

**MINUTES OF THE MAY 7, 2019 SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

A special meeting of the Hopewell City Council was held Tuesday, May 7, 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  
Deborah Randolph, Councilor, Ward 1  
Arlene Holloway, Councilor, Ward 2 (arrived at 5:32 p.m.)  
John B. Partin, Jr., Councilor, Ward 3  
Janice B. Denton, Councilor, Ward 5  
Brenda Pelham, Councilor, Ward 6 (arrived at 5:32 p.m.)

Charles Dane, Assistant City Manager  
Stefan M. Calos of Sands Anderson PC, City Attorney  
Ronnieye L. Arrington, City Clerk

**ABSENT:** John M. Altman, Jr., City Manager

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Gore opened the meeting at 5:31 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

Mayor Gore	-	present
Vice Mayor Bennett	-	present
Councilor Randolph	-	present
Councilor Partin	-	present
Councilor Holloway	-	absent (arrived at 5:32 p.m.)
Councilor Denton	-	present
Councilor Pelham	-	absent (arrived at 5:33 p.m.)

**CLOSED MEETING**

At 5:32 p.m., Councilor Partin moved to go into closed meeting for To go into closed meeting for (1) discussion and consideration of specific appointees of city council (city attorney, city manager, city clerk); (2) discussion and consideration of the disposition of publicly-held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of city council; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by city council related thereto and regarding specific legal matters, requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel in accordance with Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A) (1), (3), and (8), respectively. Councilor Denton seconded the motion. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

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

**Motion passed 7-0**

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**RECONVENE OPEN MEETING**

At 7:41 p.m. Council returned to the dais and 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:

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

**Roll Call**

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The Mayor requested a roll call:

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

**AMEND/ADOPT AGENDA**

Councilor Partin moved to adopt the agenda. His motion was seconded by Councilor Pelham. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

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

**Motion passed 7-0**

Mayor Gore requested a roll call, which resulted as follows:

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

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**WORK SESSION**

Mayor Gore announced that the scheduled Work Session regarding FY20 City of Hopewell Budget was canceled due to the illness and absence of the City Manager.

**SPECIAL MEETING**

Mayor Gore called the meeting to order, and thanked all for attending.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**PH-1 Disposition of Property**

**ISSUE:** The transfer of City-owned parcels 042005, 0420010, 0420015, 0420020, 0420025, 0420027, and 0420030 to the Hopewell Economic Development Authority (EDA). The parcels are adjacent to Cavalier Square at the intersection of Salem Avenue and Winston Churchill Drive.

At Mayor Gore's request, Charles Dane, Assistant City Manager, provided more details concerning the exact location of the proposed property to be transferred to the EDA. Mayor Gore opened the public hearing at 7:44 p.m. There being no one signed up to speak, and no one coming forward to speak at the meeting, Mayor Gore closed the public hearing at 7:45 p.m. Councilor Randolph moved approve the transfer of City-owned parcels 042005, 0420010, 0420015, 0420020, 0420025, 0420027, and 0420030, which parcels are adjacent to Cavalier Square at the intersection of Salem Avenue and Winston Churchill Drive, to the Hopewell Economic Development Authority. Her motion was seconded by Councilor Partin. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

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

**Motion passed 7-0**

**PH-2 Approval of 2020 Tax Rate**

**ISSUE:** A tax rate needs to be established before tax bills can be sent out and before the schools' budget can be approved. Staff is not seeking a tax increase this year, but Council still needs to approve the rate.

Charles Dane, advised Council that Staff was not seeking a rate increase, and that if Council approved the current rate, but during further budget deliberations decided a decrease was needed, they could do so, but they could not increase the taxes without starting the process over again. Mayor Gore requested that Mr. Dane state the rates so that the public would be aware. Mr. Dane said that the current and proposed rate was \$1.13/\$100. Mayor Gore then requested that Mr. Dane provide more detailed information regarding other taxes, as well per the information in Council's packet, which he did. Joan Gosier, City Treasurer and Debbie Reason, Commissioner of Revenue responded to Council questions. Mayor Gore opened the public hearing at 7:53 p.m. There being no one signed up to speak, and no one coming forward to speak at the meeting, Mayor Gore closed the public hearing at 7:54

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p.m. Councilor Denton moved to adopt the proposed 2020 Tax Resolution. Her motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett. After discussion\*, and upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

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

**Motion passed 6-1**

\*Some members of Council requested that certain items be “read” into the record. Their readings are below:

Partin: This is just going to be a quick comment and, if you will allow, I’d look to put it on the record [Mayor Gore approves]. I feel that, since we had very large real estate assessments go up this year, and which percentages ranged, at least for the people in my ward, anywhere from 5% to 25, 30, 40%, and I think that there needs to be a way that we can, kind of, level this off. And I think that it would actually end up helping a lot of our constituents. I think that with this, keeping the rate the same, we are still asking them to pay more, even though, I personally haven’t seen a whole of improvements over the years, in the neighborhood specifically to garner or to allow for that increase, so I will be voting no for this tax resolution.

Pelham: I think that, it might have been a misnomer about the tax not increasing. Based on the background information he [Charles Dane] gave us, the assessment increase, the total assessment is increased by 2.3%, is that correct? And then, based on the proposed real estate property tax rate, and the changes in other revenues, the total budget for the City you projected will exceed 1.8%. So, I guess, there is an increase. I would ask again, when he does assessment, bring that to us in actual dollar amounts, so that we will have some type of comparison other than the pure percentages. And the fact is, he also could give us the numbers for what the revenue would be at \$1.10, \$1.11, \$1.12, so that just in case we don’t get the majority for \$1.13, we could do it at \$1.12, what do we have to take away...what are the things that he recommends we not include in the budget that he currently gave to us if its \$1.11 or maybe \$1.10.

Councilor Pelham and Councilor Partin both submitted Transactional Disclosure Statement for item PH-2 because they are citizens of Hopewell who would be impacted by Council’s decision regarding the tax rate, but both stated they were able to participate fairly, objectively, and in the public interest.

**ADJOURN**

At 8:15 p.m., Councilor Denton 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/ Ronnieye L. Arrington  
Ronnieye L. Arrington, City Clerk