

**Special Meeting
June 30, 2022**

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD JUNE 30, 2022

A Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, was held on Thursday, June 30, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Patience Bennett, Mayor, Ward 7
 John B. Partin, Vice Mayor, Ward 3
 Deborah B. Randolph, Councilor, Ward 1
 Arlene Holloway, Councilor, Ward 2
 Jasmine E. Gore, Councilor, Ward 4
 Janice B. Denton, Councilor, Ward 5
 Brenda S. Pelham, Councilor, Ward 6

John M. Altman, City Manager
Cynthia E. Hudson, Acting City Attorney
Mollie P. Bess, City Clerk

Mayor Bennett opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and requested a roll call.

ROLL CALL:	Mayor Bennett	present
	Vice Mayor Partin	present
	Councilor Randolph	present
	Councilor Holloway	present
	Councilor Gore	present
	Councilor Denton	present
	Councilor Pelham	present

Mayor Bennett requested a motion to approve or amend the special meeting agenda.

Motion made by Vice Mayor Partin and seconded by Councilor Gore to adopt the Special Meeting Agenda. At the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	yes
	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	yes
	Councilor Holloway	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion passes 7-0

FY 2023 BUDGET

Mr. John M. Altman, City Manager, presented the resolution to the corresponding document that illustrated the cuts that were made at last night's budget meeting. The total amount of cuts is a little bit more than what is shown on the document. What was not captured was the discussion of the Economic Development Division. The amount increased from \$659,000 to \$698,000 (just under \$700,000) in cuts, still looking at a \$1.3 million shortfall. He further stated that there are some way to plug the holes.

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Councilor Pelham asked if the budget cuts included the schools, and Mr. Altman answered affirmatively; the schools reduced their budget requests from \$14.5 to \$13 million. Those dollars are not reflected on this document because they are not available today, but will be after the books close. Those dollars will become available in July. He suggested that if they want to use the funds, they have to make an adjustment with those dollars in July or August.

There was a discussion between Mr. Altman and Councilor Gore regarding the language added to Section 24, in the second paragraph: "The City Manager is authorized only upon approval of City Council to transfer between funds from the unassigned fund balance of any of the rainy day fund should the fiscal conditions and circumstances prescribed that. ." The rest of it is the same.

Returning to discussion regarding the budget cuts, Mr. Altman talked about the two Economic Development items, and money to the EDA (Economic Development Authority). \$20,000 goes to EDA in the budget.

Councilor Randolph stated that this is the Legacy Grant money, \$20,000 annually for fa9ade improvement to disburse out of code for the Legacy Grant.

Returning to the discussion regarding the shortfall (\$700,000 in cuts), Mr. Altman discussed ways to address shortfall and the addition of \$125,000 created by M & T (machine and tools), which puts the shortfall at about \$1,175,000. He also discussed ways to address the shortfall, such as using the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds; encouragement from the Treasury Department to use those funds to pay competitive salaries (as was done for Police, Fire, Public Works and Sheriff's departments); use the rainy day fund. The policy for use of the rainy day fund is 10% of the anticipated general fund budget, and then there are anticipated revenues that will be coming in, such as personal property taxes. Mr. Altman then gave the floor to Council for any questions.

Councilor Gore had two questions. First question was based on a previous conversation with Mr. Altman regarding no more creation of part-time positions because he wanted to freeze everything; she wanted to know if this was reflected in the resolution. Mr. Altman stated that he will defer to the City Attorney for this question, but Council can make this part of the motion as opposed to part of the resolution.

Councilor Gore's second question regarded replenishment of the Communications line item. She asked Mr. Michael Terry, Finance Director, if this was put back into the budget. This was in reference to the \$21,000/\$3,000 per ward line item. Mr. Terry answered affirmatively. Councilor Gore thanked everyone and stated that she was fine with using ARPA funds, and that Council can demonstrate and prove that they are as fiscally responsible as can be.

Councilor Pelham's question referenced page 2 of the budget. She asked if the City was up to \$1.1 million and had a shortfall of almost \$2 million they why transfer \$1.3 of ARPA funds; should be less than that. Mr. Altman explained that it would be less because of overlooking the M & T money, and also being able to increase the tax revenue piece and adjust down the ARPA money. Councilor Pelham asked if this could be done now, and if the Police Department part-time position will be added to the budget.

