

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 26, 2019 CITY COUNCIL MEETING

A meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held Tuesday, March 26, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 300 North Main Street, Hopewell, Virginia.

PRESENT: Jasmine E. Gore, Mayor, Ward 4
Patience Bennett, Vice Mayor, Ward 7 (arrived at 5:35 p.m.)
Deborah Randolph, Councilor, Ward 1
Arlene Holloway, Councilor, Ward 2
John B. Partin, Jr., Councilor, Ward 3
Janice B. Denton, Councilor, Ward 5
Brenda Pelham, Councilor, Ward 6

John M. Altman, Jr., City Manager
Charles Dane, Assistant City Manager
Stefan M. Calos of Sands Anderson PC, City Attorney
Ronnieye L. Arrington, City Clerk
Michelle Hicks, Interim Assistant City Clerk

ROLL CALL

Mayor Gore opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

Mayor Gore	-	present
Vice Mayor Bennett	-	absent (arrived at 5:35 p.m.)
Councilor Randolph	-	present
Councilor Partin	-	present
Councilor Holloway	-	present
Councilor Denton	-	present
Councilor Pelham	-	present

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING – FEBRUARY 26, 2019

Having not come out of closed session at the February 26, 2019 meeting, Council responded to the question pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3712 (D): were only public business matters (I) lawfully exempted from open-meeting requirements and (II) identified in the closed-meeting motion discussed in closed meeting? Upon the roll call, the responses resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

RECONVENE OPEN MEETING – MARCH 5, 2019

Having not come out of closed session at the March 5, 2019 meeting, Council responded to the question pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3712 (D): were only public business matters (I) lawfully

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exempted from open-meeting requirements and (II) identified in the closed-meeting motion discussed in closed meeting? Upon the roll call, the responses resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

CLOSED MEETING

At 5:39 p.m., Councilor Pelham moved to go into closed meeting for (1) discussion and consideration of specific appointees of city council (boards, commissions, authorities); (2) discussion of specific appointees or employees of city council (city manager, city clerk, city attorney); (3) discussion concerning a prospective business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business's interest in locating its facilities in the community (Project Bamboo); (4) consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body (Green Plains, registrar, cemetery); and (5) consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by city council related thereto and regarding specific legal matters (National Park), requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel in accordance with Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A) (1) [two items.], (5), (7), and (8), respectively. Councilor Partin seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted*:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 7-0

*Councilor Partin disclosed a conflict of interest and stated that he would not participate in any discussion for Project Bamboo because of a potential personal interest.

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RECONVENE OPEN MEETING

Council returned to the dais at 6:33 p.m. and announced that they would not be coming out of closed meeting. Mayor Gore requested a roll call, as follows:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	present
Councilor Randolph	-	present
Councilor Holloway	-	present
Councilor Partin	-	present
Mayor Gore	-	present
Councilor Denton	-	present
Councilor Pelham	-	present

AMEND/ADOPT AGENDA

Councilor Pelham moved to amend the agenda to move item IR-1 so that it comes after the proclamations, resolutions and presentations, and to approve the agenda after that amendment. Her motion was seconded by Mayor Gore. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 7-0

WORK SESSION – TAX ASSESSMENT

Patrizia Waggoner introduced a representative from Wampler Eames, the company that handled the 2019 residential assessment for the City of Hopewell. The representative discussed the process of how the assessments were made, explained why some properties increased this year, and confirmed that citizens would be able to address any concerns, either at the local appeals (with assessor’s office), or by appealing to the Board of Equalization. Ms. Waggoner verified this information and advised that the application to appeal to the BOE would be online for a limited time. She also advised that the application could be printed and filled out, or filled out online.

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REGULAR MEETING

PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

At 7:31 p.m., Mayor Gore called the meeting to order, and thanked all for attending. The prayer was led by Rev. Tamara Blow of the John Randolph Pastoral Care, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, led by Vice Mayor Bennett.

CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered routine by Council and will be approved or received by one motion in the form listed. Items may be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion under the regular agenda at the request of any Councilor.

- C-1 Minutes:** February 12 and February 26, 2019
- C-2 Pending List:**
- C-3 Routine Approval of Work Sessions:** Joint Work Session with School Board – 4-10-19
- C-4 Personnel Change Report & Financial Report:** Finance Report attached
- C-5 Ordinances on Second & Final Reading:**
- C-6 Routine Grant Approval:**
- C-7 Public Hearing Announcement:** Tax Rate Public Hearing – 4-9-19
- C-8 Information for Council Review: Minutes:** Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority 1-14-19; Keep Hopewell Beautiful – 12-12-18 and 1-9-19
- C-9 Resolutions/Proclamations/Presentations:** Women Veterans’ Week proclamation; Women’s History Month proclamation;
- C-10 Additional Announcements:** Status of Council Office Renovation; Riverwalk Grand Opening 4-6-19

Mayor Gore read the items that were on the Consent Agenda. She asked Mr. Altman, the City Manager, for an update on the City’s CAFRs. Mr. Altman said that the auditors were in the field and that he hoped to have a completed 2017 audit in two weeks. He further stated that he hoped to have the 2018 audit completed by May. Mr. Altman said the objective for 2019 is to submit it in October, prior to the November deadline.

