

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 09, 2026 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell Council was held on Tuesday, June 09, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Rita Joyner, Vice Mayor
Michael Harris, Councilor
Ronnie Ellis, Councilor
Susan Daye, Councilor
Malik Wheat, Councilor
Lovena Rapole, Councilor

CLOSED MEETING

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 (EDA Support Agreement 101 City Point Rd.); § 2.2-3711(A)(8), for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel (Virginia American Water rate case, and Council Rules update); § 2.2-3711(A)(1) and (8), to discuss personnel matters (Dock Commission, and Water Renewal operations contract). Councilor Wheat seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Ellis -	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	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 the closed meeting

ROLL CALL

Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Ellis -	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Vincent Jones provided two announcements before the staff agenda items. First, he reminded the public that the city has been actively engaged in the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) water rate case involving Virginia American Water. He noted that the City Attorney's Office has worked diligently to ensure the City's interests are well represented throughout the proceedings. Mr. Jones informed those in attendance that an evidentiary hearing was scheduled for 10:00 a.m. the following day at the State Corporation Commission Building, 1300 East Main Street in Richmond. He explained that residents had been encouraged to register by the established deadline to either speak in person or submit written comments. However, he added that members of the public who had not preregistered were still welcome to attend the hearing to observe the proceedings and stay informed about the case. Mr. Jones also announced an update regarding the City's Juneteenth celebration. He explained that the Department of Recreation and Parks, which now oversees the City's special events, had anticipated hosting a Juneteenth event the following weekend. Unfortunately, the city would not be able to hold the celebration in the same manner as in previous years. He stated that Recreation and Parks would be seeking input from residents to help plan a larger and more successful Juneteenth celebration for the following year that the entire community could be proud of. Mr. Jones emphasized that the city would still recognize the Juneteenth holiday and planned to share additional information with the public through social media following his announcement. He concluded his remarks after providing these updates.

Crime Summary – Gregory Taylor, Police Chief

Police Chief Gregory Taylor presented the June Police Crime Summary, highlighting continued reductions in major crime across the city. Chief Taylor reported that, year-to-date, violent crime had decreased by 44%, property crime had decreased by 5%, and overall major crime was down 14% compared to the previous year. He also reviewed long-term crime trends, comparing 2022 to 2026, noting that since the department began implementing enhanced technology initiatives in 2022, violent crime has declined by 43%, property crime has decreased by 30%, and overall major crime has fallen by 32%. Chief Taylor provided an update on suspected overdose statistics, reporting that in 2026 there had been four fatal overdoses and two non-fatal overdoses, for a total of six suspected overdose incidents to date. He noted that the number of fatal overdoses remained consistent with 2025 while the overall total was lower than in previous years. He also reviewed narcotics enforcement efforts, stating that officers had made 22 narcotics-related arrests during the first six months of 2026, compared to 29 arrests during all of 2025, 49 in 2024, and 55 in 2023. Similarly, 22 individuals had been arrested for narcotics

violations in 2026, compared to 27 in 2025, 46 in 2024, and 50 in 2023. Chief Taylor also reported a significant reduction in shots fired incidents, with nine incidents recorded thus far in 2026, compared to 54 in 2025 and 64 in 2024. Providing an update on department staffing, Chief Taylor advised that since preparing the report, the department had hired an additional dispatcher, leaving one dispatcher vacancy remaining. He also reported five sworn police officer vacancies. Recruitment efforts were scheduled for June 11, with department representatives attending recruitment events at both the Hampton Roads Convention Center and Fort Lee. He noted that there were no changes to Neighborhood Watch meetings or Community Policing Officer awards since his previous report. Chief Taylor then highlighted several recent community engagement activities. On June 1, the department's Community Engagement Team hosted an end-of-school event at Carter G. Woodson School, bringing the department's gaming trailer for students to enjoy. On June 5, officers participated in the Special Olympics Torch Run, which began at the Publix in Colonial Heights and concluded at Rosa's Pizza in Hopewell, drawing a strong community turnout. That same day, the Community Engagement Team, along with Chief Taylor, participated in the Healthy Families Building Bridges event at Atwater Park, an annual multi-jurisdictional event focused on gun violence prevention and strengthening community partnerships. Looking ahead, he announced that on June 27, during the Hooray for Hopewell VA250 Celebration, the Police Department would provide a Touch-a-Truck exhibit, allowing children to explore a police vehicle and learn about law enforcement equipment. Chief Taylor concluded his presentation by outlining the Police Department's Strategic Enforcement Team initiative for the summer months of June, July, and August. He explained that the specialized team would focus on proactive policing rather than routine calls for service, except in emergencies. Their efforts would include enforcing curfew violations, conducting citizen contacts and field interviews, increasing patrols in crime hot spots identified through crime analysis, holding outdoor roll calls at Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority properties, addressing crime and disorder throughout the city, assisting patrol officers with priority calls when needed, targeting firearms and narcotics violations, and serving outstanding warrants. He concluded his report and responded that he was available to answer any questions from Council, though none were raised.

