

The work session meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting video link is <https://petersburgva.new.swagit.com/videos/336476>

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:

City Manager John March Altman, Jr.
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. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gary Talley said that he would like to thank the City for the work on the Oak Street Bridge. He said that he was planning to bring this up tonight. He said that another question that was not addressed by Council Communicates was regarding the retaining wall between Hotel Petersburg and the back of City Hall. He said that specifically, the discussion centered on who was responsible for it, and that question was left unanswered. He said that therefore, he asked who was paying for it - the City or the Hotel? He said that if it was the City, he would like to know why.

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

- a. Minutes of:
October 1, 2024 Work Session

February 4, 2025 Work Session

- b. First Read & Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY25 Petersburg City Public Schools Budget, in the Amount of \$1,900,000
- c. First Read & Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY25 General Fund Operating Budget
- d. First Read & Schedule 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
- e. First Read & Schedule 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

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

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

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

7. SPECIAL REPORTS

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

8. MONTHLY REPORTS

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

9. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

10. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Mr. Michael Luning of the JMT presented the Overall Southeast Petersburg Infrastructure Improvements Program Review and Update. He said that the Poor Creek overall project included the abandonment of the existing force main that ran through the battlefield and its replacement with a larger force main. They were also rehabilitating the Poor Creek Pump Station and constructing an additional water pump station in the City, which would provide better water service to the southeastern portion of the City. This included the new water booster pump station under construction at the Walnut Hill tank, the new water transmission main down 301, and the new water storage tank off Normandy Drive near I-95.

Mr. Luning provided photos to show the progress of their work. The water storage tank was approximately 80% complete and was scheduled to be completed by October of this year. A contractor was providing construction management and inspection services on this contract. In terms of funding, this project had been awarded a \$7 million grant from the Economic Development Administration, and they had already spent \$5.8 million; there was \$2.4 million remaining.

Mr. Luning said that the City's contribution to this project was a match of 15.6%, totaling \$1.2 million. Moving on to the next slide, he would like to show some interesting pictures of the construction. The interior of the tower featured a column that would support the tank on top, as well as inlet, outlet, and overflow pipes. The center picture showed a ladder and rest platforms for workers to climb up the interior of the tower. The steel plates being welded together around the tank demonstrated the contractor's clever approach to building this tank.

Mr. Luning said that the tank and tower were being constructed, with the tank built around the tower. Next, they would jack the tower all the way up to the top of the building, where it would become the water storage tank. They expected this process to be completed within about three weeks, but he would provide a more exact date when it was possible. As they waited for the tower to be raised, it would be an exciting time to observe the construction process.

Mr. Luning said that they could see the tank under construction, with concrete being poured for the dome portion and the tower in the center. He said that this video, prepared by the Communications Department, provided a background on the tank's construction process, created internally for the City's use. They were constructing the tank around the bottom, then elevating it, adding the roof and walls, and it would provide 2 million gallons of water for the third pressure zone, feeding that area and increasing water supply for the casino and pharmaceutical areas, solving several problems for utilities.

Mr. Luning said that this project was associated with the water main booster pump station and pressure reducing valves. He said that he wanted to provide an update on the facts of the project. The project began on May 20, 2024, and was expected to be completed by July of this year. The contractor, Waco, Inc., was working on the project and still had \$4.3 million to spend; so far, they have spent \$1.5 million.

Mr. Luning said that the water main had been installed from the Walnut Hill tank south, underneath the creek at the Blackwater Swamp, and it would continue south to Wagner Road, where it would tie in. The pictures showed the water main installation on 301 and the water pumping station. They could see the blue tank in the background to give an idea of its proximity to the ABC distributor. The water pumping station was being built, and they could see additional construction as they moved forward.

Mr. Luning said that the force main project, which replaced the existing force main on Norfolk Southern Railroad through the battlefield, was now going to be installed on 301 North. He said that this project had initially been bid, but they had had to re-bid it due to complications, resulting in a slight delay. The completion date was now May 26, and the contractor was still working on the project, which was behind schedule due to the initial slow start.

Mr. Luning said that this was why they had their construction managers involved, working to get the Utilities, Public Works, and contractor, Morgan Contracting, on track. He said that it was part of the rebid package they implemented to reduce costs and get back within budget. When the original bid was submitted, it was over budget, but by breaking it into two projects, they were able to secure better prices for the contractors, and as a result, this project was moving along a bit faster.

Mr. Luning said that the contractors were currently working on it; they had spent \$173,000 so far, with the remaining \$8.6 million allocated for this project. In another month or so, they would have better pictures of this project's progress and show Council. In summary, the water tank, built water booster pump station, and all associated work would be completed in 2025, as planned. This work would ensure that they had the necessary water pressure for the new facilities being built. He said that the wastewater pump station projects would be completed in 2026, which fit within their original schedule.

Mayor Parham asked if they should be prepared to budget any extra funds in anticipation of the federal tariffs.

