
The special regular meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, January 5, 2021, live streamed. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 12:33p.m.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Council Member Charles H. Cuthbert, Jr.
Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith
Council Member W. Howard Myers (left at 12:49pm) (returned at 2:21pm)
Council Member Darrin Hill
Vice Mayor Annette Smith-Lee
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: Council Member John A. Hart, Sr.

Present from City Administration:

City Manager Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams
Clerk of Council Nykesha D. Jackson

2. PRAYER:

Mayor Parham stated, "Councilman Hill will lead us in our opening prayer."

Council Member Hill led the council meeting in prayer.

3. CLOSED SESSION:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

4. MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Mayor Parham led council and citizens in the moment of silence.

5. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Parham led council and the citizens in the pledge of allegiance.

6. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:

A quorum was determined with the presence of all City Council Members except Council Member Hart.

7. PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATION OF CEREMONIAL PROCLAMATIONS:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

Mayor Parham stated, "I just want to open up with a Positive Petersburg Moment for Tuesday January 5th. First Good Afternoon and Happy New Year Everyone. For our Positive Petersburg moment today, I just want to give a brief highlight of the Petersburg Public Library's new conference and event center. Construction officially began on November 29th. The steel work currently taking place is scheduled to be complete by the end of next week, weather permitting. This project remains on schedule to be complete for this summer 2021."

*Audio available upon request.

8. REPORTS/RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD:

Folakemi Osoba, Public Information Officer, stated, "Good afternoon Mayor and Members of Council. Happy New Year. I just have a response from a question at the last meeting. There was a question about an update from the fountain in Old Towne that was unfortunately vandalized last year. Petersburg's Facility Maintenance Division has located a replacement fountain for the Old Towne fountain. This fountain that they have found with the assistance from tourism requires adjustments to the base and the nozzle to ensure that the fountain will remain stabilized and the water will shoot at a higher velocity. So, it took some time to find a fountain that would appropriately fit site that would match the Old Towne ecstatic and included a base that it could rest on above the waterline. So, due to it being late in the winter season and with cooler temperatures arising adjustments will be made now during the winter and installation of the new fountain will take place in the spring. That concludes my report. Thank you."

9. COMMUNICATIONS/SPECIAL REPORTS:

a. City Manager's Report – Aretha R. Ferrell-Benavides, City Manager

[City-Managers-report-1521 \(petersburgva.gov\)](https://www.petersburgva.gov/city-managers-report-1521)

Mrs. Benavides stated, "Mayor and council you should have been provided a copy of the City Manager's Report. And for the sake of time, if there are questions on anything on the report, I can respond to it. But each of you should have a copy of the report."

Mayor Parham stated, "Any questions from members of council?"

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "When were we sent the report? It was not in my package."

Mrs. Benavides stated, "That is a good question. I will have to find out. Let me find out. If you do not have it then I should not report on it. Let me make sure that it goes out to eat of you. I have a copy in front of me. So, I don't know the answer to that if it wasn't in your packet. But I will find out and make that each of you have it and then I can report on it once you have it in hand."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Thank you."

b. COVID-19 Update

Ms. Tyus stated, "Good afternoon Mayor and Council. Let me say congratulations Mayor Parham and Vice Mayor Annette Smith-Lee."

Ms. Tyus gave an overview and update on COVID-19.

Key points:

- At the last meeting, the list of deaths was at 33 before the holidays and now they are at 36 deaths with COVID. This has been the number for the last two weeks.
- The number of cases is going to continue to go up because testing is being done throughout the Crater District.
- As of January 4th, the City of Petersburg had 1,340 cases. Of that number 1,295 have been cleared. The City has continued to have less than 100 active cases. There was an escalation of 96 cases in the last week. The number is likely high because the lab closed down because of the holidays.
- Thanked Council for support for Contact Tracing within the Health Department from January through June 30th.

*Audio available upon request.

- Southside Regional Medical Center started their vaccine to healthcare providers the week of December 21st and they continued to have those teams vaccinated.
 - The City is scheduled to have testing start on the 9th with the first responders of the City of Petersburg. This would include police, fire and EMS works. They will start vaccinating them on January 9th.
 - There is drive-thru testing going on at Fire Station 4 on this Thursday from 5pm to 6:30pm. The City is taking walk-ups and are encouraging anyone that may have been around anyone exposed to COVID-19.
- c. Update on 2020 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement funding and sub-recipient allocation.

Reginald Tabor, Interim Director of Planning and Community Development, gave briefing on the 2020 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement funding and sub-recipient allocation.