New Real Estate Website – Nelson Pollard, Residential Appraiser

Nelson Pollard introduced a presentation on the City's new online real estate information platform, expressing his excitement about the improvements that would soon be available to Hopewell residents. He thanked the Planning Department, particularly Chris Ward and James Jones, for their collaboration and support throughout the project, stating that the partnership had helped create a significantly better tool for citizens to access real estate information. Mr. Pollard announced that the new platform, called Quest Atlas Site, is being provided by Civic Vanguard and introduced Jamie Christensen, the company's founder and representative, who was present to demonstrate the system. He explained that the project was initiated in response to ongoing difficulties experienced by residents, as well as staff in the City Clerk's Office and Treasurer's Office, when attempting to access real estate records through the existing system. Mr. Pollard highlighted several enhancements available through the new website. He explained that the platform features a more modern and user-friendly interface with improved mapping capabilities, customizable data tables, and an integrated chat function to assist users. Residents will be able to search property information by owner name, street name, or parcel number, without needing to

know an exact property address. He noted that even entering a partial address, such as a street number and street name, would allow users to locate relevant property information, including assessments and market data. In addition, Mr. Pollard stated that users would be able to access floodplain maps, zoning maps, and other geographic information for individual properties and neighborhoods. The system also allows users to query and save data, compare similar properties, and review recent home sales to better understand local real estate market conditions. He informed Council that a beta version of the website was already available for public use, allowing residents to begin exploring the platform before its official rollout. Mr. Pollard concluded by noting that while the website's appearance is intentionally simple, its underlying functionality is significantly more powerful than the City's previous system. He expressed confidence that the enhanced capabilities would greatly improve public access to real estate information and turned the presentation over to Jamie Christensen, who would provide a live demonstration and answer any questions from Council. Jamie Christensen, President of Civic Vanguard, presented a demonstration of the City's new Quest Atlas online property information system. He explained that Civic Vanguard is a mapping and software company based in Richmond, Virginia, serving approximately 35 localities across the Commonwealth, including Petersburg and Surry County. Mr. Christensen stated that the company had worked with the City of Hopewell for several years and was excited to launch an upgraded platform designed to provide residents, businesses, and City staff with easier access to property and assessment information. He advised that a link to the new platform would be added to the City Assessor's website later in the month. Mr. Christensen demonstrated the platform's three primary methods of accessing information: chat, interactive mapping, and table view. He explained that users could simply type an address or property information into the chat feature, which would quickly locate the desired parcel and display it on an interactive map. Once a property is selected, users can view detailed information including ownership records, assessment values, building characteristics, property sketches, photographs, sales history, and assessment history. He noted that if a property contains multiple structures, each improvement can be viewed individually. He highlighted several advanced mapping features, including the ability to display detailed property boundary information and elevation data by hovering over the map. Mr. Christensen explained that this information would be valuable not only for property owners but also for economic development, emergency management, utilities, and planning purposes. Users can also generate and download a comprehensive PDF property card containing assessment information, ownership details, maps, improvement data, and sales history, making it especially useful for real estate professionals and others needing portable property records. Mr. Christensen further demonstrated the system's ability to perform geographic queries, such as identifying all parcels located within a specified distance of a selected property. He explained that this feature could assist City staff with public notifications, assessments, planning projects, and neighborhood analysis. He also showcased the platform's integration with EagleView imagery, allowing users to view high-resolution oblique aerial photography, as well as embedded Google Maps, Google Street View, and 3D Google Earth imagery without leaving the City's website. These integrated tools provide detailed visual information for residents, planners, emergency responders, and utility personnel while keeping all property information accessible from a single platform. Another feature demonstrated was the integration with the City's real estate tax system. Mr. Christensen explained that users can access their real estate tax information directly from a property record and make online payments without navigating to a separate website. He added that the platform was designed to support additional integrations in the future as the city expands

