

**MINUTES OF THE October 19, 2023 CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL
MEETING**

A SPECIAL meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday
October 19, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: John B. Partin, Mayor
 Jasmine Gore, Vice Mayor (Virtual)
 Rita Joyner, Councilor
 Michael Harris, Councilor (Virtual)
 Janice Denton, Councilor
 Brenda Pelham, Councilor (Late, 6:10)
 Dominic Holloway, Councilor

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to allow Vice Mayor Gore and Councilor Harris to participate in meeting by zoom, Councilor Denton seconds the motion.

Roll Call:	Councilor Joyner -	Yes
	Councilor Harris -	Abstain
	Mayor Partin -	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore -	Abstain
	Councilor Denton -	Yes
	Councilor Pelham -	Absent
	Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Passes 4-0

CLOSED MEETING:

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to go into closed session pursuant to Va. Code Section § 2.2-371 1 (A)(I) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointments; the assignment and

performance of specific appointee and employees of City Council, and to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby, motion is seconded by Councilor Denton

Roll Call:

Councilor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes
Councilor Denton -	Yes
Councilor Pelham -	Absent
Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Pass -6-0

Reconvene Open Session

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to come out of closed session motion is seconded by Councilor Joyner.

Roll Call:

Councilor Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore -	Excused
Councilor Denton -	Yes
Councilor Pelham -	Yes
Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Pass -6-0

CERTIFICATION:

Immediately thereafter, council responded to the question pursuant to Virginia § 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 Joyner -	Yes
Councilor Harris -	Yes
Mayor Partin -	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore -	Excused
Councilor Denton -	Yes
Councilor Pelham -	Yes
Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Pass -6-0

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to appoint Mr. Tunstall and Ms. Harris-Jones to the HRHA Board. Motion dies for lack of a second. Councilor Harris speaks stating he did not hear the motion. Councilor Denton makes a motion to appoint Mr. Tunstall and Queen Jones-Harris, Councilor Holloway seconds the motion. Mayor Partin asks then city attorney can someone make the same motion of one that died for lack of a second. Councilor Harris stating he did not hear anything until he heard the motion died, and he stated he wanted to second Councilor Holloway's motion. Vice Mayor Gore asked for the motion to be repeated and stated she also did not hear the motion. Vice Mayor Gore stated there is a technical issue, Mayor Partin stated he asked the attorney what to do next because the motion has died. Councilor Holloway also asked the city attorney to check for rules on technical difficulties. City Attorney stated there are no rules for that. City Attorney stated there is nothing that answers the question in city council rules, Roberts rules does not talk about technical difficulties, but if a motion dies, the issue is it died because all members of

city council were not present, so what should happen is the motion is revived so Councilor Harris and Vice Mayor Gore can participate. Councilor Holloway's motion is revived. Mr. Harris seconded the motion.

Mayor Partin states he cannot vote in favor because of the issues HRHA is currently experiencing and he feels there needs to be fresh members on board to fix the issue. Vice Mayor Gore asked to split out the vote to make sure nothing is contradicted that was shared in closed session. Motion on the floor by Councilor Holloway is to appoint Queen Harris-Jones to HRHA board. Vice mayor Gore states for record that the motion in the floor based on assumption should be a unanimous vote based on discussion in the back. Councilor Pelham states change is difficult and the current HRHA housing authority is a trouble housing authority and received a 40 out of 100 points. The city has failed financially and so has HRHA. Councilor Joyner reiterated some of Councilor Pelham's comments. She stated the troubled status of HRHA should concern everyone in the city. Based upon the troubled status clearly this board has failed in many ways to represent the best interest of the residents and would prefer for change and irresponsible for council to not move in that direction. Councilor Holloway states the information discussed amongst councilors with issues brought up had not given any substance, and people make accusations and not give evidence of those accusations and get clarity. Councilor Holloways calls for the vote, Vice Mayor Gore states she wanted to speak as well as Councilor Dentin, Councilor Holloway withdraws his motion to call for the vote. Councilor Denton states she is not astute on HRHA as some on council are, but she has done her homework and listened to those who came to her home and talked to her. She stated they should sit down and talk to the members and have a come to Jesus moment. She states she knows it's a push back but they need to sit down with the commission and give them a chance. Vice Mayor Gore states she sees points on both sides of the equation and states she understands the board is in trouble and she would like to request a special meeting to investigate specific points to address with data with what people are claiming because serious allegations have been raised. She is supporting Mr. Tunstall because he has been on constant contact with her and his work experience around the state. When she polled to see if there were any objections there were none, so she assumed there was no issue with appointing Queen Harris-Jones. She would also like to request the ability to interview three of the candidates because she has not spoken to them and they are the ones divided between council, she would like to do this if council does not object. Mayor and Councilor Holloway stated they have no problem

