

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD MARCH 16, 2023**

A special council meeting of the Hopewell City Council was convened on Thursday, March 16, 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
Vice Mayor Gore	-	present
Councilor Joyner	-	present
Councilor Harris	-	present
Councilor Denton	-	absent
Councilor Pelham	-	absent
Councilor Holloway	-	present

**Quorum established.**

An attempt to contact Councilor Pelham was made by the City Clerk, however no contact was established.

**BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Dr. Concetta Manker, Interim City Manager, gave a breakdown of the budget work sessions to City Council—explaining that departments had a presentation time limit, and to please allow department directors the time to complete their presentations before asking questions. All presentations were for the discussion of budget increases and required no action at the time of the meeting.

**City Attorney** – Danielle Smith, City Attorney, asked for an increase to cover the associated costs of the office of the City Attorney, including the increased prices of office supplies. Councilor Holloway asked about the cost of furniture listed as a line-item. Danielle Smith explained that this was for filing cabinets to house sensitive legal documents.

**City Manager** – Dr. Concetta Manker, Interim City Manager, noted that the only increase for the City Manager’s budget was to include the salary for an Assistant City Manager. She then covered the following requested budget increases for the positions held by those in abutting offices:

**Economic Development and Tourism** – Dr. Manker asked for this budget to be reinstated for the coming fiscal year.

**Communications and Government Relations** – Dr. Manker asked for no increase in the original funding amount.

Vice Mayor Gore noted that “Tourism” was under its own line item, and that it should be consolidated with “Economic Development” in MUNIS. Dr. Manker agreed and noted that she would work on the consolidation moving forward.

**Commonwealth Attorney** – Rick Newman, Commonwealth’s Attorney, explained the budget increases for the Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office and Victim Witness protection services.

**Development** – Chris Ward, Director of Development, noted some budget increases due to inflation and the lease program for new vehicles. He also noted the increase in postage for the rental inspection program notices. Mr. Ward also noted some projects Development would like to implement.

Vice Mayor Gore asked how many vehicles would be needed for the rental inspection program. Chris Ward stated that there would only be one vehicle and one inspector. Vice Mayor Gore asked Mr. Ward if he could include the funding for one additional staff person and an additional vehicle. Chris Ward stated that he would look at the cost for these additional programs and would have an answer for City Council.

**Finance** – Michael Terry, Director of Finance, presented to City Council a request for budget increase to bring the Assistant Payroll Specialist from part time to full time, and to cover the salary for a part-time Procurement Assistant.

Vice Mayor Gore asked Mr. Terry asked what changed from the discussion to bring the Finance Department whole to the budget session that there was a need for a part-time Procurement Assistant. Mr. Terry stated that the workload on the full-time Procurement Officer had grown over time, and that employee was also assisting CSA with purchase orders.

**Fire & Rescue** – Fire Chief, Benjamin Ruppert, gave an overview of the Fire and Rescue staffing deficiencies. He asked for the salary cost for a Deputy Chief, and noted that the position was approved in 2017 but had not been funded since then. Chief Ruppert also asked for an EMS Captain due to the lack of solely EMS personnel. Chief Ruppert then explained the remaining budget increases due to inflation and other operational costs.

Vice Mayor Gore acknowledged that the requested FY24 budget for Fire and Rescue was the highest she had seen so far, and thanked Chief Ruppert for bringing some of the deficiencies to the attention of City Council. Vice Mayor Gore asked what was different between EMS Captain and Deputy Chief. Chief Ruppert explained that an EMS Captain would focus more on the appropriate equipment, the right certifications, and the most up-to-date trainings for EMS versus the Deputy Chief.

Councilor Harris asked if there would be shared cost for utilizing a repaired burn building, either initially or as a service fee. Chief Ruppert mentioned Colonial Heights putting money forward for the repairs. Mayor Partin thanked Chief Ruppert and noted that he appreciated the idea of having neighboring

localities paying into the burn building in order to utilize it. Mayor Partin then excused himself, citing preparations for his sister's wedding.

**Information Technology** – Dr. Concetta Manker, Interim City Manager, presented the IT budget, and named some new requests from the IT department, including MUNIS annual increases, new Police camera maintenance, and an IT dedicated vehicle. She noted other IT needs such as new servers, Microsoft Office Suites, and operational fees.

Vice Mayor Gore asked why the cost of the servers is split over two years. Dr. Manker explained that servers are expensive to replace, but could be covered easily if the cost was split over that timeframe.

**Police** – Kim Parson, Administrative Support Manager, gave a break-down of the Police budget increase requests. Some of the requested increases included travel funds for officers to participate in trainings, technology updates, equipment upgrades, and new vehicles.

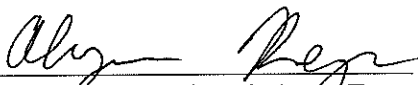
**Public Works** – Monique Robertson, Interim Director of Public Works, presented the budget increases for Public Works, Refuse, Cemetery, and Stormwater. Ms. Robertson noted some of the increases for Public Works including service contract fees, vehicle costs, and inflation costs. For Refuse, the absorption of the service contract and the leasing of vehicles were included in the budget increases.

Though no budget increase was requested for Stormwater, there was a personnel request for a field supervisor to take the load off of the administrative staff. Monique Robertson also noted the request for Senior Public Works Maintenance Specialist, Lead Fleet Mechanic, and Public Works Crew Leader. There was some discussion about the need for new vehicles, and the purchase options for said vehicles.

**Engineering** – Maurice Wilkins, Interim City Engineer, gave an overview of the needs of the Engineering Department, detailing the Emergency Vehicle Bridge Load Inspection. This item was scheduled for action on March 28<sup>th</sup>. His other increase requests were regarding city road repairs.

**ADJOURN**

At 9:30 PM, the meeting was automatically adjourned.

  
Alyson Reyna, City Clerk Pro Tem

  
Johnny Partin, Mayor