Mr. Luning said that most of the equipment was American-made, and it included a Buy American clause in every contract. The majority of the materials, including the pumping station and pipeline, had been ordered and delivered, with some items already ready for use. These were expensive lead-time items, which was one reason why the project took so long. The procurement of the pipeline was a large, time-consuming item, but it had been ordered and was ready for installation.

Mayor Parham asked if they had factored in paving Crater Road after the work was completed.

Mr. Luning confirmed that they were fully repaving the two center lanes that were disturbed from the work, but not across all five lanes.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if they planned to keep the tank near the Food Lion.

Mr. Luning said yes; it was now Pressure Zone 2 and continued to serve the area and acted as a buffer while they transferred water from the old tank to the new tank.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if the two projects were separate because one dealt with water while the other was for wastewater.

Mr. Luning said that in their context, these projects were wastewater projects. He explained that in the environmental field, they were referred to as clean water projects, but to clarify, they were not for drinking water.

John Altman, City Manager, said that technically, they had three main projects underway to serve the pharma and casino area of the City. These included the replacement of the water line, the replacement of the sewer line, and the pump stations that accompanied those two projects. There was also the new water tower, which was a separate project. It was worth noting that the water tower had been funded through a separate pot of money from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

11. UTILITIES

Public Works Presentation

Brian Copple, City Engineer, said that the Utilities Division would continue to have a robust workload. Although water main breaks had decreased since the change in weather, they had experienced a couple of recent breaks on the 20-inch Locks water main, which would eventually be replaced. They were also addressing some leaks on old work orders under the line, which they had previously contended with. They had responded well to a recent break that occurred just past Monday, thanks to their on-call contractors.

Mr. Copple said that for the streets department, they were conducting the annual pothole blitz, which was available on their website. He said that the event started on March 17, and staff would provide more information on that after the winter weather. They were also continuing to improve drainage, and they could speak to the fact that they had worked with Joanne Williams and the Department of Environmental Quality to secure funding for these improvements, which would be presented in their capital project updates.

Mr. Copple said that they were continuing to work on traffic signal control by changing some of the signal controllers, conflict monitors, and other items. As more funds became available, they would create a City-wide plan for the traffic signal upgrades. He said that for the facilities and grounds division, they were experiencing issues with the new water main installation at the sports complex. For the floodplain administrator position, there was a potential candidate who would soon be interviewed.

Mr. Copple said that Timmons Group continued to move forward with the City-wide storm drainage project, and they were actively pursuing a contract with Tri-States to line more areas throughout the City. He said that they had a strategic approach to identifying areas that needed lining and were able to redirect their contractor to those locations. This allowed them to effectively utilize their on-call contractors. They had recently renewed their contract with Tri-States for two years.

Mr. Copple said that they had just begun the fleets branch restoration project, and as a result, they had a number of other projects in the pipeline for the stormwater side. Their studies had led to tangible results, so they were actively implementing these projects rather than just studying them. He was glad to report that they were making significant headway on stormwater issues.

City Manager Altman said that one thing that was absent from the plan was the significant snow removal effort that they undertook. This endeavor required a substantial allocation of their resources, diverting attention away from other projects they were working on prior to the snow removal.

Council Member Cuthbert asked if Mr. Copple could discuss the traffic signal upgrade plan for South Crater and Wyndham.

Mr. Copple explained that a part of the maintenance involved replacing the backings on the signals, as well as the back plates, which required a certain level of reflectivity. He

said that this was a routine maintenance task that was necessary to ensure the signals functioned properly.

Council Member Cuthbert asked whether it was feasible to have a light change from green to red only when someone approached it from Wyndham.

Mr. Copple said that they were currently investigating that option, but this would impact the overall timing along the corridor, requiring them to implement a new timing plan for the entire corridor. They were also working with their on-call consultant to re-time the signal for that specific location.

Council Member Cuthbert requested the City Manager to ensure Council received a status report on the progress of these traffic signal improvements by the April meeting.

City Manager Altman said that he would share it with Council as soon as it was completed. He stated that he had mentioned at the ward meeting that they had considered closing some of those crossings to prohibit the left-hand turn off of Crater onto those cross-streets, and he thought it would be beneficial to hold a community meeting to gather citizen feedback on potential solutions.

City Manager Altman said that he believed they had some viable options to present. He said that they had considered closing the median by installing bollards, rather than concreting it initially, to create a barrier that would prevent left-hand turns across traffic. They were exploring short-term actions to address this issue, and if approved, they hoped to have the project completed by April, and he would be able to provide Council with pictures of the actual project in place, allowing them to see the results firsthand. They were focusing on the three roads that concurrently carried a significant amount of cross traffic, with the goal of reducing accidents in that area.

Mr. Copple said that they would be implementing a corridor improvement plan because, in his experience, addressing one particular intersection could have a domino effect, impacting multiple intersections. To avoid this, they needed to make changes along the entire corridor rather than just focusing on one area.