with her doing that, and there were no other objections. Councilor Pelham stated she has no direct objection except for one person who once was on the board before and the board needs education and direction on regulation, policy, and procedure. Councilor Holloway calls for the vote.

Roll Call:	Councilor Joyner -	Yes (Silence)
	Councilor Harris -	Yes
	Mayor Partin -	No
	Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes
	Councilor Denton -	Yes
	Councilor Pelham -	Yes (Silence)
	Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Pass -6-1

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to appoint John Tunstall, motion seconded by Councilor Harris.

Roll Call:	Councilor Joyner -	Yes (Silence)
	Councilor Harris -	Yes
	Mayor Partin -	No
	Vice Mayor Gore -	Yes
	Councilor Denton -	Yes
	Councilor Pelham -	Yes (Silence)
	Councilor Holloway -	Yes

Motion Pass -6-1

WORK SESSION

WS -1 – Councilor Rules – Danielle Smith

City Attorney begins the work session starting where councilor rules were left off at from the last meeting. They left off at rule 417. City Attorney begins by stating her intent is to go over standard of conduct and present to council at a later meeting to go over suggested changes for city council to adopt. Councilor Holloway has a point of information asking where it says Robert rules of order he thinks those are older editions and believes those need to be updated. City attorney made a note to update the references. Council begins with 417, section B was addressed. Mayor Partin states to strike Hopewell news. Councilor Pelham asks to say progress index and or Richmond times dispatch. Mayor Partin suggests to say any local news outlets. On subsection D Councilor Pelham suggests it read any committee member. Councilor Pelham asked about minutes from board and commission, stating they are not complete minutes from them, so she suggest adding complete in front of minutes on section F. On section G city attorney will scratch the parenthesis language. Councilor Holloway has point of information for what does G section mean. City attorney responds to what it means. Councilor Holloway ask to change it to include the language, city attorney will write down exactly what the protocol is and add it to the section. Vice Mayor Gore asked about section B stating meeting notices asking for clarification notices should be done by the clerk or council designee based on previous issues. She also suggests about boards and commission there needs to be language to say the board chair or city staff liaison shall submit them so someone is held accountable. She stated the time periods for meetings should be in section C clearly stating council members, and add another boards and commission minutes shall be submitted in the same time frame by chairman or staff designee added to section G. Council moves on to rule 418. Councilor Holloway states city clerk shall confirm with council instead of the Mayor. There is debate in reference to that suggested motion. The suggestion was changed to state mayor/vice mayor instead of just mayor. Vice Mayor asked if that language for the entire section where is states just mayor, the answer was yes. There is further debate on how meals should be distributed for meetings. City

