

The regular meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, at the Petersburg Public Library. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The meeting video link is <https://petersburgva.new.swagit.com/videos/313968>.

1. ROLL CALL

Present:

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

Absent:

Present from City Council Administration:

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

2. PRAYER

Vice Mayor Hill led the opening prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Parham led the pledge of allegiance.

4. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM

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

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Parham opened the floor for public comments.

Paula Chester, 1013 Oakmont Drive, said, "I attended the event on Poplar Lawn, this past Saturday. In talking to people about the Casino, mostly everyone, especially seniors, their major concerns as to why they were against the casino was because it would bring more crime into the city. I'm hearing crime into the city, but I don't know any statistics that's showing having a casino has increased crimes in the other states. I was hoping, if you can invite a public forum again to address the crime issue and to find out exactly where they're getting that information. This would be greatly appreciated in passing the casino. Thank you."

Brandon Riley, 535 Beech Street, said "I came primarily today on a number of different things, but changed my topic. As we have the occasion for a friend, who is suffering the loss of his mother. It was brought to my attention how those who are hurting because of love, end up then hurting others or have a void that needs to be filled by love. I know that a few months back, Councilwoman Smith-Lee presented about something needing to be done for our children, our youth, recreation center, or something to that affect. I am here inquiring about the status of Harding Street. It was converted into an AG center at one point and time, and I want to know the status of it."

Bertha Hicks, 220 Oak Hill Road, said "I am here to speak for the Walnut Hill Gardens' Oak Hill Bridge.

If I can have the signs, please? Three years for a garden is a long time. Three years of patience is a long time. It's time. We still don't know why the bridge was closed. We still don't know what the problem is, and we don't know when repairs are to begin, if at all. So, we need to be informed. Be informed. Be informed. Elections, they're coming. Elections are where we the voters send politicians to live a different life. So, November 5, whether it's casinos or bridges, you hear from the voters. So now is definitely the time to stop asking for you to do what we send you here to do. The other thing is, and the last thing, there's a commercial on TV, an auto salesperson, where he says, don't tell me what you can't do. Tell me what you can do. Thank you."

Marlo Green, 301 Rolfe Street, said, "I just wanted to speak on one of the special items today regarding the road to the Roper site. Just want to make sure other residents of the community are aware, the treatment plant actually serves multiple localities and provides essential water services to many. It's important to recognize the burden that falls on the Pocahontas Island community. Our historic neighborhood, bears the brunt of the noise, the smell from the treatment plant, the road damage, the dust settlement is all caused by tractor trailer traffic. While others enjoy the benefits of the clean water in their communities, and obviously don't have to deal with the heavy trucks coming through their residential neighborhoods, we actually pay a heavy price in our neighborhood. It's time for us to address these issues, to protect the integrity and well-being of the cherished area. The new road is supposed to be free to the city. All localities that are being served, Prince George, Chesterfield, no one has come out of pocket. It's no cost to the city, but I am hearing reservations about it going through the Roper site. There are no plans existing for the Roper site currently at all, outside of this \$2.5 million DCR grant that's for abatement issues, which is still not a plan for the Roper site. So, I understand the concerns about utilizing that space for conservation. However, this road should not impact that at all. The other thing I wanted to mention here is that when we met with Robert Wilson from the treatment plan, he mentioned that once they start these upgrades, it's going to be bigger trucks coming through the neighborhood. And I'm asking Council, if you don't say yes, now, what's the resolution for our neighborhood? I mean, we deal with the smell, the noise, the sediment issues. This is a free road where another organization is willing to fully cover the cost of a road in a city. So, I think this is something we should strongly consider, especially while there are no other options on the table in regards to the Roper site. The buildings that are currently there are just dilapidated and should really all be knocked down. I just wanted to also highlight all of my community members, residents, on Pocahontas Island. Long term residents have been there for over 50 plus years. We've been advocating for this new road since back in 2000. I think in 2020 is when the treatment plan originally came out with this plan for upgrades. Here we are, four years later, after this road was supposed to be complete. Obviously, there are some other bottlenecks and things have transpired, but it's back on the table now. I need you to vote yes for this, because the community of Pocahontas Island is a historic black neighborhood that has been dealing with these heavy trucks coming through the neighborhood since the 1950s. Like I said, anyone that owns property wherever you live, you don't want to see a tractor trailer riding down your street every day. You don't want to smell what we smell over there. But that's something we have to deal with, right? So, at a minimum, rerouting these trucks down Pocahontas Street, which is the widest Street in the entire neighborhood, is the best option. So, I'm just standing by that. Thank you."

Samad Earls, 200 Addison Way, said, "I wanted to share my concerns with you all in regard to the quality as well as the safety of the roads here in Petersburg, Virginia, specifically between Interstate 95 and Virginia State University. The roads are filled with holes. If the holes are filled in and or the roads are repaved, then people will be more inclined to visit, explore, spend time and money here in Petersburg, Virginia. This fix will assist with the continued beautification of Petersburg, Virginia. Thank you."

Kara Stevens, 226 Rolf Street, said, "I am coming to speak today. I gained some more information from when Marlo just spoke, but another emphasis on getting that road redirected. I've had damage to my vehicle from the holes on the street that I live on to go home every day from the constant heavy trucks coming through. I also deal with meeting them in the road, and one of us having a fight to get over. Of course, you know, the larger vehicle wins, and I'm just trying to get into my home. It's a one-way street.

It's very tiny. It's hard for any of us to get through. The constant road damage that has to be repaved. The pollution. The smell becomes an inconvenience for residents. I'm all for that road being voted on and being redirected. Another topic that I want to bring up with the visitation on the trail. We have brought it up before, about the trail being maintained. The grass and everything around the Rotary Park and the fishing area back there, with all the weather and the storms and things that we've had of recent the last few weeks, it's becoming very tight to even get back there. Nothing has been done. Where we had a little bit of walking space, now no vehicles, nothing really could because now it's even tighter and it's growing up more from the sides. It's a safety hazard. Snakes, animals, anything, maybe somebody's hiding because we also have people who reside in different areas out there in the woods. It's just becoming a safety hazard, and no one is looking at it. It's like you're turning away. Soon it's going to be completely away from us, and you can't even walk back there. The water is there. Why not keep it up if we have this area? This is a trail that everyone uses, from Colonial Heights to Petersburg, so on. People come there to fish. So, this is something that we need to keep up and maintain. I just want to make Pocahontas more like my home and help maintain it and get the city to look at it like a home too, because this is a part of Petersburg, and we want it to stay decent."

