

**February 3, 2022  
Special Meeting**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, was held Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 300 North Main Street, Hopewell, Virginia.

PRESENT:	Johnny Partin, Vice Mayor (Ward 3) Deborah Randolph, Councilor (Ward 1) Janice B. Denton, Councilor (Ward 5) Brenda S. Pelham, Councilor (Ward 6) Jasmine Gore, Councilor (Ward 4)
VIRTUAL:	Arlene Holloway, Councilor (Ward 2)
ABSENT:	Patience Bennett, Mayor (Ward 7)
STAFF	Mollie P. Bess, City Clerk J. March Altman, City Manager Mr. David Thompson, Hopewell City Development
GUEST:	Andrew McRoberts, Sands Anderson Law Firm

**ROLL CALL**

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

Vice Mayor Partin	-	present
Councilor Randolph	-	present
Councilor Holloway	-	present - virtual
Councilor Gore	-	present
Councilor Denton	-	present
Councilor Pelham	-	present

Vice Mayor Partin turned the Work Session meeting over to City Manager March Altman. Mr. Altman introduced Mr. Andrew McRoberts with Sands Anderson Law Firm to present their presentation on Redistricting.

Mr. McRoberts explained why we need districting, because the Va. Constitution and statutes require it. The census come out every 10 years and the following year when the census data is available to local governments you are required to redistrict. If you were all At Large you would not have to redistrict, but because you have Wards for districts that are some sub-part of the local government, you have to redistrict to make sure that you population is more or less the same, that you have not have geographic, demographic population types of changes that somehow trip over constitutional or statutory requirements. In reference to time, he encourages Council to wrap this up sooner rather than later.

Most of presentation is the nuts and bolts on how we redistrict. How and steps – you need to consider certain criteria, like where are the existing districts, what about incumbency, voting behavior and communities of interest. Those are all things that the courts have upheld as appropriate reconsiderations. There are also federal and Virginia constitutional requirements, like equal population – in the federal level

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it is called one person one vote, in Virginia it's more or less equal. Talked about contiguous and compact and you must not draw a district to discriminate on race. Contiguous does include territory across roads and streets and bodies of water. Equal Representation and racial fairness will also be discussed. Courts judge compactness in three different ways, which are included in your materials. Goal is equal population. It is 10% deviation from highest population to lowest population. Clearly observable boundaries – it is a main road or street, a road or highway that is part of the state or federal highway system, it is a river, stream or drainage feature so shown as a polygon boundary on the official census bureau map or it's any other natural, constructed or erected permanent visible feature which is shown on an official map. Follow your census blocks and you will be fine. Preclearance is addressed in your packet. No cracking and no packing is allowed! Discussed Virginia Rights of Voters Act. The Act itself is a covered practice. This Act requires detail provided in your packet. Effects of redistricting – ordinances take effect immediately, but do not cut short the term of any sitting member or require them to live in the newly-relocated district.

Councilor Randolph wanted clarification on the language minority group on page 32. A group of people who have a language different than the majority.

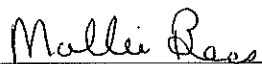
Councilor Gore asked for Mr. McRoberts to go over cracking as she had some concerns. He explained that cracking and packing was inappropriate treatment of minority groups. She is concerned her ward has cracking in this new redistricting map.

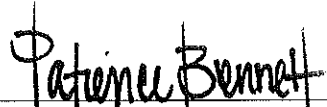
Mr. Altman then took over and handed out some additional maps for City Council to view, that are showing census block issues. Mr. David Thompson, with Hopewell City Development then took over the podium and went over the maps in detail with the Councilors. Much discussion was had by all of Council and the consensus was that Council would have a Work Session to address Redistricting again. Mr. Altman recommends as Mr. McRoberts did that we go with Option 2 and we advertise. We will need to advertise with a full page ad that includes the map. Our objective and target date is the first meeting in April when we would like to have this approved. Mr. Altman suggested a meeting outside of a Council meeting and then discuss at regular meeting on Tuesday, 2/8 as to when we would like to get back together. Mr. Altman stated he knew the concerns which are: draw without incumbent's consideration; Ramsey Avenue is concern, Mr. Partin' concern with compactness and number 3 was a no by Councilor Gore.

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Gore and seconded by Councilor Denton

Roll Call:	Vice Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Gore	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes
	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Councilor Randolph	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway		

Motion Passes: 6 – Ayes  
0 – No

  
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Mollie Bess, City Clerk

  
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Patience Bennett, Mayor