

The work session meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. The meeting video link is <https://petersburgva.new.swagit.com/videos/337730>.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Samuel Parham, Mayor – Ward 3
Darrin Hill, Vice Mayor – Ward 2
Marlow Jones, Councilor – Ward 1
Charles Cuthbert, Jr., Councilor – Ward 4
W. Howard Myers, Councilor – Ward 5
Annette Smith-Lee, Councilor – Ward 6
Arnold Westbrook, Jr., Councilor – Ward 7

Absent:

Present from City Council Administration:

Interim Deputy City Manager Kenneth Miller
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams
City Clerk Tangi R. Hill

2. PRAYER:

Vice Mayor Hill led the Council meeting in prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

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

4. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:

A quorum was present.

5. PROCLAMATIONS/RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATION OF CEREMONIAL PROCLAMATIONS

National Procurement Month – Lisa Scott, Purchasing Agent

Mayor Parham presented the Proclamation for National Procurement Month.

Lisa Scott, Purchasing Agent for the City of Petersburg, accepted the proclamation and gave remarks.

2025 Armed Forces Day Resolution – Brian Moore, Economic Development Director

Mayor Parham presented the Proclamation for 2025 Armed Forces Day Resolution.

Brian Moore, Economic Development Director, accepted the Proclamation.

Presentation to William Rigglesman, Engineering Construction Manager, Retirement – Jerry Byerly, Public Works Director

Mayor Parham presented a Recognition of William Rigglesman's service to the City of Petersburg.

William Rigglesman, Engineering Construction Manager, accepted the Recognition.

Petersburg Transit Modernization Initiative Update from Darius Mason with Petersburg Area Transit, Danielle McCray and Sarah Sciarrino with Kimley Horn, and Representatives from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation

Darius Mason, Director of Mass Transit, stated that Petersburg Area Transit (PAT) was pleased to announce a new plan designed to enhance service and accessibility for all members of the community. In collaboration with Kimley Horn and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), PAT had developed the Petersburg Area Transit Modernization Initiative.

Sarah Sciarrino with Kimley Horn said that the Petersburg Transit Modernization Initiative was a collaborative effort between the City of Petersburg, PAT, and the Department of Rail and Public Transportation. The project was selected for a grant from the Federal Transit Administration, specifically targeting areas of persistent poverty. The primary goal of the project is to enhance transit access within the Petersburg community and modernize PAT's operations.

Ms. Sciarrino explained there are three components to the grant: the first is a comprehensive operational analysis of PAT's paratransit service, which will examine ways to improve paratransit operations throughout the City, implement more efficient policies and procedures, and identify technology to enhance service; the second component is an accessibility gap assessment for both fixed route and paratransit service; and the third component is a low no-fuel feasibility study, which will investigate the potential of transitioning from gas, diesel vehicles to battery electric vehicles, considering costs, infrastructure needs, and service changes required.

Ms. Sciarrino said that they began this study last summer with extensive public engagement efforts with the community. They recently completed the comprehensive operational analysis of paratransit service and will discuss the results and recommendations today. This spring, they will shift focus to the Accessibility Gap Assessment and the Low No-Fuel Feasibility Study will be completed as part of the next steps.

Danielle McCray said that this effort involved extensive public engagement and community outreach to understand the needs and opportunities for the PAT service. They began by seeking feedback from riders, customers, and potential customers on improvements to the system and what they valued currently. To achieve this, they conducted a robust transit priority survey, both in paper and online formats, and also targeted paratransit customers with a separate satisfaction survey.

Ms. McCray stated that the public engagement results showed over 270 interactions with the community, and they distributed a significant amount of collateral materials. The community partners they connected with included Virginia Works, the Crater Health District, and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, all of whom provided valuable feedback and perspective on what their constituents were looking for.

Ms. McCray noted that one unique partner that proved valuable was the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) providers. Engaging with this group was helpful, as many residents in the community are using emergency services for non-emergency trips. The feedback from these conversations revealed an opportunity for partnership with the non-emergency transportation providers.

Ms. McCray stated that this effort resulted in over 500 responses from customers and potentially future customers in the community. The feedback from riders and customers indicates that the service is extremely valuable, often serving as a lifeline for many users. Key takeaways included a desire for extended service hours on weekends, Sunday service, improved frequency at large employment facilities and grocery stores, and more information about current bus locations and routes. There were efforts underway to improve the accessibility of information.

Ms. McCray noted that one of the highlighted takeaways was bus stop accessibility. The closer a bus stop was to an appropriate location with the necessary infrastructure for people to access it, the more likely people were to use the fixed route bus service, as opposed to the paratransit service. Therefore, there was an opportunity to evaluate the placement of bus stop infrastructure. There was also a strong desire existed to attract and retain PAT staff and encourage workforce development among the current staff to retain employees when they joined the team. Additionally, there was an opportunity to partner with apprenticeships and local technical schools to develop the necessary skills.

Ms. Sciarrino stated that several opportunities were identified to improve paratransit operations. The first was updating the ADA Paratransit Eligibility Application to include an electronic format with more streamlined questions, to sustain a consistent level of on-time performance, to increase messaging during the paratransit user application process, and to provide self-service options for frequently asked questions and weekend hours.

Ms. Sciarrino said that to recap, the next steps involved completing the accessibility gap assessment, which would examine both the fixed route and paratransit services, as well as the locations where these services were provided, to ensure that people had access to the destinations they needed to reach. Following the completion of this assessment, they would regroup and engage in further discussions before presenting their findings to the Council again.

Mayor Parham and Council Member Jones expressed concern regarding a lack of benches and canopies at their bus stops.

Mr. Mason explained that there was a grant they were currently working on; they had previously presented it to the Council last year. The project aimed to enhance bus stops with new shelters and updated signage for schedules and other information. Given the upcoming changes in the City, they were exploring alternative options to improve transit. This transit modernization study was one of the first steps.

Kenneth Miller said that they would schedule a conference with the City Manager and Transit Department staff and provide a more detailed response.

Council Member Jones expressed concern that the stakeholders involved in this study were not from low-income areas or inclusive of children attending the public school system. He reiterated that all of their community engagement must include low-income residents and neighborhoods to ensure everyone was included in these discussions.

Vice Mayor Hill added that tomorrow they would be conducting the groundbreaking ceremony for the new casino project. He asked if staff had considered new and extended routes to that area, specifically to accommodate those who would be working at the casino.

