

MINUTES OF THE MAY 23, 2023 CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

A regular meeting of the Hopewell City Council was convened on Tuesday May 23, 2023
at 7:30pm

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

Roll Call: Mayor Partin – Yes
Councilor Denton – Yes
Councilor Holloway – Yes
Councilor Joyner – Yes
Councilor Harris – Yes

Motion Pass 5-0

CLOSED MEETING

SUGGESTED MOTION: Move to go into closed meeting pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) to discuss and consider personnel matters, including board and commission appointments; the assignment and performance of specific appointee and employees of the City Council, and to the extent such discussion will be aided thereby, (A) (5) to discuss a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry.

Roll Call: Mayor Partin – Yes
Councilor Denton – Yes
Councilor Holloway – Yes
Councilor Joyner – Yes
Councilor Harris – Yes

Motion Pass 5-0

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING

Councilor Holloway motions to come out of closed session. Motion is seconded by Councilor Joyner

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 in closed meeting?

Roll Call: Mayor Partin – Yes
Councilor Denton – Yes
Councilor Holloway – Yes
Councilor Joyner – Yes
Councilor Harris – Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to move Shameka Lewis to District 19 Board and Misty Pippin to the Board of Equalization, Councilor Harris seconded the motion.

Roll Call: Mayor Partin – Yes
Councilor Denton – Yes
Councilor Holloway – Yes

Councilor Joyner – Yes
Councilor Harris – Yes

Motion Passes 5-0

WORK SESSION:

Mr. Ward explains to council the annual salary and benefits package for each inspector is \$70,380. Chris Ward provided a chart explaining the number of rentals by zone and Ward. Ward states that a person wanting to open and operate a business, will have to pay a fee. They will have to apply for a business zoning approval, FCC registration and pay the business license fee (minimum \$155). The moratorium on evictions for the state of Virginia expired on June 30, 2022. There was an initial inspection fee of \$100 dollars and a subsequent fee of \$100 re inspection fees per violation. Councilor Holloway asked questions regarding unresolved issues from tenants when out of state landlords are not able to be reached. Mr. Ward responds to the questions stating they use the address on file to reach out to them. Unresolved major violations that a landlord failed to make repairs or corrections, a judge can assess a charge of \$500-\$2,500. Realtor Association requested a meeting after the January work session city council meeting. They requested if city council would consider adding exemptions for properties that were owned by someone or a business who was certified. Ward advised it would be best practice from a department standpoint to not allow any exemptions the first year

REGULAR MEETING

Roll Call:

Mayor Partin –	Yes
Vice Mayor Gore –	Yes
Councilor Denton –	Yes
Councilor Holloway –	Yes
Councilor Joyner –	Yes
Councilor Harris –	Yes
Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Pass 7-0

Prayer by Reverend Danny Tucker, followed by the Pledge of allegiance to the US flag led by Councilor Denton

Motion to amend/adopt the regular meeting agenda

Councilor Holloway moves to adopt the regular agenda, Councilor Pelham seconded.

<u>Roll Call:</u>	Mayor Partin –	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore –	Yes
	Councilor Denton –	Yes
	Councilor Holloway –	Yes
	Councilor Joyner –	Yes
	Councilor Harris –	Yes
	Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Pass – 7-0

Motion to amend/adopt the consent agenda

Councilor Pelham moves to adopt the consent agenda, Vice Mayor Gore seconded.

<u>Roll Call:</u>	Mayor Partin –	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore –	Yes
	Councilor Denton –	Yes
	Councilor Holloway –	Yes
	Councilor Joyner –	Yes
	Councilor Harris –	Yes
	Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Pass – 7-0

INFORMATION/PRESENTATION

1. Boy Scouts- Vice Mayor Gore Introduces Boy Scouts Ms. Tunsel. The presentation was on crime and gun violence in the area. The children gave ideas on how they could stop crime and gun violence. A cartoon PowerPoint was created to send a message about the gun violence. After the video was played, city council asked the Boy Scout troops different questions about scouting and what their favorite thing was about it. The scouts responded with multiple different responses. A picture was taken at the end of the presentation of the Boy scouts and City council members.