Sarah Witiak, 22 Center Hill Court, said "I'd like to tie a couple of things together that I've heard tonight, about the Oak Hill Bridge, about Harding Street, about casino information, and the Roper site. One of the issues that is connecting all of these is an issue of transparency and responsiveness in a timely manner to citizens in this city. As we start to think about the casino, there is really no place for citizens to go to find out exactly how many jobs, exactly how many, what types of jobs are available. We do not have any clear information about the plans for the casino. We do not have any information on taxes. We do not have a lot of information on the comparison between the different proposals that were presented to City Council. We are missing information on how the decision to hire the casino operator was made. I think that this is just a continuous pattern of a lack of transparency with the citizens that you are serving. I would also like to encourage you to produce perhaps on the web page, perhaps somewhere else, maybe here at the library, a list of facts about the casino that the city has. Right now, all we have to go on is the advertising agency at the corner of Sycamore and Washington Street that is put on by the casino, which is not quite fair. I'm sure that as a responsible City Council, you have done your due diligence, you have compared those numbers, you have asked the hard questions. I think that as people who work for the city, you need to share that information with us in some way. If you feel that the state has forced you into a process, and that process does not allow you to share information with the city, I think you need to stand up for the city residents, and insist that there be a way to share information with your citizens. You should not let the state step all over you again and again in that. We have also seen in the Virginia Mercury that there are texts between City Council members and city staff members saying that public comment periods do not matter for the casino, and that it won't make any differences if there's a city event or city input. And I find that very disappointing, that that is the attitude of the city officials here. So, I would please refer you to that Virginia Mercury article. They did a very nice study report on that."

Barb Rudolph, 1675 Mount Vernon Street, said "You all had a special meeting at the end of July, which I attended. And it was very interesting, because it's probably been about four years since you met at the at the train station, when you think about covid, and then when this building opened, I have a few comments about it. First, the good. The good was that I felt like in the environment, it was more encouraging of interaction between the people in the audience, members of Council, and the members of city administration. I'm going to make a suggestion based on that. Last week, Councilor Cuthbert had a Ward 4 meeting in here. Instead of these tables set up about here, you see where I'm standing, he had rather the tables closer to the chairs and audience. The lectern was out of the way. If you all would consider even trying it for one meeting, to bring those tables down here, put them right up in front of the stage. Be at our level. Don't be up there. Be closer to us. Get rid of this. I mean this is not Petersburg. Petersburg is not the place for whatever the group is of moms that are busy worrying about book banning and critical race theory and stuff. We don't have that kind of craziness here when you have meetings. I mean, there are people here who are asking you for things and are unhappy and critical, but we're not we're not out to get you. We want to be closer to you and interact and feel like there's a sense of trust that can be established. Eliminating that physical distance, really made a difference. So

please consider it. It really is something that I think the citizens would find to make you all, I don't want to use the word, warm and fuzzy, but it's just it really had a different feel to it. I hope that some of you felt it as well. The bad about the meeting was, I know some of you jumped into action, which was great, but there was that leak after there was a big rainstorm. Clearly the building is suffering from severe lack of maintenance. I was there. I was also observing the windows that are just about to come apart. So please, city government, take care of that building. Take care of our assets, before you get so involved. I know it's something that's going to be presented. I think maybe it's on the Consent Agenda. I'm not sure, but talking about zoning and some new rules, please, before you do all of that and make it more restrictive on citizens, look at the whole thing at once. Look at that and at the same time you're concerned about making things more difficult for people in terms of their fence building, and this type of thing, is look at our own properties in the city and take care of the assets. So do that, please, and come on down closer to us. Thank you."

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Minutes of Previous Meetings:
- City Council Meeting of June 18, 2024
- b. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of Acceptance & Appropriation of the FY25 Victim Witness Grant
- c. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of Acceptance & Appropriation of the FY25 Witness Protection Grant
- d. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of the Carryover of Funds from FY24 for Approved Projects to FY25
- e. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of Acceptance and Appropriation of the FY25 Community Corrections & Pretrial Services Grant
- f. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for Consideration of Acceptance and Appropriation of Funding from Virginia Department of Fire Programs – Aid to Localities for FY24
- g. First Reading and Schedule a Public Hearing for a Proposed Closing to Public Use & Travel of a City Street and Right-of-Way Off of Cottonwood Drive (Pecan Street) and Juniper Road Between Cottonwood Drive and Juniper Road Within the Petersburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

Council Member Myers made a motion to approve the consent agenda as read. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Jones, Myers, Westbrook, Smith-Lee, Hill, and Parham; No: N/A; Abstain: N/A.

The motion was approved on roll call.

7. **SPECIAL REPORTS**

- a. Presentation and Discussion Regarding Critical Home Repair and COVID Funds from the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Board

Mayor Parham introduced Kofi Adi, the Chair of the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Board.

Kofi Adi said "My name is Kofi Adi. I am the CDBG Advisory Board Chairman. It's been a wonderful almost three years now, and we've been making a lot of progress. We just came to you in June with our recommendations, but we have a problem, and I want to present that to

you. Before we get started, I just want to thank City Council for your time. Hopefully, you had a great recess and a great holiday. Here's our agenda, I'll be covering Critical Home Repair and issues. Overview, so in June of 2024 the CDBG Advisory Board gave recommendations to the City Council in the amount of \$494,482 for six projects in the nonpublic service sector. That being said, as you see on the left, that was the original recommendation from the board to you. On the right, maybe about a month ago, City Council came back and gave the recommendation. The key critical differences, as you see, Parks and Recs received in excess of \$376,000 and then the CDBG admin fund remained the same for the recommendation in a total of \$492,482. Well, one thing was left off, critical home repair, as you see through this presentation here. This is something that we can actually do to combat gentrification. We actually can do to keep residents in home. Some of the residents are handicapped, veterans, other disenfranchised populations that reside in our city, and we have the ability to make a decision to keep those people in their homes. We need City Council to be informed. We also have a solution for you all, a very easy lift on this one."

"Next slide. Problem statement, because we do have a problem. Based on the CDBG allocation that was recommended, our partner Project Homes will not be able to offer critical home repair to citizens in this funding year. As I mentioned earlier, those populations do not have the ability to keep their homes and stay in their homes. As I stated earlier, we do have a solution for this. Next slide. What is critical home repair? Critical home repair is homeowner rehabilitation. You must own the home. You cannot rent it. Certain public services or nonprofits come in and help elderly citizens, those excuse me, that disenfranchised population, to actually stay inside a home to provide safe and secure housing for them. One of the things that's unique about Petersburg is that we do not operate a Critical Home Repair Department. Project homes is our de facto critical Home Repair Department. The only city I could find in my research was the City of Virginia Beach, which is the largest city in Virginia. Richmond, Hopewell, Petersburg, and some of our municipalities in the Richmond metro area, do not offer a department. So, we have to partner with Project Homes rebuilding together to offer that to our citizens. But this year, they're not funded. So, we have to relook at this and figure out, how can we fund those repairs for those residents? One thing I will state is this, we all know that the economic prospects of Petersburg is going to improve, because whether it's casino or not, we are improving. The median income has improved in Petersburg. As I briefed in June, two census tract are specifically not eligible for CDBG funds. Well, I know that hurts a bit, but that means that our economic fortunes are improving. As we do improve, we cannot allow our citizens to be moved out. This tool here, critical home repair, is the most important tool, in my opinion, to fight gentrification. Right now, we have the ability to get ahead of it, instead of moving our citizens out. The Petersburg that we love, those people won't be here no more. I believe it was Councilman Westbrook that said, Petersburg proud. Well, we need to make those people proud and take care of them."