Manager states the past budget on consensus they budgeted for regular council meals and the amount that is there now is to supply meals for regular city council meetings. Vice Mayor asked Mayor to poll council so they can move on from this section. Mayor does a poll and there was a consensus to continue having meals at regular meetings and no meals at special meals. Meetings will start at 6:00 pm. City attorney is striking the 5:30 portion of number 1 and changing it to 6:00 pm and to say any meeting and not work session. Councilor Harris is asking how is food defined for meals to be provided. City attorney responded the answer is on section B1. City attorney states she will change it to say a meal is to be defined as and make sure it is not exclusive to those examples and not limited to. Vice Mayor asked to add the clerk locks stuff up, it was confirmed that the clerk's office has already began doing that. Vice Mayor asked that locks of conference room be changed so no one has access to conference room. Letter C vice mayor states it needs to say council budget instead of council miscellaneous budget. Council moves on to 419. It was suggested by councilor Pelham to change time to 15 minutes instead of 10 minutes. There was debate between council with this suggestion. The consensus was to change it to annual and 15 minutes. Vice Mayor suggest the clerk be responsible for scheduling. Councilor Joyner states the first since of 419 is not relevant and Vice Mayor agrees. Councilor Denton asked is there any rules that govern the regular presentations. City attorney answers this question. Councilor Holloway suggests that boards and commissions send updates for term ending and current members by secretary or chair of the boards. There was debate between council. Suggestion is if there is a change in membership the body should let council know of the change. It was agreed to make that rule 420 and move 420 down. Council moves on to rule 420. Vice Mayor suggested striking the whole section, there is debate between council in regard to that rule. Vice Mayor states COLA is not currently in contracts and if COLA is given to contract employees' council need to decide, and if it is decided for them to get it then the contract needs to be amended. Council debated this suggestion. The suggestion to state before adding COLA the contracts need to be amended to follow what the rule current says and add COLA to the contracts. Council moves on to rule 421. Councilor suggested this needs to be a living document for future councilors. City Attorney is going to strike out the approval date. Council went through 421 by page, on page 18 council is asked are there any suggestions. Council moves to page 19 for any

suggestions. Council Denton talks about the council rules of conduct and states they should be policed and have consequences for when it is necessary because citizens have to answer to someone, whereas they do not. There is debate between council regarding this suggestion. Vice Mayor asked for City Attorney to do steps for reprimand regarding council members, city attorney stated she did research and stated there have been a few cases where censure is allowed but it cannot violate the first amendment speech. There was further debate between council. Vice Mayor asked that conduct of council be inside and outside, including online and for sharing confidential information. The agreement is to hold on making a decision until city attorney completes research to determine what they can or cannot do. Councilor Denton states she would love to sign the council rules at the end of this, once all suggested changes have been made. City Attorney stated she will provide a copy to each council once it is completed. Councilor Harris asked what happens if they do not answer, City Attorney responds it is just a different form of acknowledgement, but they will still be responsible for the rules that are approved with or without a signature. There is further debate between council. Councilor Holloway asked about question 11 and asked about a specific example of a letter received from CW of Virginia. Vice Mayor corrected the question to state the information should be shared publically with all other council, Councilor Holloway states the word publically needs to be removed if it is just to be shares with council. There is debate between council regarding current suggestion. City Attorney stated she made the change to remove publically from the language. Councilor Harris asked is there anything explaining the intent, answer is received by Vice Mayor.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Denton would like to make an announcement; Mayor states the mics will remain hot after adjournment for her to make her announcement. Vice Mayor asked is there going to be a third meeting to finish the rules, the answer was yes.

Vote: 6 Aye

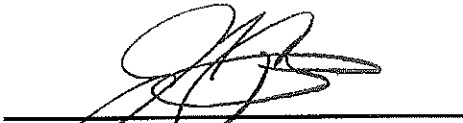
1 Nay

Councilor Denton makes announcement that at 11:40 AM there will be regular broadcast from the beacon that at 9:30 the history of Hopewell will be discussed for anyone who may be interested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brittani Williams", written over a horizontal line.

Brittani Williams, City Clerk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Johnny Partin", written over a horizontal line.
Johnny Partin, Mayor