available online services. Mr. Christensen also demonstrated the platform's artificial intelligence-powered chat capability, showing how users can ask natural-language questions, such as requesting all properties sold during the previous spring. The system interprets the request, performs the search automatically, and returns the results in map, table, or exportable formats. He emphasized that this functionality eliminates the need for users to understand complex database searches while making property information much more accessible to City staff, stakeholders, and the public. During Council discussion, Mr. Christensen explained that the system was not yet publicly available, as Council was being given an advance preview before its official launch. He stated that the city expected the platform to go live by the end of June, with a target launch date of June 30. Responding to questions about beta testing, he outlined the three-phase rollout process. The first phase involved City staff testing the system and providing feedback. Following the public launch, residents would be able to submit comments through an online feedback form that sends information simultaneously to both City staff and Civic Vanguard's support team. He explained that reported issues would be tracked through a ticketing system and resolved as they were identified, with the expectation that any necessary refinements would largely be completed within the first month after launch. He concluded by encouraging Council members to access the preview link included in their meeting packet, test the system, and submit feedback before the public rollout. Council thanked Mr. Christensen for the presentation and complimented the quality of the new platform

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM CLOSED MEETING

Councilor Wheat makes a motion to approve Bradford Smith for the Dock commission.
Councilor Daye Seconds the motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Ellis -	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Prayer by Pastor Harville, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States by Vice Mayor Joyner.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilor Wheat makes a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Daye Seconds

ROLL CALL

Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Ellis -	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes

Councilor Harris -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Mark Burrows Ward 3 - During the public comment period, Mark Burrows addressed City Council regarding his concerns over public participation and free speech during Council meetings. Mr. Burrows stated that over the previous two months he had expressed opinions that some officials did not appreciate and alleged that the City had sought restraining orders against citizens for exercising their First Amendment rights. He argued that U.S. Supreme Court precedent protects speech during public meetings and asserted that elected officials should not restrict comments based on whether they agree with or consider them relevant. He also criticized the legal advice provided to Council regarding these matters. Mr. Burrows stated that he did not support or condone any threats made against Council members in connection with videos posted online and emphasized that such actions were not made at his direction, request, or with his approval. He expressed hope that anyone responsible for making threats against public officials would be held accountable through the legal process. Mr. Burrows then warned Council that if he believed his constitutional right to free speech was unlawfully restricted in the future, he intended to pursue legal action against individual elected officials rather than the City itself. During his remarks, the mayor interrupted to advise that his comments could be construed as abusive and requested that he refrain from using abusive language. Mr. Burrows questioned what portion of his comments was considered abusive and noted that his allotted speaking time had been interrupted. The mayor responded that his time had expired and reiterated that his manner of addressing Council was perceived as abusive. As the exchange continued, Mr. Burrows referenced his personal experience with being served legal paperwork related to a restraining order and expressed frustration with the City's actions. During those remarks, he used profane language. The mayor immediately interrupted, stating that the language was abusive and inappropriate, and directed him to cease using such language. The public comment concluded following the mayor's repeated admonitions regarding appropriate conduct during the meeting. Following the conclusion of his allotted speaking time, Mark Burrows continued addressing Council while the mayor instructed him to take his seat. The mayor expressed concern that Mr. Burrows' language and manner of speaking were inappropriate. In response, Mr. Burrows maintained that constitutional protections for free speech take precedence over the personal feelings of public officials and cited what he described as rulings by the federal and Virginia Supreme Courts regarding First Amendment rights. Before concluding his remarks, he urged Council to consult with the City Attorney regarding the legal standards governing public comment and stated that, if the matter continued, he anticipated resolving the issue through legal proceedings. The mayor thanked Mr. Burrows, and the public comment period concluded.