Key points:

- An action plan was submitted to HUD to begin the plan of drawing down funding for the sub-recipients.
- HUD informed the City that the five-year plan needed to be submitted and approved before any funding can be available to the sub-recipients.
- Staff went through the process of developing a DRAFT Consolidated Plan. It went through the public hearing process with public comments that is required for the process and then submitted document to HUD for approval.
- Currently, the City is waiting for approval from HUD. Between now and then they will execute agreements with the sub-recipients for funding.
- January 1st was the last day of employment for the CDBG Coordinator.
- Currently working with HUD to expedite the process.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

d. Budget Update

Robert Floyd gave an update on the budget.

[Budget update.pdf](#)

Key points:

- The budget was adopted at \$73.3 million.
- On the surface it looks like the City is behind on revenues.
- The revenue manual does a great job of breaking things down.

There was discussion among City Council Members and staff.

10. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (to include minutes of previous meeting/s)

- a. Minutes of Closed Session of December 8, 2020 and Special Regular City Council Meeting of December 8, 2020 and December 14, 2020, Special Closed Session Meeting.
- b. Consideration of an appropriation in the amount of \$84,105 for Right-of-Way Acquisition Services for the South Crater Road Traffic Signal Improvement Project being conducted by Kimberly Horn (1st Reading)

*Audio available upon request.

- c. Consideration of an appropriation for a grant from the Historic African American Cemetery and Graves Grant in the amount of \$1,865– 1st Reading
- d. Schedule a public hearing on an ordinance to amend and re-adopt Chapter 1 Sections 1-1 through 1-19 of the Petersburg City Code in furtherance of the City’s Comprehensive Code update.
- e. Consideration to appropriate funding in the amount of \$382,494.45 for the COVID-19 Municipal Utility Relief Program that was awarded to the City of Petersburg by the Virginia Department of Housing & Urban Development -1st Reading
- f. Consideration of an appropriation for grant in the amount of \$80,926 for the expansion funding for the Comprehensive Community Corrections Act & Pretrial Services Act.
- g. Consideration of the carry forward FY2020 amount of \$371,969 for the CDBG-CVI Cares Act to be appropriated for FY2021 for the Coronavirus Pandemic due to the City of Petersburg behind a HUD CDBG Entitlement Jurisdiction.
- h. Schedule a public hearing to receive public comments on the amendment to the FY2020-21 General Fund Budget.

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a motion to approve the consent agenda as read by the Mayor. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; Absent: Myers and Hart

11. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- a. A public hearing for consideration of an ordinance authorizing the execution and recordation of a deed of vacation and quitclaim of property at 37 Slagle Avenue, Parcel ID:014010001, related to a 15” Sewer easement on the property.

BACKGROUND: The plat entitled “Pin Oak, Petersburg, Virginia” dated October 5, 1971, duly recorded in the Clerk’s office of the Circuit Court of the City of Petersburg, in Plat Book 3 at Page 262 ½ (the “Plat”), a 15” sewer easement was dedicated to the City of Petersburg (“Easement”).

To facilitate the development of the property encumbered by the Easement, the City is requested to vacate and release its interest in a portion of the easement.

The existing sewer line will be realigned to facilitate construction and encumbered by a new easement.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council approves the ordinance authorizing the execution and recordation of a deed of vacation and quitclaim of property at 37 Slagle Avenue.

Mrs. Benavides stated, “Mayor, given that we are in a holding path do you think we should move beyond this one and come back to this item.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Alright, we will move on and circle back once Mr. Barnes and Mrs. Innis are available.”

12. PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD: A public information period, limited in time to 30 minutes, shall be part of an Order of Business at each regular council meeting. Each speaker shall be a resident or business owner of the City and shall be limited to three minutes. No speaker will be permitted to speak on any item scheduled for consideration on the regular docket of the meeting at which the speaker is to speak. The order of speakers, limited by the 30-minute time period, shall be determined as follows:

- a) First, in chronological order of the notice, persons who have notified the Clerk no later than

*Audio available upon request.

12:00 noon of the day of the meeting,

- b) Second, in chronological order of their sign up, persons who have signed a sign-up sheet placed by the Clerk in the rear of the meeting room prior to the meeting.