Mr. Mason confirmed that there had been discussions about that area, and further conversations were planned for the Council's workshop on April 1. He said that PAT would provide a detailed presentation to Council at that time.

Petersburg Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) - Chloe Griffin, Treasurer, Petersburg Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)

Chloe Griffin, Treasurer for the Petersburg Animal Welfare Society, said that they were committed to the success of the Petersburg Animal Shelter, a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to improving animal welfare in Petersburg since 2009. This was a long-standing mission, and they had long advocated for replacing the municipal shelter, while staying committed to ensuring the success of both the new and current shelters.

Ms. Griffin said that their mission included fundraising, volunteer support, and collaboration to create a humane and sustainable shelter. Their current shelter was condemned by the state veterinarian, and there was significant opportunity to establish the new shelter with the recent budget allocation. PAWS was eager to provide adequate space for their animals' needs and ensure they were treated with compassion.

Ms. Griffin explained that despite being condemned by the state veterinarian, staff was managing intake of record numbers as the population of Petersburg grew and they faced an economic crisis, leading to a nationwide animal welfare crisis. Last year, they took in 446 dogs, 183 cats, and five pet rats, of which they were able to save 88%. They were just 2% shy of achieving no-kill status for three consecutive years, a national standard of 90%. Some of the animals were too sick, aggressive, or otherwise unable to be adopted out. In order to ensure they could consistently qualify as a no-kill shelter, they required community participation and an appropriate facility.

Ms. Griffin stated that they also planned to offer healthcare services and amenities for humane animal care. Currently, every dog requiring spay or neuter had to travel to the Richmond Animal League (RAL), a 40-minute drive for volunteers, often resulting in those volunteers getting to work an hour and a half late on Thursdays. This was necessary in order to ensure that these animals were safely spayed or neutered before they moved on to their adoptive homes. She emphasized that it was essential that they provide this service within Petersburg for the welfare of both the animals and residents.

Ms. Griffin continued that PAWS also offered marketing and outreach, public education campaigns to increase adoptions and reduce animal suffering. They also had a goal to strengthen community engagement to increase support for the shelter and coordinate with regional rescues and shelters to identify collaborative opportunities and facilitate transfers of animals. She emphasized that this was a primary venue for how animals made it safely into adoptive homes; it was crucial that they had relationships with these rescues.

Ms. Griffin stated that PAWS also hoped to fundraise for the veterinary clinic, offering low-cost services not only to the shelter pets in-house, but also to the community. Currently, their adoption fees were based on the cost of spay and neuter, and those sometimes reached \$250. They also hoped to have a volunteer coordinator; someone was needed in addition to the four current employees at Petersburg Animal Care and Control so they could focus solely on coordinating and making this a successful community-run initiative.

Ms. Griffin said that PAWS also hoped to fundraise for a separate intake and adoption area, a grooming facility, and a multi-purpose event space, where they could host more public education events. A separate adoption area was essential, as they currently held meet and greets outside due to the lack of space inside the facility, which was difficult to do during bad weather.

Ms. Griffin stated that they sought to develop clicker training, which taught dogs to be quiet and calm when a clicker was used, allowing adopters to see them in a calmer and inviting manner, as well as manners and life skills training, enrichment activities, and a fenced outdoor nature park within the new shelter facility where volunteers could take dogs on outings. They aimed to partner with the Tri-Cities Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) and local businesses to sustain a pet food pantry, supporting the City's companion animals who qualified for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) assistance, which was crucial in keeping dogs and cats out of the shelter.

Ms. Griffin said that they requested Council help PAWS ensure long-term success through a partnership; they would like to establish a shelter advisory council with PAWS and City representatives. She believed PAWS could offer a wealth of perspective and industry best practices in this area. They also aimed to maintain regular volunteer access, including weekends, to support the success of the volunteer program.

Ms. Griffin noted that many volunteers had jobs that required them to work Monday through Friday, and the current shelter's hours, which were limited to Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., could be quite restrictive to a regular volunteer program. To address this, they were hoping to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the City Council to solidify their partnership and enable them to confidently fundraise for these efforts and solicit more volunteer involvement.

Ms. Griffin stated that PAWS was dedicated to making the new Petersburg Animal Shelter a success, and they remained committed to making the current shelter a success as well. They requested City leaders, businesses, and residents support and collaborate with them, as together they could create a shelter that truly served this community in the way it deserved to be served.

Council Member Jones asked if they were passing on the costs of spay/neuter to the adopters.

Ms. Griffin confirmed that they were indeed passing on the cost of these initial medical services, which were required by their state. She said that for a pet to be officially adopted, it must be spayed, neutered, and receive its rabies vaccination. As veterinary costs continued to rise, it was typically the adopter's preference for them to use the services of the Richmond Animal League. In many cases, if an adopter did not live in a locality that bordered Petersburg, it was a legal requirement that they spay or neuter the dog before it went to that adoptive home.

Council Member Jones said that it would be greatly beneficial if local veterinarians could help them with the expenses with spaying and neutering. He recalled that Disputanta and Crater had helped them a lot in the past, so perhaps they could reach out to them again.

Ms. Griffin confirmed that they had been a great partner and Disputanta had greatly helped them through their crisis last spring.

Council Member Myers thanked PAWS for presenting to Council tonight. He said that they were looking forward to sitting down and discussing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with them to move forward, and were hoping to break ground in May or June of this year. He expressed his appreciation for their efforts and collaboration.

Council Member Westbrook asked if Ms. Griffin would like to comment on some of her previously expressed reservations regarding the new shelter.

Ms. Griffin said that while she would not comment on those reservations today, she would like to discuss the establishment of the shelter advisory committee. Building a shelter required a significant amount of expertise, similar to constructing a food distribution facility, given the numerous regulations that must be adhered to. In addition to passing state vet inspections and avoiding fines, there should be some consideration given to the proposed septic system for waste management for this new facility.

Ms. Griffin explained that septic systems had substantial upkeep requirements, even for standard use. In a facility that processed such a large amount of animal waste and handled numerous chemicals, a septic system was widely considered an unacceptable investment by industry professionals. She believed the PAWS group, volunteers, and staff could provide valuable insight to ensure that they created a facility that would serve the City for years to come.