Laura Greenwood Ward 6 - During the public comment period, Laura Greenwood, a resident of Ward Six, addressed Council on several community concerns. She first spoke about the proposed Virginia American Water rate increase, referencing comments made by City Manager Vincent Jones at the previous Council meeting. Ms. Greenwood stated that she had submitted

comments to the State Corporation Commission opposing the proposed increase and urged Council members to attend the evidentiary hearing to advocate on behalf of Hopewell residents. She explained that, as a senior citizen living on Social Security, she was already experiencing increased utility costs, noting that rising Dominion Energy expenses had significantly impacted her monthly budget. Ms. Greenwood expressed concern that an additional increase in water rates would create further financial hardship for residents living on fixed incomes and urged Council to continue opposing the proposed rate increase. Ms. Greenwood also raised concerns regarding traffic safety in the area of Courthouse Road, Arlington Avenue, and Berry Street, where construction has been ongoing. While she appreciated receiving an estimated project timeline, she questioned why the speed limit had not yet been reduced to 25 miles per hour as previously discussed. She emphasized that the area is residential, with children frequently present, and expressed concern that excessive vehicle speeds could result in a serious accident. She noted that motorists often travel well above the posted speed limit and suggested that additional traffic-calming measures, including speed monitoring near the school, should be considered to improve public safety. Finally, Ms. Greenwood addressed the City's feral cat population, explaining that she had contacted the Hopewell Humane Society regarding its trap-neuter-return (TNR) program. She stated that after initially being told assistance would be available within several weeks, she later learned the organization had exhausted its funding and was unable to continue the program. Ms. Greenwood expressed concern because of the recent identification of a rabid cat in the community and emphasized the importance of continuing TNR efforts to vaccinate and control the feral cat population. As her allotted speaking time expired, the mayor asked her to conclude her remarks. Before leaving the podium, Ms. Greenwood indicated that the program would require approximately \$5,000 in funding and encouraged the city to explore providing support for the initiative.

Sha'arh Fuller Ward 5 - During the public comment period, Sharah Fuller, a resident of Ward Five, highlighted several community engagement initiatives taking place throughout the city during the summer months. She recognized the work of Nicole Dorn, the resident coordinator with the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA), who has been working with residents to provide financial literacy education, homeownership resources, and employment opportunities. Ms. Fuller explained that these programs are intended to help residents build financial stability and strengthen life skills that may not otherwise be available in the home. She encouraged residents of Piper Square, Thomas Rolfe Court, Davisville, Langston Park, and The Summit to contact Ms. Dorn for additional information about the available programs and community partnerships. Ms. Fuller also informed Council that Wards Four and Five Neighborhood Watch groups have merged into a single organization. She explained that because no volunteer had stepped forward to serve as the Ward Four Neighborhood Watch captain, she volunteered to combine the two groups to ensure Ward Four residents would continue receiving crime prevention information and community updates. She announced that the combined Neighborhood Watch now meets on the first Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church and emphasized that all residents, regardless of ward, are welcome to attend. She encouraged additional volunteers to become involved so every neighborhood continues to receive important information and resources. Concluding her remarks, Ms. Fuller encouraged residents to take advantage of volunteer opportunities available throughout the summer, including assisting local schools, helping distribute free books to children, and participating in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which provides free books to children ages

five and under. She emphasized that promoting literacy and strengthening the community begins with parents and residents working together and encouraged greater community involvement in these initiatives. Council thanked Ms. Fuller for her comments before recognizing the next speaker.

Darlene Thompson Ward 6 - During the public comment period, Darlene Thompson, a resident of Ward Six, questioned the City's recent decision to appropriate approximately \$397,000 to fund an operational audit of the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA). Referring to Council's action at the previous meeting, Ms. Thompson expressed concern about the City's use of taxpayer funds for the audit, noting her belief that HRHA receives significant federal funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She questioned why the City was funding the audit and asserted that City Council does not have authority over HRHA. Ms. Thompson also referenced a previous public comment in which she had asked Council to discontinue charging residents for vehicle decals that are no longer issued, stating that she had not yet received a response. She criticized the length of time it took the City to complete its own audit and expressed dissatisfaction with the audit findings, asserting that additional issues should have been addressed beyond internal controls. Additionally, Ms. Thompson questioned the City's budgeting practices, particularly the recurring use of salary savings to fund additional expenditures. She argued that if salary savings continue to accumulate, it could indicate that the city is budgeting for more positions than are ultimately filled. She expressed concern that taxpayer dollars were being used to support projects while residents continued to face financial burdens and cited several City projects, including the marina, Shiloh Boulevard, and the former Davisville School property, as examples of initiatives she believes remain unresolved. Ms. Thompson concluded by encouraging Council to focus on reducing costs for residents and stated that she regularly attends Council meetings to remain informed about City business. Council thanked Ms. Thompson for her comments before proceeding with the meeting.