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, "Good afternoon. Happy New Year to you all. First of all, I think that is an excellent choice that you made for the Interim City Manager. Congratulations Chief Miller. I hope that you will be able to keep things going and do great things. Second comment also referring to an earlier meeting. At your organizational meeting you begin talking about the Rules of Council and the City Manager, Ferrell-Benavides, was giving a briefing about some recommended changes. I think the idea of having a separate work session and business meeting is excellent. I am saying that as a concerned citizen and also former Petersburg School Board member. And that was the model that the school board used to have a work session meeting, a general business meeting each month. And it was very effective. So, I understand that not everyone is one over to this. But I hope that this will be considered further. I would love to see more of the briefing. So, when you schedule that meeting to talk about, I am very interested, and I hope that all the materials will be available to the public. Thank you."

Patrick Ingram, 836 South Gillfield Street, stated, "Good afternoon and Happy New Year. First, I would like to shout out Madam Commissioner Flowers. I noticed a post that she had earlier today in regard to having two businesses and have their business licenses being giving the green light and being good to go. So, I just thank her for her continuous focus on bringing new and small businesses to the City of Petersburg. I did notice two meetings ago that we had a political candidate for governor. And based off that door being opened I also would like to know when we would see opportunities for Sam Rasoul, Sean Perryman, Hala Ayala, Terry McAuliffe, Jennifer McClellan even Kirk Cox and Kirk Santini II be provided those same opportunities to speak to Petersburg residents to relay their case on why they should be elected in those respected offices that they are running for. I would also like to congratulate Madam Vie Mayor. I am relieved that we have Ward 6 at the forefront. Therefore, I hope we can address the influx of violent crimes in our ward. The first shooting of 2021 was in Ward 6 in Pecan Acres. And then in December I heard gunshots, 13 of those fired right outside of my home. Which woke me out of bed at 4:00am in the morning. Yet even since then we have had the lack of police presence in our neighborhood since. I see speeding in areas like Hinton Street and homes and roads that are still in disrepair and a lack of long-term fixed salaries for City employees. Which I may add would benefit from a \$15 minimum wage. A lack of focus on the future such as things like contributions and appropriations of funding to our school board or really our schools so that we can focus on modernizations of our facilities. I just hope that you and your colleagues can really address these issues. I also want to know about the update on the Ward 6 cleanup. I know that it was slated for December. But I have not seen anything about it. I do have individuals in the community who live in Ward 6 who are ready to get out there and see our communities clean. It would be advantageous now more than ever to involve community as we deal with these issues in our City firsthand. And that is all that I have thank you."

Mayor Parham stated, "Next we will circle back. Mrs. Benavides is Mrs. Innis or Mr. Barnes available?"

Mrs. Benavides stated, "Mr. Barnes is unavailable, and Mrs. Innis is not familiar with this item. We have no one here. So, if we can pull this for the next meeting."

Mayor Parham stated, "Okay. We will table item '11a' for the next meeting. I will entertain a motion to table item '11a.'"

Council Member Hill made a motion to table item "11a" to the second meeting in the month of January. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Hill, Smith-Lee and Parham; Absent: Myers and Hart

13. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR OR OTHER MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL:

*Audio available upon request.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "I want to thank our Department of Public Works starting with Mr. Lyons and working down to Mrs. Innis and Mr. Barnes for their responsiveness to a great inconvenience to a number of 4th Ward residents. In the 1700 block of Crater Road for reasons that were not readily apparent the water failed. And for several weeks they had no water. I invite you to drive up Crater Road and you will see the temporary fix that the Department of Public Works, led by Mrs. Innis and Mr. Barnes and Mr. Lyons, had been able to put together while we work on a permanent fix. But we can all, but maybe we cannot all imagine what it would be like to go week after week with no water. That is what the people in the 1700 block were suffering from. Drive by there and you will see the work around that the Department of Public Works is installed. It is a series of pipes about ground leading to these houses. And of course, pipes have to be protected from freezing. So, it is something of an undertaking while the City is working on a permanent fix. All of this illustrates a couple of things. One, the resourcefulness of the Department of Public Works and two, the seriousness of our failing water infrastructure. Which is why we send out water bills and why we collect water revenues. Wish we did not have to do it but if we are going to keep the water flowing, we got to. In any event I invite you to drive up South Crater Road and look over on the westside of the street and you will see these white pipes running along the ground and that is the work around of the Department of Public Works has been able to design while the City is working on a permanent fix. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "At the last council meeting I brought up the possibility of council having a quarterly meeting with the school board. It was tabled until this meeting. Therefore, I would like to make that motion again. So, the motion reads for us, the City Council, to start having quarterly meetings with Petersburg Public School System effective March 2021."