Vice Mayor Hill asked if Ms. Griffin was requesting that Council create the committee for the shelter.

Ms. Griffin requested that PAWS be invited to provide input on the design of the new facility. Given that there was likely an existing committee reviewing the designs, she suggested that they consider including a few representatives from PAWS alongside a couple of passionate members of the City

Council to ensure regular communication and alignment with the issues affecting their animal welfare community.

Council Member Myers confirmed that a committee had been established, which included Joanne Williams. Regarding this committee, they were doing everything they could in terms of engineering the facility, and they believed the City of Petersburg would remain responsible for addressing its needs.

6. RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC INFORMATION PERIOD

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

7. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (TO INCLUDE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS):

- a. Minutes of:
 - March 4, 2025 Closed Session
 - March 4, 2025 City Council Meeting
 - February 25, 2025 Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission
 - February 18, 2025 Closed Session
 - February 18, 2025 City Council Meeting
 - January 26-27, 2025 Council Advance
 - October 15, 2024 City Council Meeting

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Council Member Smith-Lee seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

8. OFFICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY25 Petersburg City Public Schools Budget, in the Amount of \$1,900,000

Garry Cozier, Budget Manager, said that the school division requested that their budget be amended to reflect an additional \$1.9 million. He said that the funding would come from unspent funds previously provided by the City to the school system, which would be utilized for capital improvements, cultural climate change initiatives, and instructional enhancements.

Mayor Parham said that before the public hearing, he would like to inquire if there was a monetary breakdown provided regarding the allocation of the \$1.9 million in the FY25 Petersburg City Public Schools budget.

Mr. Cozier said that he did not have a breakdown for the request.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mount Vernon Street, said that she believed this letter from the School Board that detailed this request had been sent back in October. She asked why it had taken so long to address this issue, considering it had been nearly half a year since the initial request.

Ms. Rudolph expressed concern that if this was an urgent matter, it took a very long time to resolve. She said that she also had a question regarding the resolution passed in 2020, which stated that

leftover funds from the school division would be dedicated to capital projects. It appeared that some of the funds would be allocated to capital projects, while others would be used for other initiatives.

Ms. Rudolph stated that she did not have any objections to the plan itself, but she was puzzled by the inconsistency in using funds for purposes other than capital projects, as this went against the direction established by the City Council earlier. She asked why not all of the funds were directed towards capital projects, as they had discussed this issue before in the context of the field house, so the same guidance applied to spending on capital projects.

Gary Talley, 2323 Fort Rice, said that he strongly supported this initiative; their schools required all the help they could get.

Seeing no further speakers, Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Mayor Parham said that he wholeheartedly agreed with Ms. Rudolph's sentiments, particularly regarding the allocation of funds for capital improvements, which aligned with the original intent of the CIP. He was in favor of the proposal, but he acknowledged that it encompassed multiple items.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the \$1.9 million for the necessary capital improvements and allocate funds for the following initiatives: five additional spots for the Appomattox Regional Governor's School, two spots at the Code RVA program, and the assistant athletic director position. Council Member Myers seconded the motion.

Council Member Westbrook stated that as a proud graduate of Petersburg High School in the class of 1994, and as an educator committed to student success, he spoke not in opposition to this \$1.9 million budget amendment, but with sincere and strategic concern about how these funds would be used to create real and measurable change for their young people.

Council Member Westbrook emphasized that this Council supported their schools, their teachers, their principals, Superintendent, and most importantly, their students. However, supporting them could not stop at writing checks; it must extend to ensuring every dollar was targeted, tracked, and tied to outcomes that broke the cycle of underperformance that had plagued Petersburg public schools for far too long. He said that they were being asked tonight to allocate nearly \$2 million in reappropriated funds, money that could make a significant difference. Yet, he asked, how would they know it did?

Council Member Westbrook noted that the proposed spending fell into three major categories: capital improvements, cultural climate change, and instructional enhancements, each of which was necessary. However, this money did not translate to higher standards of learning, test scores, better student engagement and behavior, and an increase in certified, high-quality teachers in their classrooms. If this was true, they had missed the mark, and they had failed their teachers and their children once again.

Council Member Westbrook said that as the educator on this Council, he knew firsthand that progress was not measured in square footage or software licenses; it was measured by the growth in a child's reading ability, the confidence of a new teacher who felt supported, and the student who walked into a clean, safe classroom knowing their City believed in them.

Council Member Westbrook said therefore, he was asking tonight that as they consider this amendment, they explore options for categorical funding. This would ensure that money intended for instructional improvement was not swept into facilities, and that professional development led to certification, not just participation, and that the climate changes provided measurable student feedback, not just staff workshops. He requested quarterly reporting on progress, academic, cultural, and fiscal.

Council Member Westbrook clarified that this was not a personal attack; he had recently sent questions to the Superintendent and School Board, giving them 24 hours to respond, which they had done, but he had not had enough time to review them before tonight's meeting. He acknowledged the struggles of

their school teachers, emphasizing that he wanted these funds to be used in a way that empowered them, supported them, and honored their commitments to the students of Petersburg. This amendment should not just improve their schools physically, but also uplift their teachers professionally and elevate their students academically.

Council Member Smith-Lee suggested that the \$1.9 million be used to support the certification of teachers who are not currently certified. She said that specifically, she would like to see them receive certification through Virginia State University, if feasible.

Mayor Parham confirmed that the motion would include the certification of any uncertified teachers, capital improvement program items, five positions for Appomattox Regional Governor's School, two positions at Code RVA, and the assistant athletic director position.

The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

Vice Mayor Hill requested that Council schedule a joint meeting with the School Board before budget time.

A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY25 General Fund Operating Budget

Mr. Cozier said that this amendment was related to their General Fund. They had experienced additional revenues across various categories, including permits, fees, licenses, funds, and forfeitures, charges for services, expenditure refunds, and use of money and property. He noted that the use of money and property, in particular, had exceeded their projected amount for this fiscal year.