April Jones-Tyler Ward 2 - During the public comment period, April Jones-Tyler, a resident of Ward Two, shared concerns regarding both her daughter's school experience and maintenance issues at her residence managed by the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority (HRHA). Ms. Jones-Tyler explained that she had encountered difficulties related to her daughter's participation in field trips at Woodlawn, including not being permitted to ride the school bus with students during outings. She also noted that one of her daughter's field trips had been scheduled on the same day as a Parent Policy Council meeting, where she serves as chairperson, creating a scheduling conflict. Additionally, she stated that she had experienced communication issues with her daughter's teacher, indicating that her emails had not received responses and expressing concern that she was having difficulty communicating through her email account. Ms. Jones-Tyler also addressed ongoing maintenance concerns at her HRHA residence. She reported that paint had been removed from a bathroom wall during repair work but that the contractor had not completed the project, leaving the wall unfinished. She further stated that mildew on the bathroom ceiling had developed into mold and that the issues remained unresolved despite being reported. She urged that the necessary repairs be completed and concluded her remarks. Council thanked Ms. Jones-Tyler for her comments.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 (Public Hearing) Regarding a Conditional Use Permit Request from Yousef Abualia to Operate a Used Automobile Dealership on Parcel #025-0225, Also Identified as 3805 Oaklawn Blvd., in the B-4 Corridor Development District – Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Planning and Development Director Chris Ward presented a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) request to allow the operation of a used automobile dealership at a property located in Ward Seven and zoned B-4. He identified Yusef Ala as the applicant and noted that the property is owned by Joe's Enterprises, LLC. Mr. Ward reminded Council that, following an ordinance amendment adopted in June of the previous year, used automobile dealerships now require a Conditional Use Permit before operating within the city. He also noted that the site is the former Verizon store. Mr. Ward explained that the primary planning considerations for automobile dealerships include the parking and display of vehicles, as well as the potential for visual clutter. He stated that the applicant had indicated the proposed use is consistent with surrounding commercial uses, that planned aesthetic improvements would enhance the appearance of the property, and that the proposal is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. At the City's request, the applicant submitted a detailed parking plan. Mr. Ward explained that parking spaces immediately adjacent to the building would be reserved for customers and accessible parking, while vehicles offered for sale would be displayed in designated spaces toward the center of the parking lot. He reported that the existing lot contains 31 parking spaces, exceeding the minimum parking requirements of the zoning ordinance, and that all parking is located at least 50 feet from the roadway, minimizing potential visual obstructions for motorists. He also noted that the existing building is adequately sized to accommodate the proposed office operations associated with the dealership. Based on the site's compliance with zoning requirements and the proposed improvements, Mr. Ward stated that staff recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit with several conditions. These included requiring the parking lot to be seal-coated and restriped, submission of the final parking plan to the Development Department, limiting parking to designated spaces with no parking on grass or on vehicle ramps or lifts, maintaining and mulching existing landscape islands, installing street trees, repainting the existing nonconforming pole sign if it remains in use, prohibiting excessive decorative displays intended to attract attention, prohibiting vehicle washing on the property, requiring compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations, and ensuring all conditions are satisfied prior to issuance of zoning approval for the business. Mr. Ward advised Council that the Planning Commission received no public comments during its public hearing and voted 4-0 to recommend approval of the request with the staff-recommended conditions. He also noted that the applicant had already begun implementing many of the required improvements, including seal-coating and restriping the parking lot, installing landscaping, cleaning and mulching the landscape islands, and adding street trees. Following the presentation, the mayor opened the required public hearing. With no speakers present, the public hearing was closed. Council took no action on the item during the meeting, as it was the first reading, and Mr. Ward concluded his presentation after confirming there were no questions from Council.

R-2 (Public Hearing) Soliciting Comments on the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Proposed 2026-2027 Annual Action Plan and Funding Priorities – Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development