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a motion for City Council to start having quarterly meetings with the Petersburg Public School System effective March 2021. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee. There was discussion on the motion.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "I am going to vote yes. But one of the topics that I would like the school board to bring us up to speed on is the literacy rate of our third graders. What has been done during the COVID crisis to help prevent deterioration of that literacy of our third graders. And so, I would ask that the school board be prepared to share that information with City Council. I think that in the long-term there is a direct connection between lack of easy reading ability on the one hand and crime rate that we see in Petersburg. Fixing our literacy rate is not a quick fix to our crime rate but I think that it will be a substantial contribution. I know when Chief Miller was police chief, I heard him say that he had observed the correlation between the violent crimes and murders that were taking place in Petersburg on the one hand and deficiency and the ability to read on the other. And I am convinced that he was absolutely right. So, in any event I vote yes."

The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Smith-Lee, Hill and Parham; Absent: Myers and Hart

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "I would like to say that the purpose of us meeting is to formulate a relationship and come to the conclusions that we can work together for the good of the whole. And the good of the whole would be the children. The information that Cuthbert has shared about the correlation between crime and the schools or the children learning is nothing new. There is a lot of literature out which prepares the children. So, none of that is new but I do appreciate you supporting the motion. I did want to ask the City Attorney for the second thing. You had sent us an email out earlier or should I say later in 2019 which talked about redistricting. At what point does council address this Mr. Williams?"

Mr. Williams stated, "That information is in the hands of the planning director. They are going to be gathering information to present to you. It is going to be after the census come out so I am thinking it would be

*Audio available upon request.

in April of this year. They will be presenting you with a number of options. They are going to be working with trying to obtain the software that I mentioned in that email. I know that there is a price associated with it. But like I said with my former jurisdiction we were able to borrow or share that software with another jurisdiction and I think that they are exploring that now. I think that the person that is going to be heading that up is Jeremy Tennant. At least that is the last person that I spoke to about it.”

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, “Okay thank you. And my last thing and this is just an FYI. When we first started our meeting today, I want us to look at and think about, it took us about an hour or a little bit over to choose a Mayor and a Vice Mayor from among us. A little bit over an hour to choose between seven people as we look at who likes who and who doesn’t like who and who wants who and all of that. This could have all been avoided if you let the citizens, the people that we work for, make a decision as to what they want and not what we want. And that is all that I have.”

Vice Mayor Smith-Lee stated, “I just want to say thank you to the city manager for the great work that she has done in the City of Petersburg. And also, her team that I know that they are going to continue her legacy that she continuing to leave behind. Also, I would like to say that the cleanup will be done on January 23rd. I will have some information in reference to a zoom meeting so that we can get all of the logistics straight. And I would like to thank my fellow council members for allowing me to serve as vice mayor. Thank you.”

Council Member Hill stated, “I want to congratulate the new vice mayor and current mayor for their leadership to be. I know you all will do great things. First, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for allowing me yet again to serve one more time on City Council. This has been a toiling task these past few months to getting to this day. So, I want to thank the Lord for this opportunity, and I want to thank my family who have prayed for me and my friends who have supported me. Even members of community who have voted for me and even those who did not vote for me I would also like to try and win their support. All the observers on both sides at the recount on yesterday, I want to thank them for being there. I really want to give special shout out to the registrar’s office, Mrs. Dawn and her team, did an outstanding job on yesterday. They tried to keep everybody as safe as possible. You know that it is a small building to have that many people in that one building. I pray that we do not find out later on that somebody contacted COVID or anything. Because we were pretty much on each other, but you know that the work has to be done. So, I just want to thank everybody for getting me to this point. I look to continue to do great things for the citizens and the City of Petersburg to take us to higher heights and deeper depths as we move the City forward. I want to thank the council as well for those who were encouraging me along the way. And I do understand that we may have disagreements as leaders, and it is nothing personal. We all look through different lenses and we see things differently than any other person. So, it is not a thing where anybody don’t like anybody. I should hope that it is not that, but it is just that we see things differently. I am pretty sure that our Mayor and Vice Mayor will do an excellent job and we are here to support each other. Most of the things we do we do collectively as a team. I want to thank the city manager for her leadership. We are going to miss you and we bid you Godspeed while you make your transition back home to your community. So, we thank you for all your leadership and what you brought to the City of Petersburg. And mostly I want to thank the citizens for their votes that helped me win. Although it was slim, but I did have a worthy opponent. I will not take anything from Mr. Jones. He was a worthy opponent, and he is just like me. He was born and breed here. He played sports like I did. He has a business here like I do. So, I know that it is going to be close. So, I don’t take this win lightly. All the opponents that ran here recently he is the only one that is really other than Mr. Cuthbert and Mrs. Annette Smith-Lee that was from Petersburg. Everybody else was transited into the City. So, I did have a worthy opponent. So, I do not take anything from him or his team. Some things could have been done and said differently but we will leave that in the past. Also, so thank you for indulging me Mr. Mayor and thank you for putting me on last. I do know that we are kind of behind on our leaf removal. So, I would like to get an update on where we are with our leaf removal as opposed to when we came out with it. I know in the second ward I think you all may be done. I have been getting some phone calls from citizens in Ward 2 that leaves have not been picked up and they have been sitting on the side for a while. So, I would like to see that done. I have been seeing the white