"Next slide. all right, I have staff and representation from Project Homes here today. If y'all will show your hands. They're going to speak a little later, and actually, we have a resident. As you see, some of these repairs, they're critical. One of the reasons I came back to Petersburg, as a personal testimony, was take care of my mom, who was suffering from breast cancer. When I came back, one of the things I noticed just by traveling around and going to see some of our friends was that our housing population is really old. I had lived in other cities, Raleigh and New York. Petersburg, we have an aging home population that a lot of homes haven't been repaired. As you can see on here, as somebody that helps out their mom, I'm going to call her elderly. She might get mad at me, but she is. She's over the age of 70. With that being said, can you imagine your mother, father, living in a home that has hole in the roof. Ceiling is falling in, and some of these directly relate to code enforcement. So, guess what? If you fund critical home repair, you can also, in turn, fix some of the code compliant issue that your code enforcement officers deal with every day. It's not just an isolated problem. It's all connected. You see on here 161 households are on the wait list as of August 2024. Those 161 households, if I can make a plea to you all, if they're not repaired, those are homes that will not be inside of the affordable

housing inventory. And every home that is sold as somebody that is in real estate, if I take a home that, hey, look, child move their mom or parent out, and they move them out of state, and that home sister, they're going to sell it because they don't have a tie to Petersburg. That home that may have been, let's say, worth 40,000 investor comes in, he makes it 3-400,000, now that house is out in affordable housing inventory. Can't blame capitalism, but we got to take our own when we have the ability to. Based on that, 14 out of 25 households are slated to need repair right now, and that's that list, but Project Home was not scheduled to receive any funding. Last week, some of the CDBG staff had a meeting with Cameron Foundation, and it was quite clear if Petersburg is not going to fund it our own partner. How can we expect outside entities to fund them?"

"Next slide, please. So, it's not all doom and gloom. We have a solution, right? There're leftover funds. The Covid Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) has unused funds from of \$282,181. Jennifer, our CDBG admin, got an email saying that we have, I think, until June of 2026, to use this funding. So, we have time. We have time to think. We have time to act properly. I wanted to at least, bring this up to you all, so that way we can work on this solution. We'll be working in conjunction with Crater Health District. Project Homes has used that funding before to do critical home repair, and this how it will work. That 282,000 will be split between Crater Health District for them to use for their projects, but will also give \$132,090 to Project Homes. \$18,000 was scheduled to go to the pool house repair, which it's a small tax in order to get access to these funds. So, while I come up here with a problem, we have a clear solution, of how we can get this done and keep those residents, those seniors, those veterans in their home."

"Next slide, please. Timeline. So today I'm before you, September 3. This is the info session. Wanted to make you all aware of the problem, because you may not have been aware. From the 3rd to the 13th, we'll do the follow up in the research period. Any questions the City Council have and any questions that we may not have fully thought out, we can do that over the next 10 days. We'll then come back to the City Council on the 17th to make sure that we're on your agenda. Then, in turn, during the CDBG meeting, we'll outlay a plan on how those funds will be allocated to Project Homes, and give more of a detailed view. On the 24th, we'll make sure our follow up presentation come before you on October 15 will be put out there, so that way we can come back and see you at the October's meeting. City Council, I'll say this before I bring up some of the staff from Project Homes. I talked about gentrification earlier, and I don't think it's a problem in Petersburg yet, but we have the ability to get ahead of it. We always talk about the economic forecast and how we're prospering, or we're becoming prosperous as a city. We have to maintain that sensibility of doing right by our residents and making sure those people can stay at home, because right now, we have a neglect. We have a lot of affordable homes, but also that quality comes in to play. With this program, we can keep the homes affordable, but also provide that quality that they deserve."

"Next slide. All right, before we get into the question period, we want to bring up Project Homes, and we do have Miss Myrick, who is one of the critical housing repair recipients of project homes. If you guys would like to come up and say anything and please introduce yourself as you come up."

"Justin Randolph, Director of Home Repair with Project Homes said "Good evening. Everyone. Kofi, laid it out pretty clear regarding what we do. I started out as a Project Manager in 2016 here in Petersburg, I've helped several residents. I've seen the impact of what this does for homeowners. I would encourage you all to vote in favor. We want to keep helping the residents of Petersburg as you all continue to improve the people that have been here all their lives. We just want to help them stay here so they can see how great Petersburg is going to become. I have Ms. Darlene Myrick with me, who is one of our homeowners on the list for repairs this year. And she just wanted to let you all know about her situation."

Darlene Myrick of 421 Byrne Street, and a recipient of Project Homes' critical home repair said, "Good evening, everyone. Hope everything is well. My name is Darlene Myrick. I'm a lifetime resident of 421 Byrne Street. I'm also a dual status veteran. As you see, I'm elderly, okay, and what that, I'm a young, elderly. Okay. Yes, I do have some issues with my home, definitely. I've been on the list for three years, give or take, and I have requested assistance. I raised two children there. Basically, lived there all my life, other than when I went away to the service. I love Petersburg. I really do the money that I put here; I could build all your homes. But it's not just me. There are other residents here too. This is not just about me. This is not just about one person. Okay, you have a lot of elderly. Your parents, other people you would not want your parents, especially if you love them and respect them, living conditions like that. I'm sure you wouldn't, if so, something is wrong. We need help, not just me. We need help. We need you to step in and intervene and release the funding that prayerfully, is allocated to Project Homes. Like I said, not just for me. I need my City Council person, whomever that is, Mr. Myers and others, to come through the neighborhoods and see. We have put a lot there. But yes, I am at that age and stage, and not just me, where we need some help and assistance. I do not want to give up my home. If you can't understand that, then you understand nothing about life and love. You know, on the real note. I know you all do like the lady, I think she's from Byrne Street, I'm not sure, said we want to be closer to our City Council. We want to be able to help, and you all help us when we're in need. We have earned these things, at least I know I have. I really believe that, but I know I'm not the only one. We're requesting that you reach out, help us, release this funding, whatever you have for Project Homes to help everyone. This is not about gender, this is not about color, this is not about religion. This is about doing the right thing. If you ever saw the movie, "Do the Right Thing", do the right thing. God bless you all. I thank you for listening. I hope not just listen, but I hope you heard me. Okay. On the real note, we need this from you all, definitely. And on that, I thank you again."