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After a lengthy discussion, Vice Mayor Partin moved to approve the budget resolution as presented with the following changes: add the part-time detective for the Police Department; cut the PART (Petersburg Area Regional Tourism) outside agency funding; prevent the creation of part-time positions without City Council approval; add the use of ARPA funds to fill the remaining budget gap. His motion was seconded by Councilor Randolph. The floor was opened for questions from Council.

Councilor Denton asked the Vice Mayor if he had a figure of what he was adding back to the budget. Vice Mayor Partin replied that he was not adding figures but more savings to the budget, so that it's using less ARPA funds, the PART funding is over \$40,000, the part-time detective is about \$34-\$35,000. She wanted to be sure that the \$5.8 million for Water Renewal was taken out of the budget. Mr. Altman assures her that the project was set aside.

Councilor Randolph stated that she was glad that ARPA was being discussed; glad that the City was saving \$700,000; agrees with Councilor Gore on the detective piece. She stated that he had no issues with looking at PART or any other outside organization. She asked Mr. Altman to elaborate on the City being a member of PART and what that means.

Mr. Altman had a brief discussion about PART; that Hopewell is one of the member jurisdictions, and the current annual funding is \$30,000. An increase of \$40,500 was requested as a result of Chesterfield County leaving PART and creating a void. Every member jurisdiction was asked to increase their funding level. PART provides access and tours done in Hopewell; funded tours downtown and at Westin Manor; provides reach to a larger crowd through regional tourism. He asked Vice Mayor Partin of his motion, when he stated in the motion to cut the PART funding, was he speaking of the full \$40,000 or of no longer being a member jurisdiction. Mr. Altman added that because PART is one of the eligible expenses, the ARPA funds can be used for PART; he asked if the City could continue funding at least the \$30,000, deferring to Council's decision.

Council Pelham agrees that Hopewell should remain as a member jurisdiction of PART and maybe leave that money in the budget or deal with it through use of the rescue money. She asked Vice Mayor Partin if her friendly amendment of leaving the monies in for PART is accepted. He asked if this was in reference to the \$30,000, and she answered yes. He said that this was fine.

Meanwhile, Mr. Altman's email search for exact amount of money for the part-time detective position resulted in the amount of \$33,280.

After a lengthy discussion, Vice Mayor Partin called for a vote on the motion.

Councilor Pelham had a point of information to share. She requested that budget for school be separated from the rest of the budget; by virtue of employment on the administrative team of Hopewell Public Schools, it's in her best interest not to vote on the school budget. She asked Mayor Bennett to be excused from voting on the budget.

Cynthia Hudson, City Attorney, opined that a motion needs to be voted on prior to Vice Mayor Partin's motion. The proper motion is to divide the subject matter so that the school board budget may be voted on separately in order for Councilor Pelham to recuse herself from that part of the budget; this can be done by consensus if there are no objections.

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Mayor Bennett asked Council if there were any objections, and Councilor Pelham excused herself from the dais.

Councilor Gore had a point of order. She asked if the rest of the budget can be broken out into individual motions as well.

Ms. Hudson replied yes, as long as they are specific like the school board budget, and this would amend Vice Mayor Partin's motion, so that it's not a vote on the whole budget, but those items with the four qualifiers that he named.

After a brief discussion, Council agreed to separate the whole budget into the following:

1. School Board budget;
2. Four qualifiers named by Vice Mayor Partin;
3. Main budget.

Ms. Hudson stated that a motion should be made to adopt the school budget.

Vice Mayor Partin made a motion to adopt the School Board budget as presented. Councilor Gore seconded the motion.

Councilor Randolph suggested that Council stated what the total budget is for sake of clarity. Vice Mayor Partin agreed. Mr. Altman verified the amount as \$12.5 million, to be transferred from the general operations fund. The Clerk was asked to include the \$12.5 million to the motion.

At the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	yes
	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	excused from voting
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	yes
	Councilor Holloway	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion passes 6-0.