Mr. Cozier said that their original projection was \$1.4 million, but they were now increasing that amount as they had already surpassed it. As would be shown in the later finance update, the total increase was \$2,193,168, which would be allocated across departments. He said that the majority of this amount would go to the Public Works and Utilities Departments, with the remainder allocated to general government and non-departmental areas.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mount Vernon Street, said that she did not see any information on public works projects mentioned by Mr. Cozier. She said that she hoped that the majority of this funding would be allocated to one-time expenses, as it was additional revenue that was unexpected and may not persist into Fiscal Year 26 and beyond. Given that, it was prudent to use it for non-recurring purposes. She said she would appreciate clarification on which aspects of this funding were expected to be sustainable and would have a lasting impact on their budget development for the next fiscal year. She said that she would like to know more about the expected continuation of the additional revenue, specifically how much of the \$2.2 million might be available in future years.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Mr. Cozier said that in response to the public comment the one-time expenses were primarily focused on non-recurring costs. He said that the only expense they planned to continue was the use of interest, or more accurately, the use of money or property, which generated interest. He said that they intended to include this in their future budget discussions, and the remaining expenses were for one-time projects and costs.

Council Member Myers made a motion to approve the Amendment to the FY25 General Fund Operating Budget in the amount of \$2,193,168. Vice Mayor Hill seconded the motion.

Council Member Cuthbert asked for Mr. Cozier to clarify the use of the amended funds.

Mr. Cozier explained they would be used for one-time costs for multiple departments.

The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

A Public Hearing to Approve a Request by Capital City Homes, LLC to Rezone with Proffers Property at 208 North Dunlop Street and 901, 905, 909, 915, 919, 921, 925, 929, 933 Commerce Street, Parcel IDs 024140003, 024140005, 024140006, 024140007, 024140008, 024140009, 024140010, 024140011, 024140012, 024140013, from the B-2 General Commercial and M-1 Light Industrial Districts to the R-2 Single-Family Residence District

Naomi Siodmok, Planning Director, stated that this item is a rezoning request. She provided an overview of the subject properties, which were located along Commerce and Dunlap, specifically at the corner where they intersect. The applicant was seeking to rezone these properties from B-2 General Commercial to R-2 Single-Family Residence District to construct eight detached dwellings.

Ms. Siodmok explained that 901 Commerce Street was currently zoned B-2, and the remaining parcels were zoned M-1 light industrial. There are three proffers included for consideration, which were voluntary conditions from the applicant. Council may recall that the applicant had previously submitted a request in 2023. She indicated the existing conditions of the site, looking along Commerce towards the development behind these vacant lots.

Ms. Siodmok said that three designs were provided for the two-story homes, each approximately 1,500 square feet, with onsite paved parking. The use would be limited through proffer statements. The proposed plan for the development was displayed, including the paved parking along the front of the street and the single-family homes in the back. She noted that there would be a variety of elevations proposed for this development.

Ms. Siodmok said that as stated in the proffers, no neighboring home would have the same elevation, so they would alternate. The proffers, provided by the applicant, included the following conditions: no more than eight single-family detached homes would be constructed on this property, the houses would be comparable in architectural design to the plans submitted and the elevations provided, and no adjacent house would have the same façade, ensuring that the homes would not be identical to each other. As displayed on the screen, they could see the adjoining zoning, including a planned unit development in the back.

Ms. Siodmok noted that most of the properties are M-1 Light Industrial, but there is one B-2 Commercial on the corner of Dunlap and Commerce. Reviewing their comprehensive plan, this aligns with their vision for the future, which they developed in collaboration with the community. She confirmed that it is identified as a historic core neighborhood on their future land use map, and this proposal is consistent with their goals.

Ms. Siodmok said that their vision called for smaller blocks, smaller lots, and a variety of residential uses at a moderate density. The primary land use is single-family detached homes, as well as other uses such as single-family attached, multi-family residential, and neighborhood institutions. New and infill development should fit the scale, size, and character of the existing neighborhood. Another objective of their comprehensive plan is to facilitate a diverse and attainable housing stock in the City.

Ms. Siodmok stated that this proposal did go before their Planning Commission, and they voted unanimously to recommend approval. Staff also recommends approval with the proffered conditions. She said that provided was a sample motion, and requested that if the Council made this motion to

approve, that they include the proffered conditions in the motion, and if motioning for denial, to please state the reason for denial.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Vernel Gannaway, 652 Old Wagner Road, said that while he saw the diagrams, he was unclear about the income status being used to determine affordability for this property. He said that he wondered if there were individuals who could afford single-family homes of this type in this area. He said that they currently had a number of lofts, which were being maintained, but some residents struggled to afford them based on the City's criteria. He said that as the City continued to grow, he was concerned about the feasibility of this approach for their citizens. He asked if he could receive more information on the background for affordability for this development.

Marlo Greene said that she did not see in the presentation whether these proposed homes would be for resale or rental. She said their City needed to focus on increasing home ownership. She said that she was concerned about the affordability of these homes, given that they currently lacked moderate income housing options. She said that her primary question was whether these homes would be intended for resale or rental.

Mayor Parham asked if the applicant would like to address the public comments.

Barry Jones said that as for the homes he planned to start building, they would be for resale only; there would be no rentals. He said that in terms of the price point, there were several single-family new construction homes that were currently selling quickly, and their prices would be comparable to those being sold per foot. He said that therefore, the homes he planned to build would be market-rate homes.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Council Member Smith-Lee stated that she had talked with the applicant and walked the neighborhood. She acknowledged that many people in that area want houses there, but she wanted to reiterate that the homes built must be market-rate.

Council Member Jones asked if sidewalks would be included as part of this redevelopment.

Mr. Jones said that he discussed with Zoning and Planning the possibility of redeveloping the houses and redoing the sidewalk along Commerce Street, with the goal of creating a walkable and safe pedestrian area.

Council Member Westbrook stated that he would appreciate if these residences were marketed primarily to the workers of Petersburg.

Council Member Smith-Lee made a motion to Approve a Request by Capital City Homes, LLC to Rezone with Proffers Property at 208 North Dunlop Street and 901, 905, 909, 915, 919, 921, 925, 929, 933 Commerce Street, Parcel IDs 024140003, 024140005, 024140006, 024140007, 024140008, 024140009, 024140010, 024140011, 024140012, 024140013, from the B-2 General Commercial and M-1 Light Industrial Districts to the R-2 Single-Family Residence District. Vice Mayor Hill seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

City Attorney Williams suggested that Council Member Westbrook consider directing the City Manager to explore local incentivization options for future workforce housing. He said that this could potentially encourage the next developer to work towards the goals that he had proposed.