Kofi Adi, the chair for CDBG said, "City Council, before we take your questions, I want to say thank you all for being partners and being amicable. In this process, the past few years, I've been on the CDBG Board. You guys have done the work and really, not only help rebuild the board, but also been very insightful when it comes to the recommendations we proposed. So, I wanted to thank you all for doing that. At this time, we'll take any questions any City Council member may have."

Mayor Parham opened the floor for questions from the City Council.

Council Member Jones said, "I don't want you to take this any other way, other than concern for my seniors. I'm going to ask you questions. I want to make sure I understand. First of all, if there's money available at this point, I think we should give it to them to make sure that they stay in surviving mode. Make sure that people get this stuff done. It's no reason for somebody to be on a waiting list for three years, and we just did this thing with the money this year. I'm kind of curious about what happened to the other two years that this young lady was on that list. I want to ask these questions. How do you prioritize that list? Who get chosen first, second and third? For them to wait three years."

Kofi Adi responded with "Okay, so I can answer one part of that, and then I'll defer to Project Homes if they want to come up here. So yes, the CDBG did receive funding the past three cycles. So, once we allocate that, we have a follow up process with Project Homes. The actual allocation of who is picked, how they're picked, what order they pick is more of them. What we do is we make sure that we have critical home repair. When we look at the whole CDBG matrix of what the funding can be used for, one of the highest things we've always picked, whether it's Project Homes, Rebuilding Together, or Habitat for Humanity each year. If you go back to the records, one of those three entities were selected to reduce critical home repair. Now it's up to the individual entity to choose Project Homes. I don't know if anybody wants to answer to that, or how you prioritize inside of that, but I would tell you, as the Chair of the Board, one of those three entities receive funding each year that I've been Chair."

Justin Randolph, Director of Critical Home Repair for Project Homes, asked, "So, Mr. Jones, your question one more time so I can make sure I'm answering you correct."

Councilmember Jones responded with questions. "How do you prioritize who's on that list? Who gets chosen to get what work done? I think three years waiting on a list is kind of a long time."

Justin Randolph agrees.

Councilmember Jones continued, "Especially for a veteran, our senior, and a mother. She's a mother to me, just like anybody else would be. So why did she have to wait three years? Because this money, this year is just one thing, but I'm talking about the year before that, the year before I got on Council. I'm sure y'all been in existence before I got here. So why did she have to wait three years?"

Justin Randolph stated that "So, we've been working down here a while. I would say her in particular. We take clients as they come in, first come, first serve. We'll look at when we take the request for them to join our waiting list. We also ask them for what their current issues are. We'll prioritize from that list how we go about serving them. The only thing I can speak to as far as the length of the waiting list and the time to being served with the funding were provided, we may serve anywhere from 10 to 15 clients a year. As he showed you on that previous slide, we got like 161 people waiting, and not just this year, but the previous year. Last year, we weren't funded at all either. So that list just continues to grow with us not being able to provide repairs."

Councilmember Jones continued on his line of questioning. "Okay? So, when you get your waiting list, when they join the list, who does an inspection to see what issues are more serious than others?"

Justin Randolph commented that "Well, that's actually something we're implementing now into something starting, which is like a pre inspection. But basically, what we've been doing is kind of not just going off the list of repairs that they provide, but when we're in the service area, which have a project manager serving residents, he may drive by some of the other homes and be like, hey, these look bad, or, you know, something like that. But we're trying to actually put something together where we have a person assigned to ride through just to make that initial assessment of the property."

Council Member Jones stated that "I'm just making a recommendation that you probably want to get that established. You do understand that we got to go on more than just that looks bad and this don't look bad. If she got a hole in her floor, you won't see that unless you go in there and look at it versus somebody's porch is raggedy. You see that riding past. So, 161 homes, let me do my math, right? It's on the waiting list, and we're talking about \$113,000 -113,931, right? That we didn't get. Now, if you divide 161 homes into that, it's average about \$700 a house to make repairs. What can you fix with \$700?"

Justin Randolph responded with commenting on the average hard cost stating "The average hard cost per home is anywhere from \$8,400 and up, maybe, and that's facts."

Council Member Jones continued saying "Okay, so my question is, do y'all solely depend on the CDBG grant or money, or are there other moneys coming in? Or if we didn't give you this money today, would you fall out right now?"

Justin Randolph responded with "Yes."

Council Member Jones asked, "So, there's no other funds coming in?"

Justin Randolph responded, "No."

Council Member Jones said, "So, \$113,000. I'm sorry. I'm not fussing, so don't nobody take this as I'm grilling this man, because I'm not. I just want to get to the facts, because you may need more money. You know what I'm saying."

Justin Randolph replied, "Yes, more money."

Council Member Jones said, "But I just want to make sure, because if I do the division, it averages out to \$707 per household."

Kofi Adi said, "Councilman Jones, that just shows the need of the repairs needed in Petersburg. While they get funded from other municipalities from their CDBG, because I think they're working in Hopewell and other places as well. We have one of the higher needs in the Richmond Metro. So even though they're asking for 113 as you can see, it doesn't go that far. So, it leads to a bigger issue, but you're exactly right. \$113,000 or 132 even they were to get the Covid CARES is only going to maybe do a handful of homes that would basically make a small dent in the actual 161 homes. So, you're spot on correct with that one."

Council Member Jones responded with "Thank you. So, this is to you guys, and to my colleagues up here. She said something real positive about I want to stay in my home. I don't want to lose my home. My job up here is to make sure that when I turn 70, that I'm still in my home. I'm not saying you are 70 ma'am, but I'm getting somewhere with this. Yes, ma'am, you look 25 to me."

Kofi Adi said, "That was a good comeback."

Council Member Jones continued "So what I'm saying is at some point, we want our seniors to own their home without paying taxes, period. And that's what we've been working on for the past year. How can we reduce the taxes or eliminate taxes for our senior citizens? That's what we're working on. It's more than just \$113,000. We want you to own your home right out. You paid your dues here in Petersburg. So that's what we're working on. I heard you say you want to provide a safe and secure home. So, I'm wondering, are we installing security systems? Are we trying to repair homes because you want to make it safe and secure, or you want to make it livable?"

Justin Randolph stated "Safe and Secure. Some of these houses, we run into you talking security systems, but we talking something as simple as a dead boat lock or just a lock on the front door. So, to us rehabbing these homes by giving them new front door is safe and secure. No security stuff."

Council Member Jones continued "So lastly, I want to give you that money. I think if I can make that motion to do that, but I have some recommendations. We need to come up with an inspection program to make sure we prioritize people. So, nobody's waiting three years on the list because somebody can have something worse than a porch or lock or something. She can have a hole in her roof. So, you need to come up with that program. We need to be able to prioritize who's home you fixing. We just need to know that kind of stuff. Right now, we're just going on looks... "well, that looked bad," and you didn't see inside of her house.