During the reading of the Women Veterans’ Week proclamation, Mayor Gore asked all of the women veterans present (who had been invited) to stand. The women were pinned by Beverly VanTull, Virginia Women Veterans Program, Program Manager of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services of Richmond, Virginia. Each gave remarks. For Women’s History Month, during the reading of the Proclamation, the Mayor bestowed a rose upon all of the women leaders in Hopewell (whom she had invited to the meeting) in a vase.

Mayor Gore then called forward the Hopewell High School Girls Basketball Team. She and Dr. Melody Hackney, School Board Superintendent, provided the team stats for the year. Mayor Gore then asked Council to place medals around each team member’s neck.

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Mayor Gore announced that the council, clerk, assistant clerk, reception area renovations were complete. She detailed some of the work done, and said the total spent was \$4,856.85. She also provided a breakdown of those costs, which she asked be included with the minutes (see attached).

Mayor Gore requested an update on the new Police Department building. Mr. Altman announced that it should be done by mid-April.

Aaron Reidmiller announced the grand opening of the Riverwalk.

IR-1 – Upon vote of Council, this item was moved up. Mayor Gore introduced the item. There was a presentation from Polco via livestream outlining their services and how it could be used in Hopewell as in other municipalities. Councilor Pelham moved to participate in bringing Hopewell into the 21st century and to try Polco for a year for the \$3,000 base price, but if Hopewell were awarded the grant from VML providing the service free, that would be even better. Mayor Gore seconded the motion.

Upon additional discussion, Vice Mayor Bennett made a substitute motion to purchase Polco for the year at the \$3,000 base price, and to include individual councilors for the year along with the base, for a total cost not to exceed \$7,200. Mayor Gore seconded her motion. Upon additional discussion, Mayor Gore offered a friendly amendment to Vice Mayor Bennett’s motion, to add that the base will be administered by IT, and each councilor will manager their own. Vice Mayor Bennett accepted the amendment. There was additional discussion. Vice Mayor Bennett called for the vote. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	no
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	no
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	no
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion failed: 4-3 (this vote called for 2/3 majority, which would have been 5-2)

IR-1 (cont.) – Upon further discussion, Councilor Pelham moved to try Polco for a year, at the base price of \$3,000, and to include individual councilors for a total cost not to exceed \$7,200, and that the base would be administered by IT, with each councilor managing their own individual access, and that this purchase would be contingent upon a cyber-security review by IT and the City Attorney. Mayor Gore seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	no
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	no
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	no

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Councilor Pelham - yes

Motion passed 4-3

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PH-1 Conditional Use Permit – Barber Construction Company – March Altman introduced Tevya Griffin, Director of Development. Ms. Griffin provided background information on this item. She then introduced Mr. Barber, who spoke briefly to Council regarding this request. Councilor Pelham requested, and Mayor Gore approved, that Councilor Pelham’s remarks be included in the minutes:

I appreciate your efforts in trying to make Hopewell a better place. I have come to appreciate your building in our area especially. I would also like to say though unfortunately, I won’t be able to support this one because of the safety issues, for me. It just doesn’t seem feasible. I think about children, even if it’s fenced in or whatever, just a kid getting outside of that home, and having to navigate that area seems a little difficult to me. But, I really appreciate the opportunity you tried to afford the owner of the land. So, not at this time.

Mayor Gore then opened the public hearing at 9:02 p.m. No one came forward to speak. She closed the public hearing at 9:06 p.m. Councilor Pelham moved to recommend denial of the conditional use permit based on the recommendation of the Planning Commission related to the adherence to—does not meet criteria 2 and 3 found in the Article XXI of the Zoning Ordinance. Councilor Randolph seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 7-0

PH-2 Amendment of Article XVII, Section F of the Hopewell Zoning Ordinance – Tevya Griffin came forward to discuss why this article of the Zoning Ordinance required amendment. Mayor Gore opened the public hearing at 9:11 p.m. No one came forward and the person signing the sheets had signed up to be heard on another item. Mayor Gore closed the public hearing at 9:11 p.m. Upon discussion, Councilor Partin moved to approve the proposed amendment of Article XVII, Section F of the Hopewell Zoning Ordinance, to require a conditional use permit for non-conforming lots of record in all zoning districts. Councilor Pelham seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

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

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Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 7-0

Councilor Pelham moved to amend the agenda to move item R-3, Virginia First Cities Legislative Update, to directly after the Communications from Citizens and before item R-1. Councilor Partin seconded her motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 7-0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Fred Quinter signed up, but left the building prior to being called forward.

