

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD MARCH 14, 2023

A regular council meeting of the Hopewell City Council was convened on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 300 North Main Street, Hopewell, Virginia.

PRESENT: John B. Partin, Jr., Mayor, Ward 3
Jasmine E. Gore, Vice Mayor, Ward 4
Rita Joyner, Councilor, Ward 1
Michael Harris, Councilor, Ward 2
Janice B. Denton, Councilor, Ward 5
Brenda S. Pelham, Councilor, Ward 6
Dominic Holloway, Councilor, Ward 7

Dr. Concetta Manker, Interim City Manager
Danielle Smith, City Attorney
Alyson Reyna, City Clerk Pro Tem

ROLL CALL

Mayor Partin opened the meeting. Roll call was taken, as follows:

Mayor Partin	-	present
Councilor Joyner	-	present
Councilor Harris	-	present
Councilor Denton	-	present

Quorum established

CLOSED SESSION

Councilor Joyner moved to go into Closed Session pursuant to Va. Code Section § 2.2-3711 (A) consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel and to the extent of such discussion will be aided thereby, (A)(7) for the protection of the privacy of individuals personal matters not related to public business. Councilor Harris seconded the motion.

Roll call:	Councilor Joyner	-	yes
	Councilor Harris	-	yes
	Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes

Motion passed 4-0

During Closed Session, Councilor Holloway, Councilor Pelham, and Vice Mayor Gore arrived at the Council meeting.

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING

Councilor Holloway moved for Council to come out of Closed Session. Councilor Harris seconded the motion.

Roll call: Councilor Joyner - yes
Councilor Harris - yes
Mayor Partin - yes
Vice Mayor Gore - yes
Councilor Denton - yes
Councilor Pelham - yes
Councilor Holloway - yes

Motion passed 7-0

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?

Roll call: Councilor Joyner - yes
Councilor Harris - yes
Mayor Partin - yes
Vice Mayor Gore - yes
Councilor Denton - yes
Councilor Pelham - yes
Councilor Holloway - yes

Motion passed 7-0

REGULAR MEETING

Roll call: Councilor Joyner - present
Councilor Harris - present
Mayor Partin - present
Vice Mayor Gore - present
Councilor Denton - present
Councilor Pelham - present
Councilor Holloway - present

Prayer was led by Reverend Danny Tucker, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Partin.

AMEND/ADOPT AGENDA

Councilor Holloway moved to adopt the regular meeting agenda. Councilor Joyner seconded the motion.

Roll call:

Councilor Joyner	-	yes
Councilor Harris	-	yes
Mayor Partin	-	yes
Vice Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	
Councilor Holloway	-	yes

Motion passed 6-0

AMEND/ADOPT CONSENT AGENDA

Councilor Holloway moved to adopt the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Joyner.

Roll call:

Councilor Joyner	-	yes
Councilor Harris	-	yes
Mayor Partin	-	yes
Vice Mayor Gore	-	no
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	
Councilor Holloway	-	yes

Motion passed 5-1

INFORMATION/PRESENTATIONS

Finance Report – Michael Terry, Director of Finance, delivered the financial report to City Council. He detailed that the audit team had faced delays due to COVID-19, lack of total implementation of MUNIS, and policy changes. Mr. Terry thanked Council for the aid to hire assistance to the audit team. Mr. Terry noted that the City of Hopewell was in compliance with DEQ regarding the landfill. He thanked the City Manager for her help with keeping timelines for the budget cycle on track.

Councilor Joyner asked Mr. Terry about delays with post-implementation system issues. She noted that this was due to a lack of staffing, despite having jobs posted. Councilor Joyner suggested that lack of staffing for the audit teams to be considered as one of the reasons for delays in the completion of the audits.

Vice Mayor Gore asked about an item in section 2 of Mr. Terry’s report, regarding vendors not being paid via electronic fund transfers (EFTs). Mr. Terry explained this was due to software and/or user error. He noted that the online payments were a service to vendors and supportive to staff.

Police Report – Major Donald Reid, Interim Chief of Police, gave the crime summary report. He noted a reduction of major crime of 5% year-to-date. Major Reid also noted the number of drug overdoses and explained that number was consistent with the previous 5 years. He highlighted success that led to an arrest on March 6, 2023. Law enforcement officer presence with the assistance of the Virginia State Police led to a noticeable reduction in weekend crime.

Councilor Harris asked if Hopewell Police Department had been in contact with the management from Summit Apartments. Major Reid stated that an off-duty officer was set to be stationed at the complex per management request. Councilor Harris asked if it was going to be communicated to residents that police presence was in the complex area; Major Reid stated that it could be made publicly aware for the residents through the apartment complex management.

Vice Mayor Gore stated that she was happy to see the opioid overdoses reported out, but was still seeking numbers regarding shots fired. She noted she wanted to see this data entered into a software to generate a heat-map of shots fired. Major Reid noted that something along that request could be featured in future crime summary report-outs. Vice Mayor Gore stated she was working with Chris Ward, Director of Planning and Development, to compare the locations of shots fired with nuisance properties.

Councilor Pelham asked if the increased police presence over the weekend had helped with the reduction of crime, and asked whether the LED lights made a difference. Major Reid stated that the police presence had helped, but noted that he did not notice any difference in lighting according to his personal discretion.

Councilor Holloway asked if the newly implemented technologies had aided in criminal apprehension. Major Reid said yes, there were three confirmed arrests as a direct result. He expressed that he was looking forward to the increase of cameras in high crime areas.

Mayor Partin asked if there was additional assistance that City Council could provide to Hopewell Police Department at this time. Major Reid suggested waiting for implementation of other technologies at that moment, stating that it was a learning period to see what works best and to be fiscally responsible. Major Reid stated more personnel may be needed to cover the new technologies, but that more time was needed to establish that need.