Kofi Adi commented, "Councilman Jones, we can invite you on the next one. The board did do a ride along, per se, with Justin almost a year and a half ago. We were able to meet the residents, actually see the repairs. It's a fun time to get to meet some of those citizens that were like if it wasn't for Project Homes, I couldn't stay here. That was powerful. So, what we did when we started awarding critical home repair money, we didn't just sit back in our ivy tower and

say, oh, you get money, you get money. No, we said, let's meet with Project Homes and really figure out what is the need out there. So next time we do it, we'll definitely give you a ring. And if you want to come, you're more than welcome."

Council Member Jones comments "Well, I definitely appreciate all that you guys are doing for our seniors because without them, like the young lady said, we wouldn't be here. They paved the way for people like me to be up here to make a way even more. I'll try to convince my colleagues, it won't take much convincing, to make sure we get you that money."

Vice Mayor Hill starts off with greetings and then commending Kofi and Project Homes on a good presentation. Vice Mayor Hill said, "My question is similar to Councilman Jones. So, you said you ride through the neighborhood and then you just kind of go and pick them, or just looking at the way they look, or something basically?"

Justin Randolph replied, "To put a little more clarity to it, like Mr. Jones mentioned, we get a set amount of funds. We get lists from the homeowners with the repairs they need."

Vice Mayor Hill asked "Do they contact you or do you contact them?"

Justin Randolph replied, "They contact us."

Vice Mayor Hill states "Okay, they apply. Okay, that's what I want. Okay, so they apply to you. Okay. So after they applied, you go and check out and see what they want, this, that another or what they need, right?"

Justin Randolph comments that "Once they they get added to the waiting list, when their time comes up, then we go assess the home. Okay, so is it assessed by the most severe need versus it's the most severe need, but one part I left out what we do also in this process, we have a volunteer department where we have an immediate response team. Some of the people coming in to get on this waiting list need their repairs today. Okay, so when we don't have that funding, Project Homes takes that upon itself to send our immediate response out to those people and address some of those repairs right away."

Vice Mayor Hill asks "So are you a nonprofit organization, or are you for profit?"

Justin Randolph comments "We're nonprofit."

Vice Mayor Hill states "Nonprofit. Great. Okay, okay, so if it's immediate thing, you all try to jump right on it, but that may kick somebody else back to been waiting for a while,"

Justin Randolph comments "Not necessarily. Depending on the situation, they'll still get put on the list. But depending on that repair, you know, we'll address the most, like, if it's an active roof leak, we may get a roofer out there right away, and then they'll still get added to the list, like, in to the bottom of the list."

Vice Mayor Hill ask "So is income, absolutely a part of you are doing or not doing."

Justin Randolph answers "It's so in order to get this program, you have to income qualify."

Vice Mayor Hill confirms "Income qualify. Yes, okay, all right, thank you."

This ends Vice Mayor Hill's line of questioning.

Council Woman Smith-Lee begins her time.

Council Woman Smith-Lee states that "I thank you all for all that you do for the seniors and the citizens here in Petersburg, but it's several questions that I have. It's nothing against the seniors. Me, of all people, love our

seniors because I'm a senior myself. But, one of the things I want to ask you, you said that every one of these individuals own their homes.

Kofi Adi and Justin Randolph respond with "Yes."

Council Woman Smith-Lee says "Okay, so if they have problems, like with their roof and different things that happen, like water damage, has anybody educate[d] them on the insurance that they have, because everybody who owns a home should have homeowners insurance. Am I right?"

Kofi Adi comments "Correct. So yes, Councilman Smith-Lee down the insurance, the education and insurance part, I think that's something that they maybe broach very lightly, but oftentimes these are people who can't afford a deductible, so their last resort is to apply for, you know, critical home repair. We have to understand, and I know you do, the population we're trying to assist, like they're very low income."

Council Woman Smith-Lee continues "But, but am I right though yes, reference to homeowners insurance?"

Kofi Adi states "Yes."

Council Woman Smith-Lee continues "And then if, if the homeowner's insurance can help the citizens, these homeowners, then if the deduction is \$700, why can't we help them with their deduction and they can get what repairs that need to be done because they pay in to their homeowner's insurance, yearly and may not have anything ever to happen, and when something does happen, that's the reason why you have your homeowner's insurance. And then maybe Project Homes can help them."

Kofi Adi says "Correct. So you know, I'm going to put on my real estate hat that I do my regular life. We all know what homeowners' insurance, how the damage was caused, how long it's been there, if it was caused by natural disasters. Those are all things that feed into you filing a claim neglect and wear and tear is not one, and that's one of the things that what we see, and I've done ride along with them, that it's just I cannot afford a roof, I cannot afford to get my subfloor fixed. I cannot afford to fix a door that's been hanging off, because that's not going to get repaired. It's not at the level of repair to warrant homeowners insurance. So it's like we're dealing with a dichotomy here. It's like, Yes, I have homeowners insurance, but the repairs I need are really done from either, you know, damage, neglect, and more likely, neglect, because they just don't have the funds to repair it."

Council Woman Smith-Lee responding to a audience member states "Okay. Okay, okay, no, no, that I'm truly ma'am. I want to help everybody, and being educated about certain things is nothing wrong with that."

With that, Council Woman Smith-Lee's line of questioning ends and it's time for Council Member Cuthbert.

The Mayor ask that Council bring down their microphone due to an audio issue.

Council Member Cuthbert thanks the Mayor and also has an exchange with Kofi about diction of his name.

Council Member Cuthbert begins his questioning, "Thanks Adi for being here tonight, and thank you for all you do for the CDBG committee; thank you for the city of Petersburg, and thank you for what you've said tonight. I'm certainly very impressed by your presentation. And to those who have spoken with you. As you may remember, I voted on the losing end of a six to one vote to give you this money when it came up. I think it was July, so I'm delighted to see you back. I think your timeline was a good timeline that you presented tonight, and I think the bottom line of your timeline was that you suggested that council, consider this at its meeting on September the 17th."

Kofi Adi states that "I would like for a vote, if possible, will be in October. So the second meeting in October, so that gives everybody enough time to understand, ask questions, do the research. You know, we have until 2026 to actually use the CARES funding. So we have time. I don't want to make a hasty decision, but also understand time is of the essence, because winter is coming, it will get cold. Weather will change. So while we

have more temperate weather, I think we have enough time to do some true research and get this right. So October, the second meeting in October ideally."

Council Member Cuthbert continues "Well, that's great, and thank you for that suggestion. Mr. City Manager, would you feel comfortable committing to coming back to council with a recommendation at our business meeting on October 17, as to whether we-the city gives I think it's 130 is it \$131,500...is 132 even?"