Planning and Development Director Chris Ward presented the second public hearing regarding the City's 2026–2027 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan. He explained that the City of Hopewell is a CDBG entitlement community, meaning it automatically receives an annual allocation of federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Mr. Ward reviewed HUD's mission of creating strong, sustainable, and inclusive communities while expanding access to quality affordable housing. He noted that all CDBG-funded activities must satisfy at least one of three national objectives: benefiting low- to moderate-income persons, preventing or eliminating slums and blight, or addressing an urgent need resulting from a declared disaster. Mr. Ward reported that since 2020, the city has received approximately \$1.6 million in CDBG funding. He explained that HUD places spending limits on certain categories of expenditures, allowing up to 20 percent of the annual allocation for program administration and up to 15 percent for public service activities, with the remaining funds available for eligible housing, infrastructure, utility, park, and other community improvement projects. For the 2026–2027 program year, the city will receive \$263,796, consisting of \$52,759 for administration, \$39,569 for public service projects, and \$171,468 for housing and community development activities. Mr. Ward reminded Council that the City's Five-Year Consolidated Plan, adopted the previous year, establishes the community's priorities and goals for CDBG funding. The upcoming program year represents the second year of that plan, and the identified priorities have remained largely consistent over the past 15 years. He explained that the CDBG Committee, composed of five City Council members, reviewed all submitted funding applications and developed recommendations for the upcoming program year. For the public service portion of the funding, the committee recommended \$5,000 for Huron's Rocks and Rulers after-school entrepreneurship program for youth, \$10,000 for Healthy Families to provide counseling services aimed at preventing child abuse among at-risk families, \$12,569 for The James House to support domestic violence shelter services, and \$5,000 for Crater Community Hospice to provide hospice and supportive care for low- to moderate-income Hopewell residents. Mr. Ward noted that Crater Community Hospice was the only new organization recommended for funding, while the remaining agencies had previously received CDBG support. Mr. Ward further explained that the remaining \$171,468 would be awarded to Project: HOMES to rehabilitate homes owned by income-qualified homeowners. Based on current estimates, the funding is expected to assist with improvements to approximately eight homes during the upcoming program year. Concluding his presentation, Mr. Ward announced that the required 30-day public comment period would begin the following day. Residents would have the opportunity to submit comments by email, telephone, in person, or in writing regarding the proposed funding allocations. He advised that copies of the draft Annual Action Plan, including the funding recommendations, were available for public review at the Planning and Development Department, the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the Hopewell Public Library, and the Hopewell Community Center. Following the presentation, the mayor opened the public

hearing. With no speakers requesting to comment, the public hearing was closed, and no action was taken on the item during the meeting.

**R-3 (Public Hearing) Ordinance Amending Hopewell City Code
Chapter 33 (Traffic Calming Devices) – Anthony Bessette, City Attorney**

City Attorney Anthony Bessette introduced a proposed ordinance amendment intended to modernize the City's approach to traffic calming measures. He explained that staff had recently reviewed the City's Code of Ordinances and found that the existing provisions only address speed bumps, without recognizing the many other traffic calming options commonly used today. Mr. Bessette noted that the current ordinance contains two significant limitations. First, it requires City Council approval before any speed bump can be installed. Second, it limits the use of speed bumps exclusively to parks, playgrounds, and other recreational areas, preventing their use in other locations where traffic safety concerns may exist. He stated that the proposed amendment would expand the ordinance to authorize a wider variety of traffic calming measures throughout the city, allow their use wherever warranted, and assign responsibility for evaluating and approving their placement to the Chief of Police, Fire Chief, and Director of Public Works. If those three officials were unable to reach a consensus, the matter would then be referred to City Council for a final decision. Before moving to the technical presentation, Mr. Bessette invited Council to ask questions regarding the proposed ordinance and the process that led to its development. Following Mr. Bessette's introduction, Josh Elli provided an overview of traffic calming measures and the process typically used to implement them. He explained that traffic calming devices are designed to reduce vehicle speeds, discourage cut-through traffic, and improve pedestrian safety, particularly in residential neighborhoods, near schools and parks, and in areas experiencing significant through traffic. As an example, he noted that traffic calming measures had previously been implemented in the Cobblestone neighborhood. Mr. Elli outlined the standard process for evaluating requests for traffic calming. Rather than installing devices solely in response to a citizen complaint, staff would first conduct an engineering study, develop a conceptual plan, gather neighborhood and community support, obtain any necessary approvals, and then proceed with construction if appropriate. He also reviewed the different categories of traffic calming measures. Non-intrusive measures include gateway signs, pavement markings that visually narrow travel lanes, pole-mounted speed display signs, and enhanced speed limit signage. Vertical traffic calming devices include traditional speed humps, speed tables, and raised intersections or crosswalks. Horizontal traffic calming measures include curb extensions or chokers, raised medians, and similar roadway design features intended to slow traffic without creating vertical obstacles. Mr. Elli concluded by discussing factors that must be considered before installing any traffic calming devices. These include the potential for increased emergency response times, additional traffic noise in residential areas, challenges associated with snow removal operations, possible damage to low-clearance vehicles, and increased roadway maintenance costs resulting from additional wear on pavement and traffic calming infrastructure. After responding to an opportunity for questions, the presentation concluded with no further discussion from Council.