A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Option Agreement and Convey Property Upon Satisfaction of Terms for 3501 Halifax Road

Mayor Parham provided the background information on the item. He stated that the City desires to offer an option to purchase the property at 3501 Halifax Street for the purpose of constructing a high-efficiency stacked data center or a commercially similar or better development. He said that it was recommended that the Council hold a public hearing on March 18, 2025, to consider an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute an option agreement and convey property upon satisfaction of terms for 3501 Halifax Road. This option to purchase involved 94.131 acres of land, identified as parcel ID 092010001, for the purpose of constructing a high-efficiency stacked data center or a commercially similar or better development.

Mayor Parham opened the public hearing.

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mount Vernon Street, said that she noticed that this property was different from the one discussed at the public hearing in March, which was located on Halifax Road and consisted of a larger parcel. She said that upon reviewing the map, she saw that this parcel was divided into approximately two or three pieces, which seemed unusual. She expressed concern because, despite having a public hearing, the plan being presented was for a different property, size, and scope.

Ms. Rudolph said that this may lead to fewer objections due to the location, but also raised the possibility of other concerns that were not addressed during the public hearing. She said that she was not opposed to the idea of selling data centers or utilizing the property, and she was aware of the assessed value being offered at 100% of the assessed value. However, the current assessment was much lower than the initial assessment. She said that it would be beneficial to know if this discrepancy was related to the current proposal. She said that given that this assessment occurred several years ago, she believed it would be helpful to provide more information on this site before Council's vote on the proposal.

Mayor Parham closed the public hearing.

Mayor Parham said that to address Ms. Rudolph's question, part of this proposal involved the offsetting of wetlands. Although the first parcel was larger, this particular proposal consolidated and excluded the wetlands from this property. He said that this was why it appeared to look different, despite being in the same area.

Council Member Westbrook said that he concurred with Ms. Rudolph, as he had been conducting thorough research on this matter. He said that he was initially concerned that the development would encroach on the Camelot neighborhood, but he understood that this was a step towards moving forward. The development agreement still needed to be finalized, and they would have a better opportunity to review the plans before the property was sold. Unfortunately, he did not see anyone from the Warrington Group present tonight who could provide more information. He said that he hoped that they would conduct their due diligence in the months to come.

Council Member Cuthbert said that he was reviewing page 154 and noticed that there were three separate parcels highlighted in yellow. He asked if these were the parcels that totaled 94 acres. He said that when he looked at page 154, it seemed to indicate that there were three parcels without any acreage listed.

Mayor Parham clarified that those parcels were designated as wetlands.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if the three yellow parcels on page 154 were the 179 acres. He said that they had already signed an option for 179 acres, and now they had 94 acres available. He said that he was seeking clarification on how these two numbers were connected.

Mayor Parham said that the consolidation process ultimately resulted in reducing the number from 179 to 94, excluding the areas marked in yellow.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if the sale of property was at a separate address from Collier's Yard.

Council Member Myers confirmed that was correct.

Council Member Cuthbert asked where the data center was being proposed.

Council Member Myers clarified that it would be located across the street; the parcels highlighted in yellow would be preserved as wetlands in order to mitigate the impacts on that parcel.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to table Item 8(d) until the next meeting of City Council. Council Member Smith-Lee seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

9. 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 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 removed from consent agenda

Bruce Richardson, 848 Miller Street, Petersburg, Virginia, said he would like to discuss their upcoming homebuyer education event. The Clerk of Council had forwarded each of the Council Members a homebuyer education class to be held on Saturday, March 29, at the Petersburg Public Library from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This event was a collaborative effort with the Southside Community Development Housing Corporation, a local nonprofit. Over the past 15 years, they had successfully hosted these events, and they had seen great turnout.

Mr. Richardson said that it was crucial that they encourage their residents to participate, as they discussed the challenges and obstacles related to home ownership, including credit and income. However, a new challenge was emerging, and that was artificial intelligence. While they were not directly addressing AI in homebuyer education, it was essential to understand how mortgage lenders were using data to determine credit worthiness, which was often extracted from the data they collected through artificial intelligence. In many areas he had led efforts, when discussing employer-assisted

housing with localities, he was one of the few agents who had successfully completed this with Virginia State University.

Mr. Richardson said that five years ago, they had organized an event to discuss the importance of housing with the City of Petersburg, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a meeting at the Tractor Museum to emphasize the importance of employee-assisted housing. If they were not preparing their workforce and providing them with this assistance, they were missing a crucial opportunity. He strongly believed that appointing a dedicated staff member as the real estate professional for employee-assisted housing was crucial. This was not a Council's duty, but rather a staff position that should be established to address this issue.

Wayne Carter, 3209 Hastings Road, said that he was a resident of the 7th Ward. He requested that the City build a sidewalk or bike path along Johnson Road from Delectable Heights to the sports park complex. He said that the rationale for this bike path or sidewalk was to provide citizens of the 7th Ward and Petersburg with a safe and accessible route for recreational purposes, including walking, biking, or running. He said that currently, running or walking along Johnson Road was hazardous due to the limited space and the presence of cars.

Mr. Carter said that seniors and young people would appreciate adequate sidewalks to walk on. He said that a bike path from Delectable Heights to the park would serve as an incentive and attraction for these young people, as well as the health-conscious individuals who occupied the former Virginia Avenue School building. He said that this bike path would provide an opportunity for residents to walk, run, and ride their bikes to the park, where they could participate in various athletic activities and enjoy fishing at the lake.

Mr. Carter said that additionally, the bike path would enable students to ride their bikes to school at the high school. He expressed concern regarding the drainage along this route as well; it was prone to flooding and standing water, which then led to health risks due to mosquitos. He said that on the route he ran on, which led to the high school and Camelot, he was concerned about the safety of cyclists, particularly when cars approached from behind. He said that a bike path built over the drainage ditch, with slotted concrete slabs that could be easily repaired, would not only improve aesthetics but also functionality for the City.

Marlo Greene said that she wanted to speak to road standards versus reality on Pocahontas Island. Tractor trailers come in around 6:30 a.m. every morning and were consistently there for about 12 hours. She explained that she and her brother measured every street on Pocahontas Island, which were all 22 feet wide. In the City Ordinance Article 3, Sections 33 through Section 28, it documented that industrial use roads were required to be 46 feet wide; residential uses should be 36 feet. She noted that the widest road on Pocahontas Island was Pocahontas Street, which was 30 feet wide. The current route by the treatment plant, coming down Sapony to Rolfe Street was 22 feet, not even half of what was required. She had provided photographs of the true conditions of the road.