PUBLIC HEARING

PH1-Dog Boarding, Chris Ward, Planning and development Presentation from Downtown Pups, LLC.

The owners are requesting the Conditional use permit application be approved tonight. The Conditional Use permit application states the proper use of the disposal of waste, noise level and odor within the hours of operation. The following conditions apply: The CUP is granted exclusively to the applicants. The City Staff will provide a written report every six months for two years to Planning commission, and city council, to relay any issues. The operation will keep a tally of the number of dogs on site and any given Time. Outside run area will be limited to the hours of use between 7am and 7pm. Indoor cleaning regiment according to the code of Virginia. Dog pickup and drop off would be between the hours of 6:30am and 7pm. Similar cleaning regiment as previous listed but for the outside area, twice daily. Maintain adequate refuse container and double bag solid waste. store in interior bins. Interior liquid waste would be collected with absorbent material. Cleaners must be pet safe and bio degradable. Noise must not exceed 65 decibels. Applicants gave a short presentation explaining a little more detail of the design and floor plan.

Councilor Holloway moves to extend the meeting until closed session is finished seconded by Vice Mayor Gore

Roll Call: John B. Partin – Yes
 Vice Mayor Gore – Yes
 Councilor Denton – Yes
 Councilor Holloway – Yes
 Councilor Joyner – Yes
 Councilor Harris – Yes
 Councilor Pelham- Yes

Motion passes 7-0

Councilor Denton makes a motion to approve the CUP Application to add overnight dog boarding immediately, Councilor Holloway seconded the motion with a friendly amendment to add that condition 10 will read as Solid animal waste generated from the pet shop and kennel operations both inside and outside shall be stored properly to minimize odor.

Roll Call: John B. Partin – Yes
 Vice Mayor Gore – Yes
 Councilor Denton – Yes
 Councilor Holloway – Yes
 Councilor Joyner – Yes
 Councilor Harris – Yes
 Councilor Pelham- Yes

Motion passes 7-0

PH2- Tax Rate Resolution for Personal Property Tax, Business Property, and Machine and Tools.

Dr. Manker wants to propose the tax rate for 2023. On April 25, 2023 we approved the real estate tax. Tonight's meeting asks to approve the resolution for personal property tax, machinery and tools meals and lodging. It is proposed to adopt M&T rate t \$3.10 per 100 dollars of assessed value, tangible personal property of 3.50 per 100 of assessed value, meals and tax rate of 6% remaining constant, lodging tax 8% for calendar year 2023. Staff recommends action tonight to provide ample time for the production of mailing in tax bills. The property taxes proposed for this budget is to remain the same. Tonight's hearing was advertised in the Richmond Times and the progress index.

Vice Mayor Gore makes a motion to postpone tax rate resolution for personal property tax, business property tax, and machine and tools tax until May 25, 2023. Councilor Joyner seconded.

<u>Roll Call:</u>	John B. Partin –	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore –	Yes
	Councilor Denton –	Yes
	Councilor Holloway –	Yes
	Councilor Joyner –	Yes
	Councilor Harris –	Yes
	Councilor Pelham -	Yes

Motion passes 7-0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Anthony Zevgolts Has a serious and grave concern about how the real estate Property tax was assessed. He does not believe it met all the requirements of the VA state law. He stated Rates have to be advertised 10 days in advance. The believes the public was not notified prior to the tax rate adjustment increase. A tax rate increase of \$500 or more must have all council members present to his belief. The rate must also be advertised for 30 days in the local newspaper and it was not advertised so he believed. Zevgolts states there have been a lot of mistakes because of high turnover.

He says he has no idea what is on the consent agenda today that was adopted. It was not posted by video and it was not posted by notice at the entry.

Councilor Pelham moves to extend Mr. Zevgolis to continue speaking, seconded by Vice Mayor Gore.

