoning Appeals and appoint Wayne Taylor to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Councilor Ellis seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to add to the consent agenda to publish notice of a public hearing to be held on February 25<sup>th</sup>, that the city council will consider the creation of a tree board, a tree planning and protection ordinance and to consider appointments to that board if created. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

Councilor Daye makes a motion to revise the January 28<sup>th</sup> minutes and the February 3<sup>rd</sup> minutes to expressly include the city attorney as the specific employee of the city council and to add 2.2-3711 for legal consultation. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**WORK SESSION**

**WS-1 – Bank Street Fire Lane Review-** Ben Gomes, Fire Marshall

Fire Marshal Ben Gomes presented findings regarding parking and fire lane issues on Bank Street following a fire incident on March 7, 2024. The fire department faced difficulties accessing the street, especially in the 1000 block, where townhomes are located. Gomes outlined that while parking from Maplewood to Prince Henry has been addressed, access issues remain for emergency vehicles on Bank Street. The street, built in 1917, is narrow—25.5 feet wide—and does not accommodate fire trucks, which are around 9-9.5 feet wide. Gomes discussed the need for a designated fire lane and outlined recommendations, including marking a fire lane on the left side of Bank Street and both sides of the section where Bank turns into James Street, with towing enforcement. He proposed a 30-day grace period for residents to adjust. The council was encouraged to review parking options to better accommodate residents. Vice Mayor Joyner expressed appreciation for addressing the long-standing issue, particularly after the fire incident, and acknowledged the challenges while emphasizing the importance of finding parking solutions.

Councilor Holloway thanked the Fire Marshal for his efforts and emphasized the importance of acting quickly to prevent potential tragedies, acknowledging that the fire could have been much worse had it occurred in a middle unit. Councilor Harris, who had lived on Bank Street in the past, appreciated the action taken,

recalling how parking on both sides of the street had been problematic, especially during gatherings. Councilor Ellis reflected on the fire and stressed the need for proactive measures to avoid future disasters, mentioning that the situation could have been much worse had the fire spread further. Public Works provided an estimated \$3,500 for the initial steps to create a fire lane, though there were more expensive options to increase parking capacity. Vice Mayor Joiner pushed for immediate action, proposing that the council approve the fire lane marking while exploring additional options in the future. Ultimately, the council reached consensus to move forward with the fire lane marking and further discussion on parking improvements at a later date.

**WS-2 – Opioid abatement agreement-** James Gaston III, Deputy City Manager, Susan Fierro, Prince George

The meeting began with James Gaston, Deputy City Manager, introducing the topic of the Opioid Abatement Agreement and the collaborative effort between various jurisdictions to apply for funding for opioid response efforts. Gaston explained that the grant application must be submitted by April 2024, with the support of the Commonwealth Attorney and other regional representatives. Susan Fierro, Commonwealth Attorney for Prince George County, provided more details about the grant and the planned creation of a Mobile Response Unit to assist with overdose calls. The unit, including certified peer recovery specialists, will offer referrals, harm reduction kits, and services within 48-72 hours of an overdose call.

Denise Wal, with Riverside Criminal Justice Agency, elaborated on the participation of five localities in this initiative, including Prince George, Hopewell, Surrey County, Dinwiddie County, and Sussex County, all of which are working together to submit a joint application to the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority by April 2025. The goal is to utilize these funds for a project lasting through 2030. It was emphasized that these funds are distinct from the direct opioid settlement funds already received by localities, and those funds will not be affected by this collaborative effort. The group clarified that the collaborative effort will allow access to additional funding that would otherwise be forfeited if not applied for as a group.

Gaston reassured that the localities' existing opioid funding would not be disrupted by the collaborative project, and he confirmed that individual jurisdictions' direct funds are already being used for specific local initiatives. Fierro and Wal described the logistics of how the mobile response unit would operate, with training for law

enforcement and other partners to ensure a coordinated approach. The initiative is expected to expand on similar programs already in place in neighboring counties, such as Chesterfield County. In closing, the group expressed their hope for a successful grant award to address the growing opioid crisis.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to extend the meeting until CCR-1. Mayor Partin seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

Councilor Harris continues and asks questions about the Opioid Abatement agreement by asking about the inclusion of Chesterfield in a cooperative project, as he noticed they were not listed. It was clarified that while Chesterfield is not part of the cooperative, they are undertaking a similar initiative using opioid abatement funds. This project involves a mobile response unit that connects individuals with services and provides harm reduction kits. Councilor Harris acknowledged that similar efforts are being implemented in surrounding areas, though this particular project would be new to their region. He then inquired about the determination of the "gold standard" amount, which was explained to be set by the OAA based on various criteria, including the number of overdoses in the area. The discussion concluded with an indication that action would be taken at the next city council meeting.