Ms. Greene said that on an unrelated note, she was walking Appomattox River Trail with Mr. Williams, and noticed a man participated in public indecency on the trail. She noted that she had shared the man's license plate with Chief Christian and hoped to have a case number associated with this incident. She said that next, she wanted to mention the recent cleanup on the Appomattox River Trail, and she would like to extend her gratitude to Marquis Allen, who had a significant role in organizing this greatly successful collaborative effort between the City of Petersburg and the OCR Community Empowerment Group.

Vernel Gannaway, 652 Old Wagner Road, said that on October 16, his wife and he were involved in an accident, and he wanted to thank Officer Street, Captain Adams, and the Fire Chief for their kindness and assistance. Although they had just met him briefly before the accident, they were warm and

welcoming, and their actions helped alleviate his wife's panic attack. He wanted to state on the record their good deed. He said that furthermore, he would like to bring attention to the ongoing issues in their community. Despite the change in leadership, with three new City Council Members, they still had the same problems, such as the issues with drainage.

Mr. Gannaway reiterated that the promised repairs had not been completed, and the last drain cleaning was eight years ago. When heavy rain occurred, water flooded into his property, and in some cases, it also affected the adjacent property. He added there was an easement on his property, and trucks came to use it for electrical and cable work, which also damaged his cement. He said that he wanted something done about it in a reasonable amount of time. He said he was glad to see so many Peabody alumni present tonight; the educators in Petersburg had made a significant positive impact on many people's lives and he believed they should continue that legacy.

Kara Stevens, 226 Rolfe Street, said she wanted discuss beautifying the area over on her Naked Woods in Ward 4, specifically the area used for 4th of July events, as well as the Grapes and Hops event last year. She said that the water had receded from part of the area, which revealed a disturbing amount of trash.

Ms. Stevens said that during the summer months, the trash reeked, and she would like to continue bringing activities to Pocahontas Island while ensuring the area looked presentable and reflected the kind of community she wanted to be in. She said that she would also like to bring up the issue of the house at 712 Logan Street, which was supposed to be demolished in October or November, but remained standing. It was not only an eyesore but also a potential hazard.

Ms. Stevens said that finally, she would like to discuss the Roper site, where some of the infrastructure had started to come down, but people were still hanging out there. She was concerned that they needed to find ways to make this area more significant and meaningful, while also addressing the debris and potential safety issues. She said that considering the recent information regarding how the roads there were smaller than the ordinance allowed, she was wondering what could be done about this issue.

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

Council Member Cuthbert asked Mr. VanVoorhees to display the older photograph of 938 Rosewood Terrace. He explained that this was known among his constituents as the "Redskins House", due to its color scheme. The house looked this way when he joined Council in 2017, and there had been repeated requests for the City to resolve the aesthetic issue. He said that finally, it was being repainted and renovated; it was no longer an embarrassment to the neighborhood. He thanked Mr. Miller for his leadership in this initiative, which had clearly led to positive changes. He believed the neighborhood was better off due to Mr. Miller's efforts and those of his team. He reiterated his gratitude to Mr. Miller and his team for this significant achievement in improving the neighborhood and community.

Council Member Cuthbert said that the next photograph was of 112-114 North Crater Road. The owner or business operating on this property had submitted a special use permit application about a year ago, on January 16, 2024, which the City had unanimously denied. The special use permit was for a stand-alone used car facility at this location at Blandford in the 4th Ward. He expressed his concern over the activities at this address, which went against the City Council's ruling on the special use permit and negatively impacted the neighborhood. He requested Mr. Miller please make a note of this issue. He said that additionally, there was a sign out front that said rezoning pending, which he did not understand.

Council Member Cuthbert asked Mr. Miller to explain Ms. Stevens' reference to the house on Logan Street. He said that it was in a state of disrepair and had no realistic future due to ineffective code enforcement over a decade. He asked what the planned timetable was for demolishing that house.

Mr. Miller said that he did not have an exact date, but he anticipated it would be within the next two weeks. He thanked Mr. Williams and his staff for expediting the process of issuing the code enforcement letter, which had enabled them to move forward with the demolition.

City Attorney Williams said that he did not have any further details, but Code Enforcement staff could tell him the timeline for demolition.

Council Member Jones thanked everyone for attending the meeting tonight, especially the Peabody alumni in the audience. He said that he understood that constituents had raised a variety of concerns, and he agreed that many issues had been outstanding for too long. While these issues did not resolve themselves overnight, it was no excuse for them to never get done.

Council Member Jones asked Council to apply more pressure, particularly on the City Manager. He said that he needed to prioritize their issues in their wards, and that responsibility fell on all of them. He said that he was aware that they had drainage and lighting issues at that location. He said that they must prioritize and apply pressure to resolve these issues. He said that they needed to make sure that everyone involved, including department heads, was aware of what was necessary and took action.

Council Member Westbrook said that he would like to extend a happy Women's History Month greeting to all the women in the audience, as well as the women of Petersburg and the nation. He would also like to take a moment to recognize the women in his life, including his mother, Elizabeth Westbrook, who raised him. There were many women seated in the back of the room who had made a positive impact on his life. He expressed his appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the City and its youth. He hoped they would continue to do great things.

Council Member Westbrook stated that secondly, he would like to address the upcoming speech and debate showcase at Petersburg High School. The debate showcase would take place tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. sharp at the high school auditorium. He was particularly excited about this event, as it highlighted the talents of three students: Ms. Taylor Thomas, Ms. Kayani Donahue, and Mr. Justice Moore. Two of these students would be competing nationally in June, and all three would be competing at the state level next weekend. He encouraged everyone to come out and support these young students.

Council Member Westbrook thanked the Arts Council and anyone else involved in the District Fine Arts Festival, which took place at Petersburg High School last Saturday. The festival featured artwork from students across the district, and he was grateful for the hard work and dedication that went into making it happen. It was great to see the arts initiative in action, and he firmly believed that the arts could be a valuable way for people to learn and express themselves. As someone who traveled frequently, he had noticed the impact of the arts on communities across the country, such as the public murals and sculptures around Washington, D.C. He was committed to continuing to support the arts in their students and City, and he would like to thank Council Member Myers for starting the Arts Council.