Vice Mayor Hill chimes in and states that "It would have been \$132,090."

Kofi Adi confirms "Yeah, it'll be \$132,090. As our vice mayor said."

Council Member Cuthbert continues, "Right. Okay, great, Mr. City Manager, would you feel comfortable coming back to council with a recommendation as to what action Council should take as to this request for the \$132,090 and do so at our October Business Meeting? Do we need a motion on that?"

Mayor Parham interjects stating "Well, we'll have it at our next meeting to direct the city manager with a motion at our formal business meeting. This work session is for informational purposes, but the City Manager got a consensus for council that we're moving forward. Yeah, we've seen this done."

Council Member Cuthbert continues "All right, good. So the protocol would be to put this issue on our business meeting for September the 17th. Is that? Right?"

CM Altman states "October."

Mayor Parham continues "If the city manager needs to move it, we can move it forward on the 17th and then final approval on the 8th in October, was what you're saying, right?"

CM Altman informs that "What we have is there are CDBG, CV or the Covid funds that were provided. We'll go back and we'll do an audit to make sure what is available and what has been spent. Then what's available, if you decide to reallocate those funds, you'll have to have a public hearing, because you approved a budget, whenever it was, for those funds, we'll schedule a public hearing so that will allow us to have it available for you on the second meeting in October, and schedule that public hearing at the first meeting which meets their timeline, if I'm correct."

Council Member Cuthbert asks "All right, and, yes, and Mr. City Manager, that means that we once again, it could be robbing Peter to pay Paul. Is that right?"

CM Altman states that "Well, what we'll do is we'll go back and look at what funds have not been spent. So some of the money that you allocated, of the CDBG-CD funds were for PPE purchase, or some things that we don't, we're not doing right now. So there's, there's going to be some funds that were allocated to projects that we did not expend, that we don't need to use for those projects today, that we'll be able to look at to reallocate."

Council Member Cuthbert comments "All right. Well, that's great. I understand, Mr. Mayor, do we have a calendar?"

Mayor Parham states "Yes, Garrett, can you pull back up the calendar that Kofi had displayed was right there. That's the calendar of events right there, starting with today at the work session, then the request to be on city council meeting agenda for the bus at the 17th, then CDBG have their public meeting and hearing on the 18th, All right, then on the 24th follow up presentation with City Council for the building meeting agenda, and then the final approval on October 15, city council meeting and vote. Okay?"

Council Member Cuthbert states "Great. All right. Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Mr. Adi."

Mayor Parham chimes in saying "Yes. Thank you so so much for that. Like I said, we're on track for approval on the 15th, and I think you have a consensus from Council, so you'll have that funding."

Kofi Adi and Project Homes representatives say "Okay, thank you Mayor. Thank you City Council. Thank you."

Mayor Parham thanks them for their service, but then relays that Council Member Jones has a question.

Council Member Jones is recognized.

Council Member Jones comments "Hey, how you doing again, man? So I want to make sure that this information get out to all of our seniors. They can get on that same list. You know, there's people that's out there that don't know how to get on that list. So my question is, and I don't think it's on it, but Mr. City Manager, do we have a hyperlink from from this organization on our website? So when people visit it, they can say, well, I need to get on that list. Or do y'all do this?"

CM Altman states that "Well, so our CDBG planner staffs the CDBG committee, if I'm correct. So there we would have the ability to put a link on our web page and then push items out through social media, in our in our newsletter, and if we have, I mean, in other communities, what we would call FOIA list, you would push that out or email out to let seniors know that there's an opportunity to register now they're going to get on the list we've already. A waiting list, so they'll be on a longer list. But as we continue to fund Project Homes in future years, that list will get well, we hope it gets smaller. It'll probably get a little bit larger at right in the immediate future, but yes, we can find ways to push this out so our seniors know that there's an opportunity to get on a list and to receive some of this funding to address issues within their homes."

Council Member Jones thanks CM Altman and ends his line of questioning.

Kofi Adi chimes in stating that "And Councilman Jones, just stating one thing before our meeting on the 18th, we'll make sure we push that information out as well. So, we're going to have a public meeting and push that information out as well."

Mayor Parham states "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. All right. Councilman Westbrook"

Council Member Westbrook passes over his time for questioning as the question was already posed and answered.

Darlene Myrick interjects.

Darlene Myrick says "I'm sorry for spilling out. Try to get used to the city council meetings, and I hope all of us who normally don't come will come, because it certainly has been enlightening. But I was just going to say about what you were saying, Councilman Smith, you know, sometimes circumstances happen. I'm not ignorant to insurance, but when I returned here, and this is not for pity's sake, this is just a fact, both my parents were ill, terminally ill, and I took years to take care of them. And during the course of this and and the children, you know, stuff just happened. And unfortunately, I dropped the ball because they were not in any shape to...you know...handle things anymore, and unfortunately, I dropped the ball. But I'm not just saying this for me, like I said, this is something that's bigger than myself. I'm not. There are other people here, you know, and I pray that I'm advocating and speaking for them and on their behalf. But like I said, I just wanted to address that. And then when I tried to get it again, see, my house is historical, it is over 100 years old, I could not get it. I did not now I'm just saying. I'm just letting you know what you were talking about roofing and all that doesn't really, really apply to me, but I just wanted to address that sometimes things really do happen, you know, in people's lives, and it's it can wind up being all fought like I'm, you know, acknowledging the simple fact I dropped the ball on that, and then when I tried to do this again, because that happened to me. So that's all. I just want to address that, but I do appreciate you all's time and just hearing me out and listening. I thank you all, and God bless you. Thank you now, bless you as well Mayor."

Council Member Smith-Lee states "I truly understand that, and that's one of the reasons, I said what I said,

because my grandmother lived on 715 South, on West Street ... and she lost her house because of not knowing the right tools or the right people, right? And this is all about a learning experience, yeah? And if we know, we do better, yeah? And I, anyone that wants to know anything, I'm here for you."

Darlene Myrick then concurs before asking Council Member Smith-Lee if she was a graduate of Petersburg High School's Class of 1979.

The matter is deemed inconsequential and Item A is deemed done.

b. Discussion: Noise Ordinance

Item B, which was a noise ordinance discussion was tabled for a future time.

c. Discussion: Zoning Permit Application

Item C, which is a discussion of zoning permit application begins.

Mayor Parham brings up Naomi Siodmok, Director of Planning and Community Development.

Naomi Siodmok, gives her greetings to the Council and the audience as she begins to talk about zoning permit applications.

She begins with informing the community with the new developments, stating "[Informing] the Community about a process we've put in place. I did hear the action at the beginning of this meeting. So it looks like maybe we want to take another look at this, but I'll start with the presentation, and we can have further conversation after that, if you'd like.

