

**Regular Council Meeting
June 8, 2021**

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD JUNE 8, 2021

An electric (Zoom) meeting of the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia was held Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Bennett opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

PRESENT: Patience A. Bennett, Mayor, Ward 7
John B. Partin, Vice Mayor, Ward 3
Deborah Randolph, Councilor, Ward 1
Arlene Holloway, Councilor, Ward 2
Janice B. Denton, Councilor, Ward 5
Brenda S. Pelham, Councilor, Ward 6

ABSENT: Jasmine Gore, Councilor, Ward 4

John M. Altman, Jr., City Manager
Charles E. Dane, Assistant City Manager
Sandra Robinson, City Attorney
Mollie P. Bess, Acting City Clerk

CLOSED MEETING

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Pelham to move into closed meeting pursuant to Va. Code §2.2-3711 (A) (1) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including, but not limited to, the assignment, performance and salaries of specific appointees, officers and employees of the City, including the City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk; and to consider prospective candidates for appointment to various boards and commissions; (A) (7) and (8) to consult with legal counsel and staff regarding specific legal matters and probable litigation, where such consultation in open meeting would adversely affect the City's interest; and to the extent these discussions will be aided thereby, (A) (4) for the protection and privacy of individuals in personal matters not related to public business.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 7-0

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CONVENE INTO OPEN MEETING

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Denton to come out of closed session.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	technical difficulties
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 5-0

CERTIFICATION

CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO VIRGINIA CODE §2.2-3712: 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 Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	technical difficulties
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 5-0

Motion was made by Councilor Pelham and seconded by Vice Mayor Partin to reappoint Lynda Frank to the Economic Development Authority.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	technical difficulties
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 5-0

Motion was made by Councilor Pelham and seconded by Vice Mayor Partin to appoint Rita Joyner to the Economic Development Authority.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	technical difficulties
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes

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Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 5-0

OPEN MEETING

Mayor Bennett opened the meeting and welcomed guests.

ROLL CALL:	Mayor Bennett	-	present
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	present
	Councilor Randolph	-	present
	Councilor Holloway	-	present
	Councilor Denton	-	present
	Councilor Pelham	-	present
	Councilor Gore	-	absent

REGULAR MEETING

The regular meeting opened at 7:30 p.m. Prayer was offered by Councilor Holloway, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, led by Mayor Bennett. Mayor Bennett welcomed everyone and asked City Council for any good news. It was noted that Rashad Biggs was named Employee of the Quarter.

AMEND THE AGENDA

Motion was made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Pelham to adopt an amended agenda to include the community center change order request as the new R-1 and then move everything else down in subsequent order and to extend the meeting until the new R-6, Operating and Capital Budget Resolution, was completed.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 6-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion was made by Councilor Pelham and seconded by Mayor Bennett to amend the Consent Agenda and add the HPC meeting minutes as R-7.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	no
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes

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Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	no

Motion passes 4-2

Mayor Bennett turned the meeting over to Heather Lyne for her presentation on Hopewell Downtown Partnership. Ms. Lyne gave an update that there are two new businesses opening in Downtown Hopewell; one is the Crystal Luna Company which is located on East Broadway. Opened about two weeks ago, she makes jewelry from rocks that are shipped in from around the country, and also sells crystals. The second business is the Yoga Studio located at 256 East Broadway; she is looking to open by the end of the month.

PUBLIC HEARING

PH-1: SCHOOL BOARD APPOINTMENT – Vice Mayor Partin asked to recuse himself from the public hearing since his sister is one of the applicants. Mayor Bennett granted his request.

Mayor Bennett turned the public hearing over to Mr. John M. Altman, City Manager, who asked Ms. Mollie Bess, City Clerk, to share the names of those who applied. Ms. Bess informed Council that there are four applicants: Deborah E. Marks, Shannon Foskey, Nelson G. Cuffey, and Alison K. Partin. No other applications have been received. Mayor Bennett opened the public hearing and announced each candidate’s name. There being no response from the public, the Public Hearing was closed.

Mayor Bennett asked Council if they would like to discuss in closed session at this time and if so, to use the motion §2.2-3711 (A) (1).

Councilor Pelham made a motion for Ms. Bess to schedule the necessary interviews with the candidates and thereafter go into closed session to speak about the candidates. Mayor Bennett asked Councilor Pelham if she would like to discuss the candidates this evening or have the interviews first. Mayor Bennett asked Councilor Pelham if she would be okay if the motion states to ask Ms. Bess to set up interviews.

Motion made by Councilor Pelham and seconded by Councilor Holloway to task Ms. Bess with setting up the interviews with the four candidates for Council members before June 22 via Zoom.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	recused from voting
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 5-0

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REGULAR BUSINESS

Moving to Reports of the City Manager, meeting turned over to Mr. Altman.

R-1: COMMUNITY CENTER ROOF

Consideration to modify the contract that City Council approved. As was discussed brought forth request on the roofing contract, we knew that there were things we were going to find once we took off the roof and we have found things which require some change orders. The original contract was \$277,471.00, the first change order we had was for \$68,187.00, under 25% of the cost of the contract. Once we hit 25%, the change orders need to come back to Council for approval, so we have two change orders for consideration this evening for authorization to move forward, those at \$17,900.00 and the second for \$23,440.23. Mr. Reidmiller is here to discuss projects and challenges. So we are requesting your authorization to move forward with the change order which would change the total dollar amount of the project contract that you already approved a lesser amount and that is here what we are asking for.