Council Member Westbrook said that his fourth point was that spring began on Thursday, March 20 at 5:01 a.m., which meant the grass would start to grow. He encouraged everyone to start cutting their grass, encouraging their neighbors to do the same, and maintaining their yards with mulch, flowers, and gardens. He said that as they entered the new year, he hoped they could all come together to beautify their City.

Council Member Westbrook said that his fifth point was that he had been looking for Friends Of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR) to make a presentation, and he would like to address the City Manager and request that FOLAR provide an update to the City Council on the progress of the trails project and the pavement on their side of Patton Park, because the bridge that was supposed to be built over that area. He said there was a lot of upcoming projects that would affect Pocahontas Island; it was supposed to extend all the way from Dinwiddie to Hopewell.

Council Member Westbrook said that his next point was to acknowledge the spiritual community in the audience. As a Christian, he also celebrated Ramadan. He said that he believed this was an opportunity to deepen their connection with God. He said that he hoped God was blessing their City, given their high density of churches.

Council Member Westbrook said that his final point was to continue working hard with the City Manager to address the issue of single-use plastic bags, which caused a significant amount of trash and litter, ultimately requiring taxpayer monies to clean up. He proposed that the City Manager's Office explore imposing a \$0.05 bag tax, which was the maximum allowed in Virginia, as they approached the budget season for Fiscal Year 26. Their community deserved to live in a clean and healthy environment, and a \$0.05 bag tax was a small step with a significant impact. It was a tool that had proven effective in other localities, and he hoped it would be successful here in Petersburg, Virginia.

Council Member Myers said that he had nothing to report at this time, but wished everyone a good evening.

Council Member Smith-Lee extended a special shout-out to Peabody alumni. She also offered her sincerest congratulations to Tanya Brown and Tara Cosby, who have graciously agreed to assist her in Ward 6 community endeavors. Additionally, she would like to extend her appreciation to Allie Jones and Naomi Jackson for their dedication to community service, particularly in supporting young children in their community.

Council Member Smith-Lee asked that everyone continue to pray for their government, especially those who have lost their jobs with the federal government. Losing a job could have a ripple effect on everything in one's life. She said that those who were facing this challenge were just one or two paychecks away from financial instability, especially those taking care of their families. She asked everyone to please pray for them.

Vice Mayor Hill noted that the Chair of the School Board, Ken Pritchett, had explained to him that he would have been glad to join today's meeting, but had been told he did not need to be in attendance. However, he would like to clarify some points. Their school currently has a partnership with Virginia State University through the Hero Program. They have students and teachers from Virginia State working with them, and university staff members evaluate their student teachers. He said that this year, the Cameron Foundation provided them with funds to help their teachers obtain certification.

Vice Mayor Hill said that additionally, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) has a teacher residency program in their schools, where teachers are working on their master's degrees. They are also paying for their professional licensed teachers to participate in the I-Tech program, which assists them in becoming licensed teachers. He said that Mr. Pritchett had sent him this message because of the concerns raised by Council during the earlier school funding item. While they do have some initiatives in the pipeline, he wants to assure everyone that they are indeed in partnership with Virginia State and other surrounding schools.

Vice Mayor Hill said that he would like to take a moment to express his gratitude to Ms. Joanne Williams, their Public Information Officer, who has done an outstanding job in capturing the activities and events in Petersburg. He would also like to thank her for her efforts in removing over 30 signs from the right-of-way area in the City. He had previously asked Public Works to address this issue, and while they have made some progress, they still had work to do.

Vice Mayor Hill said that the issue of litter was a persistent one, and they must continue to strive for improvement. He said that while he would continue to ensure Public Works was aware of the issues, they as citizens must also take responsibility for their own actions. He said that he was also aware of the drainage issues that continued to be of concern and they needed to find a more effective solution.

He said that he sympathized with Mr. Gannaway because he knew he had been dealing with the flooding for a very long time. He said that he would ask Public Works what they could do to resolve the issue.

Vice Mayor Hill wished everyone a Happy Women's History Month, International Women's Day, and hoped God blessed all of Petersburg's citizens.

Mayor Parham thanked Joanne and Ella for their efforts in producing a wonderful newsletter. He said that it had become a valuable resource for the community, and he felt it was now comparable to a City newspaper. Recently, he had a neighbor stop by his yard while he was doing yard work and tell him how informative and enjoyable the newsletter is. Their newsletter had grown to 10 pages, and he was pleased to see it was packed with a wide range of information. The latest issue was available, and they would continue to share updates on the good news happening in their City.

Mayor Parham said that they had had several ribbon-cutting ceremonies, and their next one was scheduled for Thursday at 3:30 p.m., celebrating the opening of the vegan restaurant, NuVegan. He said that he was also hosting a ward meeting with School Board Chair Ken Pritchett on March 24 at 6:00 p.m. at Vernon Johns, to discuss school funding and some of the concerns raised tonight regarding the schools. He said that he would reserve the rest of his time to Council Member Westbrook, if he would like to add anything.

Council Member Westbrook clarified that the reason he abstained from the vote earlier was because he was very passionate about the school system, and working with the schools for five years and having a daughter in the schools currently meant he felt very attached to the schools' operations. He expressed his support for funding the schools; however, he explained that he felt he must abstain from the vote because he needed some specific assurances from the School Board and Superintendent.

Council Member Westbrook emphasized that they were looking at multiple avenues for revitalizing Petersburg, but they would see no results if they did not empower their children and ensure they had quality education that will lead to fulfilling careers. He was not trying to be overly critical, but he wanted to see tangible improvements. His previous speech during the earlier public hearing was not said with the intention to criticize or catch them off guard. He reiterated that he would be happy to share the questions and answers from himself and the School Board as part of the public record.

11. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

12. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT

Department of Finance Monthly Update

Garry Cozier, Budget Manager, said that this item included budget to actuals and an earned interest update. He said that provided was some information on their departments. Overall, they were still on track, with 67% of the year gone and 63% of the total budget spent in the General Fund. Looking at the other funds, many were supported by grants and other sources, which may not trend in the same way as the General Fund over the course of the year, but they were still in a very good position.