So we wanted to talk about the zoning permit application that we launched in August 2024 so it's very recent. This is really to talk about the fact that there's a new permit available, a fee associated and talk about maybe the interest of council in waiving the fee for a set period while people get accustomed to the new permit, focused on fences, sheds and sign re-faces.

So again, we just put this into place, and it's really to ensure that for structures that aren't regulated in the building code, they meet our zoning standards. So for example, accessory structures, maybe this is a carport, a shed, we want to make sure that people are meeting the requirements of where it should be, in the front yard, in the backyard, in the side yard, meeting the setback requirements and meeting historic standards as well associated with these structures. For fences I know we recently had a meeting before Council where we had some conflicts between the Architectural Review Board and the zoning ordinance, and we really want to make sure we're getting on the same page when it comes to height and visibility requirements when it comes to fences. So this would be a way that we review fences as well.

Then the sign refaces. Right now, these are subject to a regular sign permit application at \$150 and this is just when someone's coming in to put in a new panel. They already have the sign cabinet, the signed structure. They're literally just replacing the face. So this would make a more affordable, easier process for someone to make that replacement. And this application isn't unique to Petersburg, other localities like Colonial Heights and Prince George and Hopewell, who has a fence permit, have these zoning related applications to ensure that there's compliance when there's zoning standards that aren't related to the building code.

So, on outreach we've done so far, I'm here today. We've shared it on social media, and it's also going out in our next newsletter. So, it would be great to have a conversation with you all, in case you want to make any changes, because that's going to reach 30,000, over 30,000 addresses.

Next steps. What I wanted to talk to you today, mostly about, is seeing if you all were interested in me coming before you all with a resolution to waive the fees associated with this permit, but it sounds like maybe there's additional conversation you all might want to have. So if you want to talk any further about this idea and have any feedback, do let me know."

Mayor Parham thanks Naomi for her presentation and then opens the floor up for questioning by City Council.

Council Member Jones' first thanks Naomi Siodmok for being there and presenting her presentation then opening up his line of questioning.

Council Member Westbrook Jr. interjects with a joke quoting "Anybody holding their breath?"

Council Member Jones continues, stating "Don't take this the wrong way with the sheds. How many sheds do you see in the front yard?"

Naomi Siodmok responds with "What happens more often is a carport, like an accessory structure. That's not a shed might be placed like further in front than it should be. So it's really related to accessory structures in general, we don't get many sheds that people just place in their front yard, but we do get carports that are placed in the setbacks."

Council Member Jones retors with "So normally, sheds, they are they automatically, they are delivered, for the most part, attached is added on to the structure. So I know they got to get a building permit for that. But my next question is about the signs. I just bought that up today, and you're going to be getting an email, so you may want to wait on putting that out to social media, because we just voted on something to kick it back to you, all right? Or the sheds, but on the signs, I rode down East Washington Street, the one that we're working on, you know, and we're going to make that thing beautiful. There's some things that I saw that are not appealing to anybody's eye, so along with the trees that you're already doing a great job on and and making sure we beautify that corridor, there's some other things I saw. Those are signs. So what are we doing to maintain these signs that's already there. I see a lot of raggedy signs just still up. The poles are rusted. They're missing the plate in the middle. And new businesses come in and put a new sign up somewhere else on that same property, but the old, rusty one is still and it looked terrible. So what are we doing to address these property owners that have this mess all the way down the street, not just East Washington Street but all the other wards too I see it? .

Naomi Siodmok said her department would look into it stating "Let me take a look at what we can do with signs that are poorly maintained. I know right now we've been going out in the field and addressing flag signs, which actually are not allowed in our code, but you might see throughout the city. So my team has been going out to get rid of those, but in terms of permanent signs that might need maintenance, I need to see what we have the ability to do via zoning on that."

Council Member Jones continues "I'm bringing that up because these are the things that we should be addressing versus the easy stuff. We need to be addressing things that's been sitting in this city for decades, and every time somebody come and fill your shoes, nobody does anything about it, you know. Now applaud you for doing the new stuff, you know, but we got some old problems that need to be taken care of, you know. So you're the one who went out and bothered the people about the flag signs that everybody my team did, yes, yeah. So, so we're going to address that too, because from what I understand, the zoning code, as long as it's not in the cities right away, they can have us flag sign on in their yard, right? You can't put political signs anything like that, on the city's right of way, right?

Naomi Siodmok responds with "That's correct about the signs in the right of way, but for flag signs, if they're allowed at all, they would be regulated under a temporary permit that only allows them for a certain period of time... um... so that."

Council Member Jones apologizes before continuing his questions "So I'm sorry we kicked that back to you

also, you know. So, so that's going to be something that you're going to be on the city manager,

CM Altman says "I'll be getting with you."

Naomi Siodmok agrees to look into it and the further meeting.

Council Member Jones says "So you're a mind reader, we've been talking about everything you just put up here. We're just going to kick it back to you. That's fine. I want to make sure our people are happy. Make sure we don't be overbearing with our rules, not saying that they can break them, but we don't want to make we don't want to make them feel like they need to take their business to Colonial Heights, Chesterfield, Richmond, anywhere else, because we're we don't want them to have a sign and they have property and we're not enforcing the signs, and the dilapidated properties is already sitting, you know. So that's what all I got on that it's all I got. Thank you for everything you're doing.'

Naomi Siodmok thanks Council Member Jones for his questions.

Mayor Parham opens the floor up for Council Member Cuthbert's questions.

Council Member Cuthbert says "Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Miss Siodmok. It's good to see you as always. Three specific situations I'd like to bring to your attention. One is the flashing light at four West Washington Street. The Geeks... there's a flashing light on at that point. It's South Sycamore Street side, and I think it's likely not permitted, but that would be your determination to make. But if you would look at that, and if it's not permitted, if you would do what you do in the usual course of coming across something that's not permitted, I would appreciate it. Also moving north, on to North Sycamore Street, there are a number of businesses, kind of side by side by side with advertisements that plaster the entire front of the building, way more than I suspect, the allowable square feet. I don't know that for a fact, but if you look at that, do you know what I'm referring to?"

Naomi Siodmok agrees and says "I know exactly what you're referring to. We've been looking at this ourselves and seeing how we could use the language we have in the zoning ordinance right now to enforce it. I think our language differentiates between something that's exterior to the window versus interior the window. So we'll take another look and see what we can do for those."

Council Member Cuthbert continues "Well, that would be great. And on both those items, if you would come back to us with the city manager's permission at our business meeting and bring us up to date as to what your conclusions are. And third situation, I was surprised to see an ice machine at the corner of South Boulevard and South Sycamore Street, right there at a A1 Cleaners, and it is just plopped right down in a tiny triangle of land, and I suspect that our zoning ordinance does not permit it,

Mayor Parham interjects "I do know that for a fact Council Cuthbert that's been there for almost two years now."