Mr. Altman turned the meeting over to Mr. Reidmiller who stated that significant issues were discovered with the roof; none could be found until work was started. The first change order is asbestos related and removing safely is much more of a delicate process. The second change order is related to additional asbestos abatement found in another area of the roof. The third is a strange building phenomenon associated with having a flat roof, which also does not have a nailing board around the perimeter of the roof to which the roofing membrane should be attached.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Council Denton to authorize the City Manager to authorize the modification of the construction contract at the Community Center to include the three change orders in the amount of \$88,427.33 with a total contract value of \$365,898.23.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 6-0

R-2: HOPEWELL BROADBAND AUTHORITY

Mr. Altman turned the meeting over to Dr. Manker and City Attorney Sandra Robinson for review with City Council. Ms. Robinson explained why we need the Broadband Authority and the Resolution. The body, not the name, is required by statute. A locality cannot provide for internet services except in a limited capacity unless it goes through certain procedures coupled with the requirements of the SEC, which requires the creation of a broadband authority.

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Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Randolph to approve the resolution creating the Hopewell Broadband Authority.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 6-0

R-3: REOPENING CITY HALL

Changes to City guidelines with regard to opening City Buildings. No action requested, just to inform Council and the community of the steps we are taking to reopen city buildings. The statewide declaration will remain into effect until June 30, 2021. In our meeting July 13, we will have on agenda to end our local emergency also. However, if the Governor decides to extend, we will also extend.

In a memo that was sent out on June 3, it stated effective immediately, fully vaccinated employees (“fully vaccinated” means you have both shots but two weeks since your final dose) are no longer required to wear a mask inside city facilities. Employees who have not been fully vaccinated, including those who have not finished the two-week waiting period, are strongly encouraged to still wear a mask when physical distancing from others cannot be maintained. Any employee who chooses to wear a mask may still do so.

Effective May 28, all in-person meetings, whether they are in the same department or with other city employees and from other departments and buildings, could be held in the conference room; capacities were reinstated to pre-COVID levels.

Effective June 1, the daily temperature check that were being done for city employees and citizens coming into the building for appointments were ceased. All employees are expected to self-monitor their temperature prior to coming to work, as well as wash hands, use hand sanitizer, follow those CDC guidelines that were there in the very beginning.

Effective June 7, all employees return to their normal work schedule at their in-person work location, with the only exception was for those who have a medical vulnerability and that continues to be the only exception we are providing. They must contact HR and their supervisor to discuss options available to them.

Effective June 14, all City buildings will fully reopen to the public, and on June 21, DMV Select will return to the Commissioner of the Revenue’s office, which will be moved on June 17. When the State of Emergency expires on June 30 we will have to return to in-person Council meetings. We are anticipating that on July 13, we will be back to in-person Council meetings.

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R-4: AUTHORIZATION TO DEMOLISH 706 n. 21ST AVENUE

The City owns this structure. It is the white one-story vacant building across from Appomattox Cemetery. What is being requested is the authorization to tear it down, because it is a city owned building and there is funding available to go ahead with that.

Motion was made by Councilor Denton and seconded by Vice Mayor Partin that City Council authorized the demolition of 706 N. 21st Avenue.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passes 6-0

R-5: UPDATE ON CAMERON FOUNDATION GRANT

Mrs. Tevya Griffin gave an update on the Cameron Foundation Grant. A presentation was provided to council for review and questions.

A question was asked as to how will the \$50,000 be spent, and Mrs. Griffin responded that the \$50,000 was the entire award from the Cameron Foundation. The grant team is proposing to hire a consultant to work on implementing the grant, and also as a part of the objectives of the workout plan, is to look for other funding sources, and that process has already begun. It is outlined in the workout plan, and we are not looking for this to be a position that is added to any city department, but a contractor's position for the \$50,000 over 18 months. This program is something we want long term. Where this program is going to sit, as far as long term, is set up with the City. No firm answer on that yet. Objective of program is to provide for long term. Need to discuss how things are going in the next 18 months.

Council will be kept involved as we will need to add this to the budget in the future. No action necessary.

R-5: FY 2021-2022 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET RESOLUTION

The proposed FY 22 Overall Operating and Capital Budget appropriates a total of approximately \$180,848,289.00 across 31 funds, which is an increase of \$8,821,095.00, or 5.13% over the FY 21 budget. The proposed General Operating Fund is approximately \$54,328,648.00, which is an increase of \$1,710,971.00, or 3.25% over the FY21 General Fund Operating Budget. The City budget does include the 2½ % raise authorized by Council for employees; it does include the 5% raises for state positions; it does include the positions that were authorized, the conversion of the two part-time positions to one full-time position for the animal control custodian; the MUNIS position in IT; and Mrs. Griffin's position for the rental inspector and it includes the lab tech position at Hopewell Water Renewal (that is in the enterprise fund, so that doesn't have an effect on the general fund).

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Motion made by Councilor Denton and seconded by Councilor Randolph that City Council approve the proposed FY22 Operating and Capital Budget Resolution. Councilor Pelham requested to step away from the conversation and discussion and abstain from this vote. Mayor Bennett stated that Councilor Pelham is stepping away due to a Conflict of Interest; her form is on file with the City Clerk.

Vice Mayor Partin stated that he is unable to vote in favor of the budget; he believes that we need the City to look more seriously at the Capital Improvement Plan.

Councilor Gore just arrived to the meeting and wanted to share that she is unable to support this budget.

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Pelham	-	abstain
	Mayor Bennett	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	-	no
	Councilor Denton	-	yes
	Councilor Gore	-	no

Motion passes 4-3

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned.


Patience Bennett, Mayor


Mollie Bess, Interim City Clerk