*Audio available upon request.

trucks go through the neighborhoods and spotting and picking up trash. And speaking of trash, the City can clean up the whole City everyday in which they do. But as citizens I am really appealing to the citizens at this point. We have to do better as citizens. I have seen things and I have been riding behind cars on Crater Road and people are just throwing cups out the window and things of that nature. And it is more citizens than there are employees. So, that makes for a lot of trash on the exits. So, people just come off the exits and throw trash everywhere. And you would go to another community, but you will not throw trash there. So, I am really appealing to the citizens. If you live beside someone and you know that they are like that and you have a relationship with them and you can go to them and say I can help you then do so. Back in the day where I grew up at in Birdsville that is what we did. We cut our neighbor yard for a whole two or three years because he couldn't cut his grass and we didn't charge him. So, we do things like that. So, we have to get back to those type of morals and being our brother's keepers. So, that has been a really big pet peeve of all of ours. I just look for greater things in the years to come. For those people that put things on Facebook about me I am still here, and I am not going anywhere. The Lord has saw fit to put me here although close. I am the winner of this Ward 2 and I thank God for it. And last and not least, I would like to wish a Happy Founder's Day to the Distinguished Men of Kappa Alpha Psi Inc. Today is our Founder's Day, 110 years of the bond. Thank you, Mr. Mayor."

Mayor Parham stated, "I look forward to our 2021 year together. Thank everyone again for your support and also for Councilwoman Smith-Lee for stepping out to be Vice Mayor. There are some challenging times in the City of Petersburg. But this council is used to dealing with those trying times. We have gotten through the financial crisis together and we are moving through this COVID-19 crisis. And we have been leadership changes various times and I plan on helping the council get to the next level to keep the City of Petersburg valuable and growing. Councilwoman Smith-Lee I appreciate you sharing in some of the heavy lifting which is helping carry council and doing council business. And it is a sacrifice of love and it's another 40-hour week job on top of your regular job. You noticed that the calls and meetings are definitely demanding, and I thank you for stepping up to take some of those. But it goes back to something that was talked about earlier as far as the citizens voting in a Mayor and Vice Mayor and those sorts of things. I still feel that if that is to be done, I think that in order to be fair you have certain people who have full-time jobs. I have one but I have the availability of working for myself that I can adjust hours and get to meetings and things of that nature. And if we are going to look at changing the structure to supplement that it comes to another space and time to look at that. We will keep moving forward with what we have been doing for the last 50 plus years. At this time, I would like to thank one of one of my Ward 3 icons. And that is Mr. Phil Philips. He has cut hair in Petersburg at the Walnut Hill barbershop for over 67 years. And he has gave many of our citizens and kids their firsts haircut. The people in Ward 3 and also in Petersburg will definitely miss you Phil and we really appreciate all that you have done for the City of Petersburg in being one of our iconic businesses and adding tremendous legacy here in Petersburg. So, again I am wishing everyone a Happy New Year and I look forward to a productive 2021."

14. ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

15. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

16. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Consideration to appropriate the balance of Urban Highway Set-Aside funds in the amount of \$2,601,761.50 from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) (2nd Reading).

BACKGROUND: In fiscal year 2018, the City's Urban Maintenance funds were set aside and

*Audio available upon request.

managed by VDOT due to the City's financial crisis. In order to ensure compliance, the City met and worked with VDOT representatives for approximately two fiscal years. Activity codes were changed to align with the VDOT Urban Construction and Maintenance Program Manual, Street Operations and Grounds personnel were trained on the changes, and delinquent outstanding Weldon Cooper Highway Survey Reports were completed to bring the City back into compliance. In fiscal year 2020, the set aside program ended and the set aside funds were back to the City where it was deposited into a new bank account.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend City Council approve the attached appropriation ordinance in the amount of \$2,601,761.50 to be added to Street Operations for fiscal year 2021.