Councilor Denton went to the conference room to get Councilor Pelham to return to the dais. Vice Mayor Partin addressed each qualifier as individual motions. The first motion he made was that Council add the part-time detective to the Police Department. His motion was seconded by Councilor Pelham. At the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	no
	Councilor Denton	no
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	no
	Councilor Randolph	no

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Councilor Holloway	yes
Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion failed 4-3.

Vice Mayor Partin made a motion to reduce the PART (Petersburg Area Regional Tourism) outside agency funding by \$30,000. His motion was seconded by Pelham. Councilor Denton had a question on the motion; she asked if the funding in the budget for \$40,000. Mr. Altman stated the exact amount of \$40,500. Councilor Randolph asked was this going to be reduced or taken out of the ARPA funds, per the Council's discussion. Councilor Gore discussed the conversation she had with Mr. Altman about the money Council gave to the Chamber [of Commerce]. She asked if Council can do the same thing with the Chamber, and take the portion we gave them for tourism, take that out of ARPA this time. She was asked to wait on this since the motion was still on the floor, and was reminded by the City Attorney that her question was not specific to this motion, which is solely for this subject matter. At the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	(silence)
	Councilor Denton	no
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	no
	Councilor Holloway	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion passes 5-2

Vice Mayor Partin made a motion for Council to adopt the budget resolution as presented with the last two qualifiers of preventing the creation of part-time position without City Council approval and the use of ARPA funds to fill the remaining budget gap.

Councilor Gore pointed out that he had combined two motions, so he restated the motion: moved for Council to prevent the creation of part-time position without City Council approval. His motion was seconded by Councilor Gore.

Councilor Randolph asked if this motion should direct the City Manager or vote and make this an automatic directive. Ms. Hudson stated that the next City Manager would be charged with the knowledge of what Council directives are. Councilor Gore asked if Councilor Randolph was asking Vice Mayor Partin to change the wording of the motion, and Councilor Randolph said no. Roll call was requested and at the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	yes
	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	no
	Councilor Holloway	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion passes 6-1.

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Vice Mayor Partin made a motion to use the ARPA funds to fill the remaining budget gap. His motion was seconded by Mayor Bennett. The Mayor asked Mr. Altman for the dollar amount, and he stated the amount as \$1,184,916.

Councilors Pelham and Denton thanked the departments, Mr. Terry, Finance Director, Mr. Altman and everyone else for being very much a part of the budget this year and for reducing their budgets, as well as for the guidance and the long hours.

At the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	yes
	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	yes
	Councilor Randolph	yes
	Councilor Holloway	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion passes 7-0.

Councilor Gore had a question for Mr. Altman regarding the Chamber's tourism allocation. She asked if Council can take the tourism allocation that the Chamber receives and do the same thing as with the PART with the ARPA funds. (The PART money is technically in the budget but Council has not adopted the budget as of yet.) Mr. Altman replied that the ARPA dollars can be used towards business promotion and assistance; tourism falls under that umbrella. In doing so, this will free up the funds to cover the part time detective position.

A motion was made by Councilor Gore to remove the PART's allocation of \$30,000 from the budget, and remove the tourism allocation provided to the Chamber [of Commerce] from the budget, and to fund those with ARPA funds. Her motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Partin. After a lengthy discussion, a roll call was requested, and at the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	yes
	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes
	Mayor Bennett	no
	Councilor Randolph	yes
	Councilor Holloway	yes
	Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion passes 6-1.

Vice Mayor Partin moved that Council adopt the budget as amended with the qualifiers that passed tonight. His motion was seconded by Councilor Gore. A roll call was requested, and at the roll call, the vote resulted:

ROLL CALL:	Councilor Gore	yes
	Councilor Denton	yes
	Councilor Pelham	yes


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Mayor Bennett	yes
Councilor Randolph	yes
Councilor Holloway	yes
Vice Mayor Partin	yes

Motion passes 7-0.

AJOURNMENT

Councilor Gore made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Vice Mayor Partin. All Councilors were in favor, with no one opposing, and the meeting was adjourned.



Patience Bennett
Mayor Bennett

/s/ Mollie Bess
Mollie Bess, City Clerk