Mr. Copple noted that one of the significant projects they had underway was the VDOT project, which was scheduled to go out for bid within the next 60 days, for the South Crater Road Signal Improvement Project on Wagner Road. This would have a substantial impact on the corridor, and they would need to carefully consider the results and how they would be incorporated into the corridor-wide plan.

Mayor Parham asked if they could also examine traffic improvement measures in that area, particularly in relation to the pharmaceutical cluster, with Novo Nordisk now located there. He said that their plan was to have significantly more traffic in the future. He said that the area was not well lit, and it lacked crosswalks, particularly between the Civica and Novo Nordisk sides. He said that the road was not designed to handle this level of heavy traffic, which had quadrupled since its original construction.

Mr. Copple said that they had observed that throughout the construction process, and this issue would be addressed. A traffic impact analysis was required for the casino, which would cover the area around Brasfield Parkway and the surrounding areas. The casino was responsible for conducting this analysis, but they would have access to the

results and be able to make informed decisions based on them. He agreed with Mayor that this was a priority issue that should be considered for future improvements.

City Manager Altman noted that they had the ongoing pipeline study that spanned from Reeves to Crater, then up to Crater to Wagner, and Wagner to Normandy. He said that the VDOT was currently working on this study to assess intersection improvements at Normandy and Wagner. He said that in the short term, he believed they could collaborate with Dominion to explore the possibility of addressing the lighting component.

Mayor Parham expressed interest in learning the cost of paving the entirety of Crater Road, so that it was not unevenly paved once construction was completed.

Vice Mayor Hill said that he would like to bring to their attention three key issues. He said that firstly, he would like to discuss Sycamore Street going north to Bollingbrook. He said that the stop sign at that intersection was frequently disregarded. It used to be a traffic light, so he was wondering if they needed to put the light back.

Vice Mayor Hill said that the stop sign had been enlarged, but drivers continued to run it. Vehicles approaching from Dixie's often did not stop at all, and it happened constantly throughout the day. He had counted at least 30 cars running through it in an hour, which posed a significant risk to pedestrians and may necessitate a traffic light.

Vice Mayor Hill said that additionally, he would like to address the issue of the long cycle time at the intersection of North Crater Road and South Boulevard. When turning left onto the Boulevard, drivers often had to wait for an extended period of time, which could be frustrating and even hazardous when people made U-turns instead at the other intersections.

Mr. Copple said that they were attempting to incorporate a retiming into the South Crater Road signal project. He said that although it was not initially included in the original scope, when they rebuilt the signals at South Crater and Wagner Road, they would implement a new timing for all of Crater Road. It was not expected to be an immediate solution, but they anticipated getting the South Crater Road signal project bid out hopefully early this spring and under construction by this fall. This should help address some of the issues along South Crater and Wagner Road. He said that he would review the intersection in the interim.

Vice Mayor Hill asked if there was a Public Works plan to address the trash and littering in the City. He said that the City was plagued by trash, a concern he had since joining the Council. While some areas were well-maintained, and once attention was drawn to certain areas, they were cleaned up. He said that as the City grew, so did the amount of trash. He emphasized that signs in the right-of-way also needed to be immediately removed. He reiterated that Public Works needed to do the hard work and keep the City clean.

Mr. Copple agreed. He stated that they needed to have a plan to be more proactive in addressing these issues. As far as direct authorization was concerned, they did have a directive that for signs or other items within the right-of-way, staff were responsible for removing them without needing a supervisor's approval. This was simply a part of their everyday task.

Vice Mayor Hill asked how they would address the everyday trash.

City Manager Altman said that one of the things they were discussing was creating a crew or exploring additional contractors to help them maintain their facilities. Currently, they rotated their existing staff around the City, but they were concerned that if they did not have a sufficient presence, they may not be able to keep up. They were looking at adding more personnel, either through contracts or hiring, to ensure they could maintain a consistent presence in multiple locations.

City Manager Altman said that regarding the signs, he would like to give credit to Ms. Siodmok's crew for their efforts to clean up signs in the right-of-way, which he witnessed personally on Friday. They were working to address this issue across multiple departments, and if someone saw signs in the right-of-way, they should pull them out because they should not be there. By having more people available to remove the signs, they could clean up the area more efficiently.

Vice Mayor Hill encouraged everyone to work together as a City to pick up trash.

12. STREETS

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

13. FACILITIES

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

14. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There were no items under this portion of the agenda.

15. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

City Manager Altman reported that the next day, a severe weather system was expected to bring strong winds and potentially tornadoes. He urged everyone to be vigilant and keep an eye on the sky, as they wanted to ensure everyone was aware of the situation.

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK

Tangi Hill, City Clerk, expressed her gratitude to everyone who had reached out to her about her sister's passing. She said that she appreciated the kind words, cards, flowers, and support that had been provided. She said that their prayers and well wishes meant a great deal to her.

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 7:35 p.m.

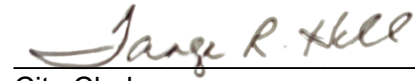
Adopted: 03/18/2025

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul Pridemore", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Tange R. Hill", written over a horizontal line.

City Clerk