Mr. Williams stated, "Mr. Mayor, before you begin this item a council member brought to my attention today that item '16a' and '16d'. I always recommend an ordinance for any appropriation. And the state code expressly requires a hearing a notice be for any appropriation that comprises of up to 1% or more of the currently adopted budget. With '16a' and '16d' I would recommend that those two items be tabled so that a public hearing can be scheduled at our next meeting for their consideration and adoption."

Mayor Parham stated, "Alright. So, I will entertain a motion to table '16a' and '16d' under new business."

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to table item "16a" and "16d" and schedule a public hearing on the items to be held at the meeting on January 19, 2021. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Hill, Smith-Lee and Parham; Absent: Myers and Hart

- b. Consideration for City Council to approve the CARES Act of 2020 funding for the Petersburg Registrar's Office in the amount of \$60,665 – 2nd Reading

BACKGROUND: The Virginia Department of Elections today announced the distribution of \$9 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, granted specifically to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, domestically or internationally, for the 2020 federal election cycle.

The Department of Elections is notifying local voter registration offices that CARES Act funding may be used for a number of expenses related to COVID-19 for the November 2020 federal elections only. These funds may be used toward any expenditures related to the protection of the health and safety of poll workers, staff, and voters during the federal election as well as those resulting from anticipated increased demand for absentee ballots by mail costs (e.g., printing ballots, printing envelopes, postage, etc.), equipment and temporary staff. Local voter registration offices may also utilize the funding for voter outreach to include mailings, public service announcements, etc. Funds cannot be utilized for items that would be needed regardless of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend that City Council approve the appropriation of the CARES Act of 2020 funding for the Petersburg Registrar's Office.

Mr. Floyd stated, "This is just a grant that the registrar's office received. The money has come in and we are going through the process of actually appropriating it. This is for their CARES funding to get them through the election process for this fiscal year. So, this is going through the formal appropriation process."

Council Member Hill made a motion to approve the CARES Act of 2020 funding for the Petersburg Registrar's Office in the amount of \$60,665. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

*Audio available upon request.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Parham closed public comments.

The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; Absent: Myers and Hart

21-ORD-1 AN ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED, SAID ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2020, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2021 FOR THE GRANTS FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$60,665.

- c. Consider appropriation of an additional \$1,339 received from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for the City of Petersburg's Litter Grant for Prevention and Recycling Program Activities for the period of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 – 2nd Reading

BACKGROUND: The City has applied for & been awarded this Litter Grant over the last several fiscal years. Also, the City has met the requirement by completing Performance & Accounting reports that were due to DEQ by the submission date.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend Council approve the additional \$1,339 to be added to the fiscal year 2021 budget.

Vice Mayor Smith-Lee made a motion to approve the additional \$1,339 to be added to the fiscal year 2021 budget. The motion was seconded by Council Member Wilson-Smith.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Parham closed public comments.

There was discussion among City Council and staff. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; Absent: Myers and Hart

21-ORD-2 AN ORDINANCE, AS AMENDED, SAID ORDINANCE MAKING APPROPRIATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING ON JULY 1, 2020 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2021 IN LITTER CONTROL SECTION OF THE STREET OPERATIONS FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,339.

- d. Consideration to approve the supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$7,397,181 for Petersburg Public Schools for the current fiscal year – 2nd Reading

***This item has been moved to the January 19, 2021 council meeting for a public hearing.**

- e. Consideration of a resolution appointing Wayne Crocker as a member of the "Friends of the Lower Appomattox River" for an indefinite term.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend City Council appoint Wayne Crocker to the "Friends of the Lower Appomattox River" (FOLAR) for an indefinite term.

Council Member Hill made a motion to approve the resolution appointing Wayne Crocker to the "Friends of the Lower Appomattox River" (FOLAR) for an indefinite term. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee.

The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; Absent: Myers Hart

*Audio available upon request.

21-R-6 A RESOLUTION APPOINTING WAYNE CROCKER AS A MEMBER OF THE “FRIENDS OF THE LOWER APPOMATTOX RIVER” FOR AN INDEFINITE TERM.

- f. Request to adopt an ordinance amending the City of Petersburg Building and Permits fee schedule.

BACKGROUND: The City of Petersburg previously amended the building permit fee schedule in 2007.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council approves the amendments to the fee schedule.

