

**December 16, 2021
Special Meeting**

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, was held Tuesday, December 16, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 300 North Main Street, Hopewell, Virginia.

PRESENT: Patience Bennett, Mayor
 Johnny Partin, Vice Mayor (arrived late)
 Deborah Randolph, Councilor
 Jasmine Gore, Councilor
 Janice B. Denton, Councilor
 Brenda S. Pelham, Councilor (arrived at 6:05 pm)

ABSENT: Arlene Holloway, Councilor

 John M Altman, City Manager
 Peter Eliades, Acting City Attorney
 Mollie P. Bess, City Clerk

ROLL CALL

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

Mayor Bennett	present
Vice Mayor Partin	absent
Councilor Randolph	present
Councilor Holloway	absent
Councilor Gore	present (arrived at 6:40 p.m.)
Councilor Denton	present
Councilor Pelham	present

Moved to go into Closed Session by Councilor Randolph and seconded by Councilor Pelham pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-371 1 (A)(6) for the purpose of discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected and Va Code 2.2-371 1(a)(I) discussion of performance of specific public officers appointees, or employees of any public body.

Roll Call:	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	yes

Motion Passes: 4 -Ayes
 0 -No

Mayor Bennett wanted it noted for the record that Councilor Holloway has been excused from the meeting this evening and Vice Mayor Partin is trying to make it in.

CLOSED SESSION

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Motion to come out of closed by Vice Mayor Parton and seconded by Councilor Pelham

Roll Call:	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	yes
	Vice Mayor Pmtin	yes
	Councilor Gore	yes

Motion Passes: 6- Ayes
0 -No

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?

Roll Call:	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	yes
	Vice Mayor Pmtin	yes
	Councilor Gore	yes

Motion Passes: 6- Ayes
0 -No

SPECIAL MEETING

SB-1-Sheriff's Office Salary Increase Request

Meeting was turned over to Sheriff Kephart for his presentation on the Salary Increase requested for the Sheriff's Office. He stated that the Sheriff's office as the police and fire, have retention issues also. In the last two years the Sheriff's office has lost deputies to other jurisdictions, and it is almost always due to pay. Two deputies on staff, one 18 and one 19 years consecutively. After that, there is one deputy at five years and after him, nobody gets to the five year mark. Governor Nightham put forth a 20% increase and that increase is for base line entry level deputy sheriffs'. The compression angle to that plan is \$100 for every year of service. He stated he is seven on board positions, (that 20% will not go to any city funded full time or part time positions) out of those seven one is the sheriff, one the deputy and one the administrative assistant, so now we are down to four. So only four people that affects, their starting pay at that 20% will go to \$42,000. There is one deputy under that at 39,900, so the only increase is for that one deputy, the other are already above that. Suggest taking part time deputies putting them at a full time equivalent and they work by the hour, they do not get benefits. Councilor Gore asked to see the comparable to other jurisdictions. Would ask that this take affect January 1, 2022. Council would like the documentation about the potential 20% from the Governor. Numbers are on full staffing per Kephart, even though he does not have full staffing. Part time dispatchers are included in the \$30,000. City

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Manager Altman stated that if there is no language in the Governor's budget that prohibits what we can do, we can certainly look at using the money that came in to offset some of this cost. In recent years when the Governor has provided a pay increase they will have language that says the state offices will get a 5% increase however the local government has to have money in the budget for the raise also, so we end up footing a portion of that bill. Need to look at the language and the offset to see. Councilor Gore asked for explanation for public, how does the pay for this office typically work? City Manager explained that the 7 comp board positions are fully funded by the Virginia compensation board, those dollars are sent down to the city and we don't pay anything for those unless we supplement those positions. The other FTE's and part time's in that office, the City fully funds those. Assuming the 20% is going to flow through the comp board, then that 20% will only apply to those entry level comp board position in the Sheriff's office. Everything else is on the City's dollar, we cannot recapture all of that money based on the number of comp board positions that we have. We are just going to have to look at the language to be sure how to proceed. The 162,000 is the baseline and build in 2.5% every year. We would have to go to the unassigned fund balance that number was 7,203,072, police and fire was \$619,328 which leaves available \$6,583,744. The rainy day fund is a different pot of money. Annual increase with the 2.5 would be \$14,000.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Pelham that we approve the pay request for the Sheriff's Department as presented with the exceptions of removing the Sheriff, the Chief Deputy, the part-timers and the dispatchers and beginning on January 1, 2022. (Friendly amendment by Councilor Denton to include the part timers, Vice Mayor Partin and Councilor agreed to the friendly amendment.)

Substitute motion to put off vote for 3 months to see if the Governor will follow through and if he does not then revote – Substitute motion failed for lack of second.

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

Motion Passes: 6- Ayes
0 -No

SB-2 - Public Works Salary Proposal

Meeting was turned over to Mr. Watson for presentation and discussion of the Public Works Salary Proposal. Mr. Watson stated that he had reached out to 6 other localities for his salary study and that they all responded. Most are in line, not a lot of variation, so jobs had to be matched, what we did have is most of our guys especially our senior guys are 10 to 20% below their peers and that is because of salary compression. We have 7 out of 9 supervisors working at entry level, they have on average 9 years of experience average and they are at entry level. So to hire someone new, they can't be brought in any higher than entry level, so the whole department is at entry level, can't hire someone at more than the supervisor. We do have a deficiency issue in pay. There are challenges to retain our employees due to everyone being entry level, 60% of his staff are entry level. COLA's have not kept up. Would like to look at each position, see how long they have been here and give them a 2.5% increase for each year that

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they have been here. Most staff are at 9 years so that might end of being a 10% or 15% raise, it would be very individual. He has a five person management team, three people on the team are entry level, it is really difficult to inspire them to stay as they get better and better at their jobs. Vacancy rate will go down if we pay them more than entry level.

Motion made by Councilor Gore and seconded by Vice Mayor Partin to endorse the Public Works Salary proposal plan to be effective January, 2022 and to support the proposal for FY22-23 to be in your proposed budget for Council in the next budget cycle.

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

Motion Passes: 6-Ayes
0-No

Vice Mayor Partin was excused to leave the meeting per Mayor Bennett.

SB-3-Financial Report

Mr. Michael Teny, Finance Director proceeded to the podium to present the financial report. In going back to the November 9 meeting and had gotten through section I. In your report you will see the updates in red that have been made after the November 9 meeting. Payroll entry was discussed in detail by Council. PTO is broken into two buckets, you get one bucket July 1 and the next bucket January 1. If you spend it all you are out until your next bucket. If you leave, it is pro-rated out based on what you have earned. Councilor Gore requested all DEQ information be brought forward and discussed at a future meeting. Are we compliant? Councilor Randolph - Have talked for 3 years about changing our billing system to go from third party to be taken in house (Wastewater), when will that happen? CM wants to get with Attorney to get in place doing the storm water fee bill on the real estate tax bill, that would take one of those out. Councilor Randolph would like to see from CM a written plan for Council to view.

Motion made by Councilor Denton and seconded by Council Gore to adjourn.


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

Motion Passes: 6-Ayes
0-No

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Meeting Adjourned


Patience Bennett, Mayor


Mollie Bess, City Clerk