<u>Roll Call:</u>	John B. Partin –	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore –	Yes
	Councilor Denton –	Yes
	Councilor Holloway –	Yes
	Councilor Joyner –	Yes
	Councilor Harris –	Yes
	Councilor Pelham-	Yes

Motion Passes 7-0

Mr. Zevgolis continues to speak about the tax rate issues he believes to be incorrect. He stated you have to show the tax rate and any decrease or increase, and it must be advertised in the paper. He stated a lot of mistakes were made and he says the state allows council to put the tax rate back to make it 1 % more than what they got the year before if they fail to follow the procedures. He stated when taxes are raised there must be two readings and explained why two readings are necessary. He mentioned that second readings should never be on a consent agenda. He believes nothing that is controversial should be on a consent agenda. He ended his speech saying that there should be no restrictions for councilors and every year when VA law changes councilors should attend.

Second Speaker Josh Shelton steps up.

Josh Shelton Spoke about the homeless people in Hopewell and says he has a solution to resolve it. He stated he is willing to donate his time and energy to resolve the homeless situation. He suggested vacant buildings can be built up to make it

efficient enough for homeless to stay indoors. He intends to come back in front of Council with a proposed plan to assist with the homeless.

Claude Ward Lives in Enon. He suggests looking at the properties that have the problems instead of throwing a blanket on them. He believes inspections should be every 4 to 5 year cycles and not every time a tenant leaves out.

Regular Business

R1- Hopewell Public School Arts in the City Parks

Tabitha Martinez, Hopewell Public Schools- Arts in the City Parks. Children created banners to post in the parks to remind people to be more cognoscente of children playing in the area. Ms. Martinez presented the council with details of the banners that have been created from the children of the schools of Hopewell. They would like them incorporated in all of the city’s parks. They would like to have them approved tonight so they can be posted in the parks by June 6. Councilors asked questions to Ms. Martinez in relation to the time of how long they will be there, the cost, and how they can be posted. All questions were responded to.

Vice Mayor Gore moves to approve the banners being displayed in the parks within the city of Hopewell, Councilor Joyner seconded it. Councilor Pelham makes a friendly amendment to have the banners displayed on kids in the park day annually.

<u>Roll Call:</u>	John B. Partin –	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore –	Yes
	Councilor Denton –	Yes
	Councilor Holloway –	Yes
	Councilor Joyner –	Yes
	Councilor Harris –	Yes
	Councilor Pelham-	Yes

R2- Safe Streets Grant, Maurice Wilkins.

The City of Hopewell was given consent for “Safe Streets for All” federal grant for \$196,800 last year. He

is asking for allowance to get the grant from the federal side in the amount of \$196,800 with a 20 percent match on the city side of 49,200, for a total amount of \$246,000. He has talked with the department of planning, public works and EDA to form a team to carry out the grant if it is approved tonight. He brought the necessary documents for the City Manager to sign tonight. Councilors made statements and asked questions to Mr. Wilkins in reference to the grant and the issues they have heard throughout their ward. Councilors mentioned the bike lane that causes issues within the city and talks about the many complaints they have received. Mr. Wilkins goes into further detail discussing the process for re-paving, and re-painting lines that are on the pavement.

Councilor Holloway makes a motion to appropriate \$49,200 from salary savings as a match grant for the Safe Streets Grant and to appropriate the total \$246,000 to the fund and the action plan Mayor Partin seconds the motion

<u>Roll Call:</u>	John B. Partin –	Yes
	Vice Mayor Gore –	Yes
	Councilor Denton –	Yes
	Councilor Holloway –	Yes
	Councilor Joyner –	Yes
	Councilor Harris –	Yes
	Councilor Pelham -	Yes

Motion passes 7-0

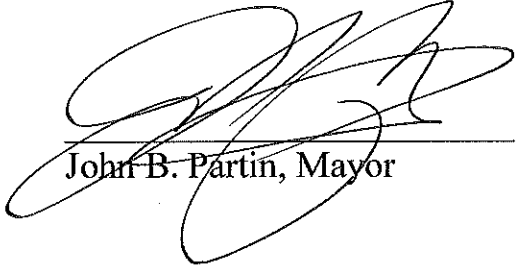
Councilors give closing comments.

Councilor Holloway motions to adjourn.

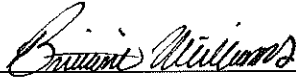
AYE: 7

NAY: 0

AJOURNMENT:



John B. Partin, Mayor



Brittani Williams, City Clerk