Ms. Jackson stated, “I have a question in regard to this item. If this is an ordinance amending the building permits fee schedule shouldn’t we be scheduling a public hearing to amend the ordinance?”

Mayor Parham stated, “Yes, we should.”

Ms. Jackson stated, “So, does this item need to be moved to the next council meeting to schedule a public hearing?”

Council Member Hill made a motion to move this item to the next City Council meeting of January 19th. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; Absent: Myers and Hart

- g. Request for City Council to adopt a resolution for the approval of Resiliency Pay Program.

BACKGROUND: On Thursday, March 12, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam issued Executive Order 51 which begin the “Temporary Stay at Home Order Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).” On Monday, March 16, 2020, the City of Petersburg implemented the temporary stay at home order with essential personnel required to report onsite.

Part of the Executive Order, the CARES ACT was created. This act included hazard pay for public safety workers which were identified as police officers, animal control, sheriff office, firefighters and water staff. The City Manager is requesting that staff who did not receive hazard pay while working during the COVID-19 pandemic receive incentive pay.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that City Council adopt a resolution for the approval of the Resiliency Pay Program to all full-time and part-time staff who did not receive hazard pay through the CARES ACT.

There was discussion among City Council Members and staff.

Council Member Hill made a motion to approve a resolution for the approval of the Resiliency Pay Program to all full-time and part-time staff who did not receive hazard pay through the CARES ACT. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith-Lee.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, “I believe that this seems to me like an extravagance in tough times to be doing this. You already know that I am a strong advocate for hazard pay from the CARES

*Audio available upon request.

ACT. The resiliency pay program I am not so certain about. I think that maybe you all would be advised to hold off on this until you discuss the broader budget amendment that Robert Floyd referenced several times and in looking at all of the different needs that the City has. That is my recommendation. Thank you.”

Michael Edwards, 409 Grove Avenue, stated, “As a City employee and a citizen of the City I want to thank each and every one of you for looking out for those of us that have fought this fight alongside with the citizens. I cannot speak for all my coworkers, but I can speak for the group that I am sitting beside on my break. We thank you all for thinking of us at transit. And we thank the City Manager for putting this program forward. We are sitting here patiently waiting for your vote. Thank you.”

Seeing no further hands, Mayor Parham closed public comments.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Council Member Wilson-Smith made a substitute motion to table action until the next council meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cuthbert.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “I would like the City Manager to bring back at the next meeting an alternative way to distribute the \$350,000 in the form of a raise. And maybe it can be only a half of a percent or maybe it is going to be ¾ of a percent. I would feel a lot more comfortable with this if it was in the form of a raise. I agree that our employees are grossly under paid in many cases. And I want them to be fairly compensated. I do not begrudge spreading this \$350,000 over their paychecks. But I would like to see at least an alternative way for a very modest mid fiscal year raise.”

The substitute motion was not approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert and Wilson-Smith; Voting No: Myers, Hill, Smith-Lee and Parham; Absent: Hart

The original motion goes back on the floor for vote.

The original motion made by Council Member Hill was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Myers, Hill, Smith-Lee and Parham; Voting No: Wilson-Smith; Absent: Hart

21-R-7 A RESOLUTION FOR THE RESILIENCY PAY PROGRAM.

- h. A resolution to initiate review and amendment of the Petersburg Zoning Ordinance to address Small Box Discount Stores and Alternative Financial Institutions.

BACKGROUND: During the December 8, 2020 City Council Meeting, the City Council discussed a Zoning Ordinance text amendment to be initiated by City Council to address concerns with Dollar Store type establishments.

Within the draft resolution, reference is made to a 2019 report from the Urban and Regional Studies Planning Division of Virginia Commonwealth University indicates that “the City of Petersburg, Virginia has long suffered with issues of limited access to food and food insecurity” which resulted in the City being ranked last of Virginia’s 133 cities in counties in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation annual health rankings. Also, the report indicates that “small box discount stores” (convenience and dollar stores) make up 67 percent of the food retailers in Petersburg and that small box discount stores are most commonly recognized for providing food of low nutritional value in low wealth communities. Therefore, these stores negatively impact the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens and subsequent low health rankings

Also, payday and title loan companies (“alternative financial institutions”) provide short-term high interest loans

*Audio available upon request.

to individuals and tend to be concentrated in areas with disproportionately low income and disproportionately minority populations. Studies such as the May 14, 2019 study by S. Ilan Guedj, PhD of Bates White Economic Consulting conclude that the use of alternative financial institutions has a tendency to perpetuate debt and poverty by creating a dependency by borrowers upon such loans. The report indicates that in addition to prolonged indebtedness, the use of alternative financial institutions can increase financial delinquency and borrower delinquency, and exacerbate instances of default by borrowers.

The City Attorney informed the City Council that he was working on some draft language, and he subsequently received a request from a Council Member to add Payday/Title Lenders to the draft legislation.

This item includes the draft Resolution and upon adoption, the proposal would be forwarded to the Planning Commission for a public hearing (as required by statute) and recommendation to Council. Once considered by the Planning Commission, their recommendation will be included in an item to be presented to the City Council in the form of an Ordinance for consideration for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council adopt the resolution.

Reginald Tabor, Interim Director of Planning and Community Development, gave an update on the resolution and recommendation.

Council Member Hill made a motion to approve a resolution and amendment of the Petersburg Zoning Ordinance to address Small Box Discount Stores and Alternative Financial Institutions. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Hart.

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Seeing no hands, Mayor Parham closed public comments.

The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Myers, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; Absent: Hart

21-R-8 A RESOLUTION TO INITIATE REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE PETERSBURG ZONING ORDINANCE TO ADDRESS SMALL BOX DISCOUNT STORES AND ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.

- i. Consideration of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System.

BACKGROUND: Since 1998, the City has used a software package from Bright and Associates (“BAI”) that has served the City well. The BAI Municipal software system includes core financial, human resources, and other systems and runs on the AS/400 server environment. Also, the BAI system is not particularly user friendly. Because many localities have already migrated to newer systems, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit staff familiar with the system. Many of the most skilled users are now retiring and leaving the workforce. And those new staff who are hired must attend specialized training from the vendor either in Tennessee, or a trainer must be brought on-site, all of which is inefficient, costly, and has become more of a challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the City has been evaluating its current processes, it has become apparent that many processes rely upon paper, e-mail, and Excel to manage various transactions. During the City staff retreat in 2019, staff identified our antiquated and labor-intensive ERP system as a significant organizational weakness. Subsequently, City Council members have also indicated that the City needs to move forward with acquiring a new ERP system.

When the need initially arose, it was not financially feasible for the City to move forward with this endeavor.

*Audio available upon request.

Now, given the increases in fund balance and upgrades in our bond rating, it is financially feasible for the City to formally begin the process to begin acquiring a new ERP system. City staff understands that a new ERP system is needed, and it is imperative to begin the process as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend City Council consider formally directing staff to identify potential funding sources and leverage an appropriate procurement process to move forward with obtaining a new ERP software system and project management services for implementation.

Mrs. Ferrell-Benavides and Mr. VanVoorhees gave an update on the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System.

There was discussion among City Council Members and staff.

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to formally direct staff to identify potential funding sources and leverage an appropriate procurement process to move forward with obtaining a new ERP software system and project management services for implementation to be completed by January 1, 2025. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hill. The motion was approved on roll call vote. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Wilson-Smith, Myers, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; Absent: Hart

Council Member Hill stated, "Very quickly, I know that we are going to be talking about the Rules of Council at our workshop. One thing that I want to kind of address is that we need to find a way to streamline our meetings. And one thing I noticed is that whenever we make our motions, Mr. Mayor may be when someone makes the motion and they second it you may call for the question so that you may have all of our conversation out the way and then just call for he vote. Because what I am noticing is that certain members of council when they do their vote, they talk a lot when they do their vote. And it takes the vote longer and it takes more time for us to get on to the next subject. And I believe that we have three items on our agenda that we have to table until the next meeting. So, whoever is in the agenda review meeting really needs to be looking at what is on this docket before we even put it on there. This should not come to us like this. That we have to take three major items and put them on for the next meeting. I have been noticing that a lot and I just wanted to express my concerns. Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Members of Council."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "Before you adjourn, we did not go over item '16d' to approve the supplemental appropriation for the schools."

Mayor Parham stated, "Yes, item '16d' was moved. Council Member Cuthbert put a motion on the floor to table it until the next meeting."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "I am sorry I probably left the computer then. Can you tell me why we are moving it?"

Mr. Williams stated, "Those two items were brought to my attention by a Council Member. And he was correct that the state code requires a notice and public hearing for appropriations that meet or exceed 1% of your current adopted budget. Because those items are that large it must have a public hearing and there has not been one scheduled."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "Thank you."

17. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

*Audio available upon request.

18. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

19. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM CITY ATTORNEY:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

20. ADJOURNMENT:

City Council adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

Mayor