

The special meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m. The meeting video link is <https://petersburgva.new.swagit.com/videos/308895>.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Council Member Charles Cuthbert, Jr.
Council Member Annette Smith-Lee
Council Member W. Howard Myers
Council Member Arnold Westbrook, Jr.
Vice Mayor Darrin Hill
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: Council Member Jones

Present from City Council Administration:

City Manager John March Altman, Jr
City Attorney Anthony Williams
City Clerk Tangi Hill

2. PRAYER:

Vice Mayor Hill led the opening prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Parham led the pledge of allegiance.

4. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:

A quorum was determined with the presence of the City Council members.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Approval of Revised May 7, 2024 City Council Closed Session Minutes

City Clerk Hill explained that the minutes unfortunately did not reflect the vote of Vice Mayor as being present for the vote regarding the FY2024-25 tax rate. She noted that he was actually presiding at the meeting during this item. The revised minutes reflect Vice Mayor Hill's vote in the affirmative on the motion to adopt the FY2024-25 tax rate.

Council Member Cuthbert asked for clarification. He asked how many Council Members were present when that vote was taken on the tax rate.

City Clerk Hill responded that all seven members of Council were present during the vote. Those voting in the affirmative were Council Members Myers, Smith-Lee, and Mayor Parham. Those voting in opposition were Council Members Cuthbert and Westbrook. Council Member Jones abstained in voting. He did not cite a reason for his abstention. The motion carried. She noted that Council Member Jones did not cite a reason for his abstention.

Council Member Cuthbert said, "That's interesting. An abstention counts in the affirmative. I don't understand that."

City Attorney Williams replied, "I don't recommend getting involved in arguing the legalities. But there is a legal authority to support that an abstention is the equivalent of we're on a basketball team. And someone says, Okay, you want to be blue shirts are red. And someone said, hey, let's take a vote. And so, I say, you know, I don't care if it's blue or red. I'll go with whatever the majority says. So, I think what Ms. Hill is trying to say is that an abstention isn't its simply acquiescence to the will of the majority. And so, she would count it as an affirmative vote, however, Councils that typically do that have that embodied in their rules for future clarification. So, we don't have an issue arise regarding how the abstention is counted, I recommend that Council consider amending its rules in the future to address that. But regardless, the issue is at this point, even with the abstention, you have four in favor of the tax rate and a minority oppose, therefore, the legislation passed properly."

Vice Mayor Hill responded by saying, "That's clarification for me."

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the revised May 7, 202 City Council Closed Session Minutes. Council Member Myers seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion.

On a roll call vote, yes: Cuthbert, Myers, Westbrook, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; abstain: N/A.

The motion was approved on a roll call vote.

b. Approval of the City of Petersburg's FY2024-25 Proposed Revised Operating Budget and Appropriation Ordinance

Mayor Parham introduced the Approval of the City of Petersburg's FY2024-25 Proposed Revised Operating Budget and Appropriation Ordinance.

Council Member Cuthbert interjected by saying, "We have only six members here."

Mayor Parham responded by saying, "Yes, which is a quorum."

Council Member Cuthbert replied, "I intend to leave this special meeting unless Council will instruct the City Manager to achieve a balanced budget by making a salary reduction in each department based on the anticipated vacancies in that department, and do so before July 1, 2024 and also reduce the real estate tax rate from \$1.27 per 100 to \$1.25, per 100. So, I am going to leave this meeting at this point and let the rest of Council consider how they want to proceed. If Council will go along with that motion, please call me on my cell phone and I'll be glad to return."

Vice Mayor Hill called for a point of order.

Council Member Cuthbert requested to be marked as absent.

Vice Mayor Hill responded, "We can't mark you as absent, Council Member Cuthbert."

Mayor Parham asked for a motion for the approval of the proposed City of Petersburg's FY 2024-25 Operating Budget and Appropriation Ordinance.

Council Member Cuthbert left the dais at 3:44 p.m. He did not leave the stage, but remained

behind the curtains, 5 to 6ft behind City Attorney Williams, during the meeting. He did not leave the building until after council adjourned.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the proposed City of Petersburg FY24-2025 Operating Budget and Appropriation Ordinance. Council Member Myers seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion.

On a roll call vote, yes: Myers, Westbrook, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; abstain: N/A; not present at the vote: Cuthbert.

The motion was approved on a roll call vote.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Authorize the City Manager to Enter into a Contract for Municipal Solid Waste Services

City Manager Altman introduced the item by saying, "As council had directed, we put out a bid for solid waste collection services in the city. We received the bids in we've done our evaluation at this point. I would request that Council approve the resolution authorizing myself to enter into the contract for municipal solid waste contract collection services with Meridian Wastes, Virginia LLC. The cost will be \$10.49 cent per month per household, which is an actual reduction of \$1.19, from what we're paying currently."

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract for municipal solid waste contract collection services with Meridian Wastes, Virginia LLC at a cost of \$10.49 per month per household. Council Member Myers seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion.

On a roll call vote, yes: Myers, Westbrook, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; no: N/A; abstain: N/A; not present at the vote: Cuthbert.

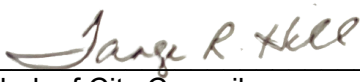
The motion was approved on a roll call vote.

Mayor Parham said, "At this time, I'd like to thank everybody, again, and thank the city staff for putting together our operating budget. And I just want the record to definitely show that we thank each and every one of our employees that deserved a well needed raise. With inflation being what it is and the price of everything from groceries, to expenses of living increase, the best thing we could do was to be able to give all of our employees some sort of compensation to help offset their expenses. I know for many years; the city was in dire financial straits in which we couldn't give our employees the much needed raises that they deserved. And I'm just happy that Council stands united with a budget that can finally address our most valuable assets we have, which is our City employees. Thank you all."

7. ADJOURNMENT:

The City Council adjourned at 3:47 p.m. Council Member Cuthbert returned at 3:47 p.m.

Adopted the 2nd of July 2024.



Clerk of City Council

APPROVED: 

Mayor