Mr. Cozier said that regarding their earned interest update, for their local government investment pool, they had earned \$1.2 million to date. He said that additionally, their interest-bearing sweep account had earned \$302,519, bringing the total to \$1.5 million in earned interest. He noted their projection for this year was \$1.4 million, and they had already surpassed that, so they were doing exceptionally well.

Vice Mayor Hill said that he wanted to know the process regarding the Budget Department's role in issuing or collecting real estate taxes, as opposed to the Commissioner of Revenue.

Mr. Cozier said that he was in the Finance Department, but as Budget Manager, he did not handle collections.

Vice Mayor Hill expressed concern that their customer service in the department could be improved. He stated that it had been brought to his attention that staff had not assisted their residents as well as they should have, and in fact had been disrespectful at times. He reiterated that it was unacceptable for any City staff to be disrespectful or unhelpful to citizens.

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

14. NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Commercial Lease Agreement Between The Wilds LLC and the City of Petersburg for the Property Located at 277 River Street, Petersburg, VA

Brian Moore, Director of Economic Development, stated that this item is a request to lease the field at the harbor for the Armed Forces event. He said that they had been advised that this was a requirement by ordinance. He said that this would enable them to host the entire event within the field area, without crossing the railroad tracks. He said that they would have all necessary amenities, including bathrooms and vendors, and would feature performances by Roberta Lea and a couple of other bands. He said that staff was respectfully seeking Council's support for this item.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Commercial Lease Agreement Between The Wilds LLC and the City of Petersburg for the Property Located at 277 River Street, Petersburg, VA. Vice Council Member Westbrook seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

Resolution Requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner and VDOT Convey the Title to the Rights-of-Way Within the Corporate Limits of said City to the City Council of Petersburg

Brian Copple, City Engineer, stated that before Council was a resolution that was required by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to convey some right-of-way at 1161 Wagner Road, which would facilitate the construction of the data center. He said that this resolution would allow the City to retain the emergency access easement and the utility easement, while the data center owner would be the property owner. He said that this paper marked the beginning of the process for VDOT to transfer the right-of-way back to the City.

Council Member Cuthbert asked when the utility easement would be presented to Council.

Mr. Copple said that when VDOT dedicated the right-of-way to the City, they would work with the Planning Department as part of the development agreement for the data center to dedicate the right-of-way to the developer, and then the City would request the easement.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the Resolution Requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner and VDOT Convey the Title to the Rights-of-Way Within the Corporate Limits of said City to the City Council of Petersburg. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

Resolution Expressing the Concurrence of the City Council of the City of Petersburg with the Inducement Resolution Adopted by the Economic Development Authority of Henrico County, Virginia and Approving the Issuance of Revenue Bonds for the Benefit of Southside Regional Medical Center

Mr. Moore said they had the pleasure of hosting Ms. Erin Sutton from Dinsmore & Shohl, who represented Bon Secours Mercy Health and would provide a brief overview of the specifics of this matter and address any questions Council may have.

Erin Sutton said that she was from Dinsmore and Shohl, serving as bond counsel on this transaction. She stated that Bon Secours Mercy Health was a 501(c)(3) non-profit health system with facilities in the Richmond and Hampton Roads markets, including Southside Medical Center here in Petersburg. In accordance with their Board-approved plan of finance, Bon Secours had requested that the Economic Development Authority of Henrico County issue revenue bonds. The proceeds of these bonds would be used to refund prior outstanding debt, reimburse themselves for prior capital expenditures, and fund planned capital improvements at their healthcare facilities throughout the state.

Ms. Sutton said that on February 27, a public hearing was held by the Petersburg Economic Development Authority, pursuant to Section 147(F) of the Internal Revenue Code, which required that they hold a public hearing to obtain a tax exemption on these qualified 501(c)(3) bonds. They had held a public hearing, also known as a Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) hearing, after publishing notice in the Richmond Times Dispatch on February 20. The concurring resolution before Council tonight served two purposes. Firstly, under federal law, they needed their approval as the City Council to obtain the tax-exempt status on these bonds, as defined by the tax code. Secondly, under state law, they required a concurring resolution, which was mandated by the Industrial Revenue Act, as Henrico County was issuing the bonds.

Ms. Sutton stated that therefore, they needed Council approval to allocate some of the bond proceeds within the City of Petersburg. The portion of the bonds allocated to Southside Regional Medical Center was estimated not to exceed \$20 million, covering capital projects from the past three years and potentially future projects over the next two years. They aimed to secure all local approvals by the end of March. She noted that these were conduit revenue bonds, and the debt service on the bonds was secured only by the funds and revenues of Bon Secours. She clarified that these would not constitute debt or general obligations of any political subdivisions, including the City of Petersburg or the Petersburg Economic Development Authority.

City Attorney Williams asked why these bonds were being issued by the Henrico Economic Development Authority instead of the Petersburg Economic Development Authority.

Ms. Sutton replied that Bon Secours is a significant health system, and at this time, their plan of finance involves issuing bonds in three different states simultaneously. She said that they are also financing in the Republic of Ireland at the same time. She said that in Virginia, the health system is financing capital expenditures at 11 different locations. She said that to accommodate this, they cannot have 11 different issuers of the bonds; therefore, they were using Henrico Economic Development Authority, as the majority of their project is taking place at St. Mary's.

Mayor Parham opened the floor to public comment. Seeing no speakers, he closed the floor to public comment and the matter rested with Council.

Vice Mayor Hill made a motion to approve the Resolution Expressing the Concurrence of the City Council of the City of Petersburg with the Inducement Resolution Adopted by the Economic Development Authority of Henrico County, Virginia and Approving the Issuance of Revenue Bonds for the Benefit of Southside Regional Medical Center. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

There was no discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call vote.

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

15. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT AND SPECIAL REPORTS

Mayor Parham stated that unfortunately, City Manager Altman was unwell and could not attend tonight's meeting. He asked if Mr. Miller had anything to report.

Mr. Miller said that on behalf of the City Manager, he said that he would like to express his gratitude to all City employees who stayed and demonstrated their commitment to their City. He thanked Council for their leadership and hoped they would move forward positively.

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK

Tangi Hill, City Clerk, stated that she had no report this evening.

17. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY

Anthony Williams, City Attorney, said that he had no report this evening.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Parham made a motion to adjourn. All members of the Council present voted in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned.

The City Council adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Adopted: April 1, 2025.

APPROVED:



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk