

**MINUTES OF THE March 12, 2024 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**

A REGULAR meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held on Tuesday March 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** John B. Partin, Mayor (Absent)  
Jasmine Gore, Vice Mayor (Late 6:05)  
Rita Joyner, Councilor  
Michael Harris, Councilor  
Janice Denton, Councilor  
Brenda Pelham, Councilor  
Dominic Holloway, Councilor

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to allow Councilor Harris to participate remotely. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Absent   |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Abstain  |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 4-0**

**CLOSED MEETING:**

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to go into closed meeting pursuant to Va. Code Section §2.2-3711 (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 VA. Code section §2.2-3711 (a)(29) for discussion of the award of public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders, offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, and to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby, and to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby, Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**Reconvene Open Meeting**

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes |

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Councilor Joyner- | Yes      |
| Council Harris-   | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-     | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**CERTIFICATION:**

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?

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to reconvene open meeting. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

Councilor Pelham makes the motion to extend the meeting to complete regular business. Vice Mayor Gore seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

Councilor Holloway makes the motion to approve the contract modification agreements for the Robert Bobb Group for the project management and audit services financial remediation services for FY2024 appropriated and FY2025 budget allocation in the amount of \$495,000.00. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**REGULAR MEETING**

Vice Mayor Gore calls the Regular Meeting to order 8:29 pm

Prayer by Pastor Collier, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilor Joyner.

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to adopt the Regular meeting Agenda. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilor Joyner makes a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

## INFORMATION/ PRESENTATIONS

1. **Finance Report- Robert Bobb Group Heather.** Ness presents the status of the progress to date and the recent Successes. Ms. Ness gives 2020 audit progress and information on the 2021 audit package submission. Ms. Ness talks about the order that will be followed for each audit year due and discusses next steps. She requests a 2-3 hour working session with everyone sometime in the near future, possibly in June, but before the modules all go into production.

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

1. **Ripley Ballou**-Reminds the audience or anyone watching or listening on line about the reports from the Robert Bobb Group. He gives his opinion of the reports and reads recommendations to the council.
2. **Sharah' Fuller**- Talks about a community walk coming up for the City of Hopewell. She states it would be great to see some of our leaders in attendance participating with the city and being present at City of Hopewell events.

## PUBLIC HEARING

**PH1- Right of Way Vacation 514 Monroe St- Chris Ward, Director of Development.** Mr. Ward gives the order status of tonight's' reading. He outlines the location of the property in reference to the surrounding properties. He responds to a written comment and addresses concerns of access to a neighboring property. Mr. Ward talks about the findings from Water Renewal of two sanitary sewer lines running thru the right of way portion of the property. Water Renewal doesn't have a problem with the right of way as long as the city executes a deed of easement with Ms. Bolling allow the city to retain access to the sanitation sewer lines for any maintenance purposes. Staff recommends approval of the vacation request with

the requirement that a deed of easement be executed with the property owner and the city. Planning Commission also recommended with a 3-1 vote for that same recommendation.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to approve the vacation as stated by Director Ward with the easement requirement. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

**PH2- Conditional Use Permit 804 Kenwood Ave- Chris Ward, Director of Development.** Mr. Ward states this was presented back on February 13<sup>th</sup> as a work session. This is technically a 1<sup>st</sup> reading and is asking for action. The applicant for the Conditional Use permit is for Waakeema Ahevonderae to allow the use of an accessory building on her property to be used as an accessory apartment. Mr. Ward gives the property's location. A CUP for this use was approved in June 2020 for a previous owner. Mr. Ward explains some confusion in terms of communication, when the property was sold to Ms. Ahevonderae. Mr. Ward talks about the details of the R2 ordinance. Mr. Ward states in the case of Ms. Ahevonderae and her aunt that lives in the accessory structure, the aunt does not drive and does not have a vehicle therefore do not have any parking concerns. Staff recommends the approval of this CUP request. Council approved this back in 2020 so this is a re-approval. Mr. Ward reads out the Conditional Use Permit requirements. Planning Commission recommended approval in the January 11 meeting with a 4- 0 vote.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to approve the conditional use permit for 804 Kenwood as is. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

## REGULAR BUSINESS

**R-1- School Zone Speed Limit Enforcement by Camera- Chief Greg Taylor, Chief of Police.** The presentation is conducted today by Marty Plank, Vice President of Sales for Ultimate. Ultimate is an automated traffic enforcement company. Mr. Plank talks about some statistics for speed limits when being struck by a vehicle. He explains the details of school zone enforcement law. A speed study was conducted in Hopewell at four different locations and he goes over the results. Mr. Plank states there are Facebook posts, there is Instagram, they will let the parents know, they will let everyone know when the cameras go live.

Councilor Pelham makes the motion to approve the use of the school zone speed limit enforcement cameras and to authorize the manager to sign and execute the agreement. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

### **ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

### **Motion Passes 6-0**

**R-2- Towing Ordinance- Chief Greg Taylor, Chief of Police.** Dr. Manker gives background information on the Towing ordinance. Hopewell City Council is required to create a Tow advisory Board and to adopt an ordinance which regulates towing services. An ordinance has been provided that the city attorney has drafted for your review. The police chief is asking for approval on that ordinance so he can move forward with towing contract services within the City of Hopewell.



Councilor Joyner makes a motion to table this item until the next Regular scheduled meeting. Councilor Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**R-3- Health Insurance Renewal- Yaosca Smith, Human Resource Director.**

Dr. Manker introduces Yaosca Smith to present the Local Choice Health Care rates for upcoming FY2025 budget. Yaosca Smith hands the presentation to Mary Jones from One Digital to present the information on power point. She states the insurance increase comes in at 6.9 percent for active employees as well as retirees not yet 65 or pre-65. There are also Medicare eligible retirees who are on a separate plan. Their premiums will be increasing from \$211 to \$218 a month. Ms. Jones states after our assessment of the renewal and the claims data projected increase would come in at 10 percent and feels that the 6.9 percent from local choice is fair. There are two options on how to handle the increase, option A, to share the 6.9 percent with the employees. By doing that, the impact to the city would be \$266,124 and the impact to the employees would be \$63,756. The option B, reflects the city absorbing the entire increase of \$329,880 and the employees' premiums would remain flat, keeping the same plans that you have today. Ms. Jones also points out some enhancements to the plans effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. She goes over the increases associated with the individual plan options and notes that the change is dictated by the IRS. This is not something that the city is imposing or the TLC but this is an effort to remain compliant by offering a high deductible plan with that Health Savings Account. Ms. Jones discusses some changes, like additions and enhancements to the Health Coverage plans for the city. The recommendation is to continue with Local Choice with the three plans that you currently offer and we are recommending that the city absorb the increase and keep the employee premium flat.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to approve the City’s health insurance renewal with the city absorbing the cost of \$329,880.00 as stated in option B. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**R-4- Harassment Policy Amendments- Yaosca Smith, Human Resource Director.** Dr. Manker introduces Yaosca Smith to the podium to present the human resources policy and procedures manual with an introduction of a workplace harassment policy. Dr. Manker states she would like to propose a committee be set up with council members, HR director and myself to meet regularly to go over policies page by page because a lot of these policies require input from an attorney. Dr. Manker states reasons for bringing the information to the Regular council meetings. She states tonight’s presentation has already been reviewed by an employment attorney. Ms. Smith requests updates on the harassment policy, which were updated by Sans Anderson in 2022. She walks thru the updates and changes and that all harassment claims and cases should come to human resources or the city manager, not department directors.

Councilor Pelham makes a motion we approve this part of the Human Resources Handbook, chapter 5 and chapter 6 consolidated workplace harassment policy. Also, to add an annual review of all employees will be done and updated on an annual basis. Councilor Joyner seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes       |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes       |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes       |
| Councilor Holloway- | (Excused) |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes       |
| Council Harris-     | Yes       |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent)  |

**Motion Passes 5-0**

**R-5- Approval of Treasurers' MOU- Dr. Manker, City Manager.** Presents before council the standing MOU between the Treasurer and the City of Hopewell. The finance department is centralizing all functions. Today, the City Staff is recommending that the city approve the MOA between the Treasurer Office and the City of Hopewell, pending the hiring of an accountant for the finance department

Councilor Joyner makes a motion for the city to approve the MOA with the City Treasurers office and for the accountant to work in the finance department until the city hires an accountant that is hired and trained. Councilor Pelham seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Passes 6-0**

**R-6- Zoning Ordinance Amendment Article I (Definitions), IX-A (Downtown Central Business District, B-1), and XIV-B (Tourist/ Historic District, TH-1, and add Article XXIII (Historic Preservation) - Chris Ward, Director of Development.** Mr. Ward introduces Kelly Davis, Sr. Planner, who will be giving the presentation tonight. It was requested by the mayor last year that our office take a look at combining our two architectural review oversight boards into one. Ms. Davis presents zoning ordinance amendments. This is the first reading. She gives a brief background, talks about the scope of the updates, goes into each individual changes for each article, recommendations and next steps. She states definitions were being added to support Economic Development to the B1 zoning district, we also needed to add them to our definition section. Ms. Davis adds we do have a website where all the historic district information lives and the information is readily available on the city's website. Both Staff and Planning Commission recommend approval of this ordinance and would like to schedule the public hearing and second reading on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

**R-7-Ordinance for City Employment of city Officials- Danielle Smith, City Attorney.** Atty Smith states this information was requested from previous city attorney. This is her attempt to draft the ordinance in response to the original request. She provides information on the purpose of the ordinance. This is the first reading. She offers city council the Virginia Code section which applies to this section, 2.2-3107 and will defer to councils' decision whether to adopt it, continue it or amend it.

Councilor Pelham makes a motion to approve the city employment of city officials on the first reading effective March 12, 2024. Council Holloway seconds the motion.

**ROLL CALL**

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Vice Mayor Gore-  | Yes |
| Councilor Denton- | No  |

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | No       |
| Council Harris-     | No       |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Fails 3-3**

Councilor Denton makes a substitute motion to table R-7 until after the election.  
Councilor Joyner seconds the motion

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | No       |
| Councilor Denton-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Pelham-   | No       |
| Councilor Holloway- | No       |
| Councilor Joyner-   | Yes      |
| Council Harris-     | Yes      |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Fails 3-3**

Information was given and explained by Vice Mayor Gore and Councilor Holloway, expressing the need and legality surrounding the ordinance for City Employment of City Officials

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to call for the vote.

**ROLL CALL**

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Vice Mayor Gore-    | Yes      |
| Councilor Denton-   | No       |
| Councilor Pelham-   | Yes      |
| Councilor Holloway- | Yes      |
| Councilor Joyner-   | No       |
| Council Harris-     | No       |
| Mayor Partin-       | (Absent) |

**Motion Fails 3-3**

An outburst was made by a City of Hopewell resident Ed Hauser “If you scared say you scared” upon exiting the Council Chambers. Vice Mayor Gore notates the incident for the record and mentions that cannot happen again. Councilor Holloway requests the outburst be put into record.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Vice Mayor Gore motions to adjourn,

Yes- 6

No- 0

Respectfully Submitted,



**Brittani Williams, City Clerk**

  

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**Johnny Partin, Mayor**