**R-4 (Public Hearing) Resolution to Consider Appointments to the
Hopewell School Board – Anthony Bessette, City Attorney**

City Attorney Anthony Bessette informed Council that two vacancies on the Hopewell City School Board would become effective July 1. He explained that, pursuant to Virginia Code § 22.1-29.1, City Council is required to conduct a public hearing on School Board nominees before making appointments. Mr. Bessette advised that the nominees under consideration were Sharah Fuller, Ruth Johnson, William Butler, Brenda Pllum, and Jackie Horak. He further explained that the purpose of the evening's agenda item was to satisfy the statutory public hearing requirement and noted that City Council was scheduled to make the appointments at its June 23 meeting, following the completion of the required public hearing process.

R-5 Resolution Amending FY26 Budget to Reassign Ward 4 Travel and Communication Funds to Ward Improvement Funds – Councilor Ronnie O. Ellis

City Attorney Anthony Bessette explained that the resolution before Council was similar to resolutions previously approved by Council during the current and prior fiscal years. He stated that the purpose of the resolution was to transfer funds within Councilor Ellis's discretionary budget by reallocating money from the communications and conference budget lines into Councilor Ellis's Ward Improvement Fund. Following the explanation, Councilor Ellis asked whether he should abstain from voting on the resolution due to the nature of the transfer. Mr. Bessette confirmed that Councilor Ellis should abstain from participating in the vote.

Councilor Harris makes a motion approve the Resolution Amending FY26 Budget to Reassign Ward 4 Travel and Communication Funds to Ward Improvement Funds. Councilor Wheat seconds this motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Ellis -	Abstained
Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

R-6 Resolution Amending the FY 2026 Budget and Designation Funds from Salary Savings to Capital Improvement Project (CIP) – Tabitha Martinez, Director of Recreation and Parks

Parks and Recreation Director Tabitha Martinez requested Council's approval to reallocate \$59,280 in salary savings from the Aquatics Division into a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) line item to begin funding a comprehensive master plan for the Parks and Recreation Department. She explained that she had requested funding for this initiative over the past several years and viewed this reallocation as an opportunity to establish a foundation for the project. Although the amount would not fully fund the comprehensive plan, it would provide a significant starting point, with the remaining funding needs to be revisited during the next budget cycle. Ms. Martinez stated that the salary savings resulted from the department's inability to hire

qualified aquatics personnel, noting that lifeguard positions require specialized certifications, which has made recruitment difficult.

Councilor Rapole makes a motion to approve the Resolution Amending the FY 2026 Budget and Designation Funds from Salary Savings to Capital Improvement Project. Councilor Wheat seconds this motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Ellis -	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes

Motion Passes 6-0

R-7 Resolution Authorizing Application for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant – Benjamin Ruppert, Fire Chief

Fire Chief Benjamin Ruppert requested Council's approval to submit an application for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant. He explained that the grant application is a key component of the four-year staffing plan presented during the budget process, which supports the department's proposed transition to a new firefighter shift schedule. Chief Ruppert stated that, if awarded, the SAFER Grant would reimburse 75% of the salaries for the additional firefighter positions during the first two years, followed by a reduced reimbursement in the third year, with the city assuming the full cost of the positions in the fourth year. He emphasized that Council's action was only to authorize submission of the grant application and that receiving the grant would not obligate the city to accept the funding. If the application is successful, Council would have the opportunity to review the award and decide whether to accept or decline the grant.

Councilor Rapole makes a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Application for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant. Councilor Wheat seconds this motion.

ROLL CALL

Councilor Wheat -	Yes
Councilor Ellis -	Yes
Vice Mayor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Councilor Rapole -	Yes
Councilor Daye -	Yes

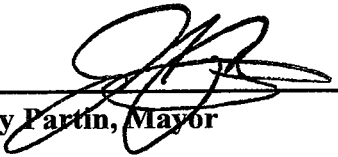
Motion Passes 6-0

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully Submitted,

Sade' allen

Sade' Allen, City Clerk



Johnny Partin, Mayor