Russell Tatum of Ward 3 came forward to request information on the discontinued use of the sauna at the Community Center.

Chase Rigsby, owner of Subhut came forward requesting financial assistance to fund Subhut's appearance on American Roadtrip, a show that airs on Netflix. He explained that Netflix reached out to them due to reviews on Yelp. He requested \$1,000 to help get the Netflix producers here in Hopewell. Mayor Gore asked council if this was something they wished to use their Ward Improved Funds on and if so to get with the Clerk later and so advise.

Shamika Lewis of Ward 7 came forward and requested that Council serve the citizens with dignity and respect.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Reports of City Manager:

R-3 Virginia First Cities Legislative Update – (moved by vote of Council) – Herbert Bragg introduced Kelly Harris-Braxton, Executive Director, Laura Bateman, Legislative Lobbyist, and Jim Reggibald, Budget Analyst. He then turned the presentation over to Ms. Harris-Braxton, who presented the legislative update to Council.

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R-1 Project Bamboo – Charles Dane, Assistant City Manager came forward to present. Prior to his presentation, Councilor Partin announced that he would be recusing himself and asked if the City Attorney needed to read any language concerning his recusal. Mr. Calos responded that recusal was fitting if Councilor Partin had a personal interest in the transaction, or if he was the agent for a firm or company that was the subject of the action. Mr. Calos stated that Mr. Partin had advised that the latter was the case. The Mayor stated that she had already excused Mr. Partin from voting on this item and agreed that he could leave the room, as he stated he wanted to do. After Mr. Dane’s presentation, he provided Council with a suggested motion, which Councilor Denton used. She moved to resolve to approve a machinery and tools tax rebate up to 25% for a period of 12 years to be appropriated to and refunded by the Hopewell Economic Development Authority to the Project Bamboo taxpayer after timely payment of all taxes due, and upon execution of a performance agreement between the parties to be approved by City Council. Vice Mayor Bennett seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	--- (abstain)
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 6-0

Councilors Partin and Denton submitted Transactional Disclosure Statements for this item.

R-2 Workforce Development – Mr. Dane presented information to Council regarding this request to pursue grants to work with school system regarding CTE programs. Dr. Melody Hackney, Superintendent of Schools, also spoke regarding this request. Mr. Dane noted that at the two Town Hall meetings recently held, the citizens overwhelmingly requested more workforce development. Upon discussion, Councilor Partin moved that City Council allow city administration and the school system and the Cities of Opportunities grant team to work together to apply for federal, state and community grants in order to finance these workforce development initiatives, to include summer programs, technical center, and evening education for adults. Mayor Gore seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

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Motion passed 7-0

Councilor Pelham moved to extend the meeting past 10:30 p.m., no longer than 11:00 p.m. Councilor Partin seconded the meeting. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	--- (not on dais)
Councilor Randolph	-	yes
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	yes
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 7-0 (per Council rules)

Council then adjourned into closed session. Council returned to the dais. Councilor Pelham moved to extend the meeting. Mayor Gore seconded her motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	no
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	no
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	no
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 4-3

Council returned to closed session. Councilor Denton left the meeting at 11:00 p.m. Councilor Randolph followed at 11:04 p.m.

Council came out of closed session at 11:27 p.m.

Council responded to the question pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3712 (D): were only public business matters (I) lawfully exempted from open-meeting requirements and (II) identified in the closed-meeting motion discussed in closed meeting? Upon the roll call, the responses resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	--- (absent)
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	--- (absent)
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

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Motion passed 5-0

Councilor Partin moved to direct City staff and the HR Department to contact the applicants for city attorney to schedule interviews for April 2 at 5:30, and April 3 at 5:30, and April 9 at 5:30, and for Council to interview the applicants in the order as provided by HR. Councilor Pelham seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Vice Mayor Bennett	-	yes
Councilor Randolph	-	--- (absent)
Councilor Holloway	-	yes
Councilor Partin	-	yes
Mayor Gore	-	yes
Councilor Denton	-	--- (absent)
Councilor Pelham	-	yes

Motion passed 5-0

ADJOURN

Councilor Pelham moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Partin seconded the motion. All councilors present responded “aye” to the question, and the meeting was adjourned.

/s/ Jasmine E. Gore
Jasmine E. Gore, Mayor

/s/ Ronnie L. Arrington
Ronnie L. Arrington, City Clerk