**REGULAR MEETING**

**PRESENT:**

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

Prayer by Mayor Partin followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Councilor Daye.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adopt the regular meeting agenda.  
Councilor Daye seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adopt the consent agenda with the amendments as presented earlier. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent
Councilor Holloway-	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner-	Yes
Councilor Harris-	Yes

Mayor Partin-	Yes
Councilor Ellis-	Yes

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**PH-1 – Conditional Use Permit request to construct a single-family dwelling on a non-conforming lot, Parcel# 079-0005, located on Cedar Lane-** Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Chris Ward presented a conditional use permit (CUP) request to construct a single-family dwelling on a non-conforming lot located on Cedar Lane, with the applicant being Mr. Riley Ingram, Jr. The lot is zoned R-1 Residential Low Density and is in Ward One. Although the lot meets the width requirement, it falls short in square footage, measuring 9,430 square feet instead of the required 12,000. The proposed two-story home is a 1,536-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath dwelling. The applicant plans to use a brick facade on the first-floor front. The property's surrounding area has an average home size of 1,553 square feet, and the design attempts to blend the architectural styles along Cedar Lane and Broadway. Staff recommended approval, with conditions such as the brick facade, a concrete or asphalt driveway, a roof overhanging eaves on all sides, and a tree canopy covering at least 20% of the lot. The Planning Commission also recommended approval, adding a clarification about the eaves. Councilor Hollow inquired about the 12-inch eaves requirement and questioned if future owners could replace the brick facade with vinyl, which Chris Ward confirmed could happen but is not a permanent requirement. Ward clarified that the requested brick would only be on the front of the house, not all around it, and that the facade would be real brick, not a faux version. The application received full support from the Planning Commission, and the applicant was present for any additional questions.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit request to construct a single-family dwelling on a non-conforming lot, Parcel# 079-0005, located on Cedar Lane in conformance with all of the requests and conditions. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

Councilor Daye-	Yes
Councilor Stokes-	Absent



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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**PH-2 – Public Hearing to add “Municipal Facilities” as an allowable use in the C-1 Conservation District (Article XV-B) and to add “Municipal Facilities” to definitions (Article I)-** Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

The second public hearing addressed a zoning amendment request to add "municipal facility" as an allowable use in the C-1 Conservation District and to define "municipal facility" in Article One of the zoning ordinance. The amendment was initiated at the Planning Commission level and affects C-1 districts, primarily in Ward Two, where municipal utilities already exist. The amendment would allow for the construction of a new burn building, specifically located east of a decommissioned landfill. Staff recommended approval of the request, noting that this area is mostly undevelopable due to floodplains or resource protection areas, and the vegetative buffer would be preserved. The Planning Commission supported this recommendation.

Councilor Holloway asked for an update on the funding for the burn building project, which Fire Chief provided. The project received \$480,000 in state grant funding, with the City already having approved \$160,000 in matching funds. Additional funding requests were sent to neighboring Tri-Cities fire departments, with those contributing able to use the facility free of charge. Chief also clarified that the matching funds came from harbor funding. Councilor Holloway also discussed approving the project’s matching funds and considered the potential involvement of neighboring localities in funding the project. The Fire Chief confirmed that the funding for the project was fully secured.

During the discussion, the issue of securing funding for the burn building project was raised. Councilor Holloway expressed concern about the potential delay in the project if neighboring localities do not participate in funding. It was suggested that if these localities do not contribute, the city could charge them to use the facility.

Additionally, there was a concern about ensuring the project's progress even if external funding is not secured. The solution proposed was to re-appropriate funds during the midyear re-appropriation process to avoid any delays. The Fire Chief confirmed this could be addressed at the upcoming meeting.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to approve the request to add municipal facilities to the C-1 District Article XV-B to the definition of Article I as presented. Councilor Harris seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

**R-1 – Repeal of recent Conflict of Interest Policy** – Stefan Calos, Sands  
Anderson PC

Stefan Calos provided an executive summary regarding the repeal of the recently passed conflict of interest policy. He explained that the policy was based on an incorrect interpretation of the authority under the City Charter and Virginia law. The original policy restricted city council members who are also city employees from voting on personnel issues related to city employees, such as the city manager, attorney, and clerk. However, the policy cited sections of the law that did not support such restrictions. In January, the council attempted to repeal the policy but could not due to procedural issues. Calos introduced a resolution to formally repeal the policy, allowing council to handle conflicts of interest under the Virginia Conflict of Interest Act on a case-by-case basis. Council members could still amend their ethics rules if desired. Councilor Holloway clarified that the discussion was about the policy, not the ordinance, and expressed support for repealing the policy while maintaining the existing conflict of interest act. The

resolution, if adopted, would leave the council to address future conflicts according to state law.

Vice Mayor Joyner makes a motion to approve the resolution rescinding policy number 9.8, limiting actions of city employees elected to city council beyond limitations under the city charter and other law as presented. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 5-0**

**CCR-1 – Repeal of the Reassigning of certain duties and functions of the City Treasurer to departments under the purview of the City Manager-** Councilor Holloway

Councilor Holloway requested a future hearing regarding the matter of a recent vote concerning House Bill 2283, which was intended to amend the city's charter to move two employees from the City Treasurer's office to the Finance department. The vote resulted in a 5-3 decision to kill the bill. Councilor Holloway emphasized that the ordinance and resolution in place were legally questionable due to the application of the Dillon Rule, which requires specific charter language for such changes. The Council discussed the need to rescind the ordinance and resolution, as they were deemed ineffective, especially given the Attorney General's opinion stating that duties assigned by state law to the Treasurer's office cannot be transferred. There was also discussion regarding the status of the employees, who, under the current resolution, were to be in the Finance department, but legal advice suggested they must return to the Treasurer's office unless a new resolution is adopted. Further discussion involved finding a resolution that aligns with both legal advice and the intention of assigning certain duties to Finance without violating constitutional law. Council members agreed to move forward by directing the City Attorney to bring back clarification on the matter and publish a public hearing notice.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion for the City Attorney back in two weeks the

updated information and research for the duties and responsibilities of the treasurer's office. Vice Mayor Joyner seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

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

**Motion Passes 5-0**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Respectfully Submitted,



**Brittani Williams, City Clerk**

  

---

**Johnny Partin, Mayor**