Councilor Denton expressed that she was disturbed by the number of opioid overdoses year-to-date. Major Reid noted that these numbers were on par with last year, citing the unfortunate nature of the opioid crisis. Both agreed the subject was bothersome.

Mayor Partin thanked Major Reid for his time.

Engineering Project Overview – Maurice Wilkins, City Engineer, presented to City Council an overview of projects in the Department of Engineering. He reviewed the public forum held on March 13, 2023 regarding the new bike lanes within the city and noted that some changes may be made moving forward. After Mr. Wilkins overviewed a few projects, Vice Mayor Gore asked if Mr. Wilkins could report out any projects that may still require funding rather than going by each line item. Mr. Wilkins explained that most of the projects had already received funding. Councilor Pelham asked about the Cattail Creek Drainage Crossing project funding. Mr. Wilkins noted that 25% of the cost would need to be furnished by the City of Hopewell.

Councilor Holloway asked why Moultrie Avenue was 80% funded by the City of Hopewell. Mr. Wilkins noted that the project was implemented before his time. Mayor Partin explained the previous engineer saved monies for a few fiscal years to furnish the funding for the project.

Councilor Pelham asked about the locations of the new LED lights. Mr. Wilkins stated the first area they were implemented was in the Five Forks area, but noted the first iteration of lights were not bright enough. He retracted the work requests from Dominion Energy for more of the 3,000 Kelvin lights, and requested 4,000 Kelvin lights.

Vice Mayor Gore asked why the 3,000 Kelvin lights in the areas noted to not be bright enough weren't the first to be replaced. Mr. Wilkins explained that due to Dominion Energy back-logs and budget constraints, the 3,000 Kelvin lights in the high crime areas would remain until replacements were available.

Mayor Partin thanked Mr. Wilkins for his time and presentation.

REGULAR BUSINESS

R-1 – Major Donald Reid requested that City Council allow Hopewell Police Department to apply for DCJS ARPA grant, requiring no monetary match, in the amount of \$633,000. The application was due by March 24, 2023. Councilor Denton moved to allow Hopewell PD to apply for the DCJS ARPA grant, with no matching funds. Vice Mayor Gore seconded the motion.

Roll call:	Councilor Joyner	-	yes
	Councilor Harris	-	yes
	Mayor Partin	-	yes
	Vice Mayor Gore	-	yes
	Councilor Denton	-	yes
	Councilor Pelham	-	yes
	Councilor Holloway	-	yes

Motion passed 7-0

CLOSING COMMENTS

Councilor Holloway thanked citizens both present and watching virtually, and noted that Council meetings are open to the public. He explained that social media can breed misinformation, and to see the meetings for oneself to get the correct information. Councilor Holloway also noted that the bike lanes were voted on in 2018 by a different City Council, including sending out a survey to citizens at the time.

Councilor Pelham suggested that citizens interested in receiving notifications regarding city happenings, meetings, and information reach out to the City Clerk's office to be added to the FOIA list. She also thanked the school system for their annual Fine Arts festival.

Councilor Denton agreed with Councilor Holloway about the new bike lanes, and stated that she was being emailed, called, and addressed by citizens out in public. She reviewed the meeting held March 13, 2023 regarding the bike lanes held by the City Manager and City Engineer, and explained that only nine (9) citizens came to the meeting. She explained that some progress was made, and hoped to see improvement with the project.

Councilor Joyner thanked Maurice Wilkins and the VDOT engineer that was present at the meeting regarding bike lanes, but did note that there may have been flaws in the design of the bike lanes. She said the City Manager would be working with Mr. Wilkins to implement changes on the project. Councilor

Joyner expressed that often City Council was working on things behind the scenes, and explained that currently she and the City Manager were looking at ordinances to improve neighborhoods in Hopewell. She encouraged citizens to join Neighborhood Watch, and to look into Boards and Commissions to help improve the community.

Councilor Harris stated that his personal cell phone number was on his business card, so that any persons looking to speak to him would be able to reach him no matter what.

Vice Mayor Gore noted the Crater Workforce office moved across the street from the Home Base Federal Credit Union, and mentioned that Crater Workforce was open to Hopewell residents for career coaching, GEDs, and other services. She noted that March would be the last month she would be Chairman of the LGAC board for the state of Virginia, and explained that there would be more environmental support for the Chesapeake Bay and green workforce initiatives to come. Vice Mayor Gore thanked Council for the continued support of OneHopewell, and named some of the services and partners to be rolled out in the community resource center. She additionally thanked Councilor Joyner for mentioning the ordinances regarding nuisance properties.

Mayor Partin thanked Hopewell PD, Sherriff, and state and regional partners. He expressed excitement regarding the technology updates and the grant for school resource officer, and offered any additional help our local law enforcement officers may need.

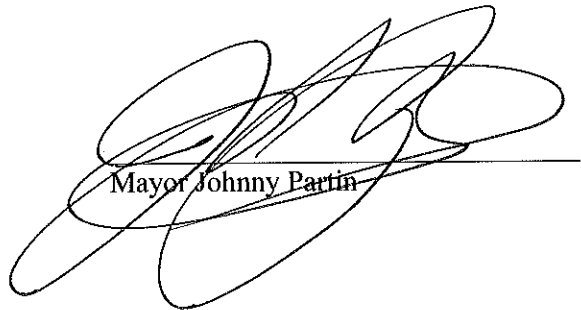
ADJOURN

Councilor Holloway motioned to adjourn the meeting.

AYE – 7
NO – 0

The meeting was adjourned.


Alyson Reyna, City Clerk Pro Tem


Mayor Johnny Partin