Council Member Cuthbert responds "Well it may be. And you know how it is, we all get used to seeing what we're seeing, but it just hit me in the face yesterday, but regardless, it certainly hasn't been it's not there by adverse possession. If it may have been there for two years legally, or it may have been there for two years under other circumstances. But would you take a look at that? I think there was an issue further out on South Crater Road, right near the intersection of Wagner and South Crater. I think it went up to the border zoning appeals, and it involved an ice machine at this at the street is there.

Vice Mayor Hill interjects to say "It's not at the street, it's behind the building."

Council Member Cuthbert states "And the I think your office made them put it behind the building, and I would think that the same set of rules would apply to this ice machine that, as the mayor says, has been there for two years. But that doesn't make it legal if it's not legal. So would you look into those three items and at all, with the permission of the city manager, let us know your conclusions. That is the blinking sign at Geeks, the signs plastered on the windows, maybe on the inside. And maybe that's something we need to address, because it's

certainly the devil beating around the bush. If the devil can take the sign from outside and put it on the inside, and inside, it's legal and outside, that doesn't seem like a good distinction to make to me. And the third one is the ice machines. Thank you very much. Miss Siodmok, and thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you."

Council Member Cuthbert's time ends and Mayor Parham opens the floor for Vice Mayor Hill.

Vice Mayor Hill says "Yes, whatever policy and procedures that we come up with; of course, you bring them to us, and then finally, you know, we vote them in, or vote them up, vote them down. So some of the stuff that we're going over is kind of redundant, that we've done before in the past, but we appreciate all the work that you're putting in, and what have you. I just want the city to look clean. I mean, just clean. Sometimes, you know, people have signs up and they leave them up for a long period of time and to the point they're falling they're not attending to them, and it may be legal or, you know, but they're not in any good condition. So, you know, those things like that. So we appreciate you for all you do, and the planning commission as well. Thank you."

Vice Mayor Hills ends his time and Council Member Jones is recognized again.

Council Member Jones says "And...I want to thank you too, but I just want to make sure that this council know that we do for one we got to do for all so we go down here and start telling people they can have in their windows what they can't have in their windows. We just opened the Casino headquarters with the whole window covered, you know. So we need to make sure that we tell these people to take it down. They got to take it down too, you know. I mean, I got high hopes for this thing, but we got to be fair. That's all I got."

Council Member Jones ends his time and Mayor Parham recognizes Council Member Smith-Lee.

Council Member Smith-Lee thanks Naomi and recognizes her good work despite only being in her position for a year.

She continues "An ice machine that they have in Hopewell and Colonial Heights, for people who may not have an ice picker or need ice. You get it at a reasonable price, compared to the young lady that said that she needs her trail in Pocahontas. Those are the things that we need to concentrate on."

Council Member Smith-Lee finishes her questioning.

Vice Mayor Hill interjects and asks to use privilege to recognize the new Fire Chief, Chief Hoover.

He says "We got our new fire chief in the back, and we haven't even recognized him, so I'd like for him, stand up, or come up or something. That's before we get too far and everyone starts leaving. Chief Hoover, could you come to the mic please?"

Mayor Parham concurs.

Council Member Jones and Council apologizes to Naomi Siodmok for interrupting her questioning session.

Mayor Parham continues "But chief...look. We wanted to to pause the meeting to bring you up, because people tend to come early and leave early. And before everybody leave, we want to introduce our fabulous, fabulous fire chief. Welcome aboard, Chief. And you know, looking forward to many years working with you."

Chief Hoover responds, "Yes, sir, Honorable Mayor, Members of Council, Mr. City Manager, City Attorney, Madam Clerk, just just a blessing to be here. I couldn't be happier. I've told the mayor and city manager that since my family and I arrived for the second time, it's been like a homecoming, and everybody is just treating us. Exceptionally well. I'm excited.

Second week on the job, we're heading in a great direction. I know some of your concerns dealing with staffing, working with your fabulous HR department, we should have an ad coming out, hopefully, if not tonight,

then tomorrow, the next day. That's our number one priority right now. And we've got some other priorities as well that you all have identified, that I can assure you, we're going to be up on the front end. One of the things you're going to start seeing from our department immediately, if you haven't seen it already, is we always hear about the bad, we always hear about the bad news, but I can assure you, and we'll put my reputation on it. The Petersburg Fire Department. There's 100 good things that happen today that nobody hears about. So we're going to, certainly, we've established the social media page. We're going to put out a lot of information right now. Just to give you an example, we're coming into hurricane season. We're going to be putting messages up about that.

We're going to be putting positive messages. I hope that if you went to the community event this weekend, you saw our trucks there, we're going to be in the public. If you have a public event coming up, send me an email, certainly me and my staff, and I'll assure you, we're going to be there. We're not hiding behind bay doors. We're we support the public. The public is why we're here. We're going to make sure we're there. So again, Mayor, thank you so much for having confidence in me. Thank you for blessing me with the wonderful staff I have, and anything you need night or day, you've got my number. Call me anytime, alright?"

d. Discussion of Proposed ROW Extension Through the Roper Property

CM Altman begins with the City Managers Office perspective "So Mr. Mayor, Members of Council, in your packet we just kind of grabbed an ... the old discussion of this item, to put it in there, because it had captured all the information. Essentially, where we're at is we've had a series of community and Ward meetings with the residents of Pocahontas Island, at the last not... but the previous one at The Chapel. I don't know where it was... I don't know... Ms. Green it was 100 degrees I think inside the chapel...there was a great deal of conversation about the proposed right of way that she spoke about earlier that the South Central wastewater authority proposed to go through the site and connect over through the basketball court to eliminate that truck traffic through the neighborhood. And it was at that Ward meeting that the residents, I will say, pushed Councilman Cuthbert to get this on the agenda. So, we are here this evening as a result of the conversation that was held with those residents to look at. Is this a feasible opportunity for us to consider? I've had conversations with Robert Wilson at South Central Wastewater Authority. They still have the funding available to do the to do the project, to build the road. What they need to know is what Council's directive is? They're not going to move forward unless they know what the council wants to do. And at this point, we push pause on the road construction due to some projects brought to us by the Governor's office and the Partnership for Petersburg for the redevelopment and reuse of the Roper property."

We-Ms. Williams has been very busy, and she was we were able to get some grant funds that would allow us to take some down, some of the accessory buildings there that are in the flood plain along the river, the pole sheds that you were used for storage, that we could use those down, and then look at looking at using some of that space, as passive open space. So the question this evening is, really, what would be Council's pleasure be as far as what our options are with respect to the road going through the Riverside."

Mayor Parham recognizes Council Member Cuthbert.

Council Member Cuthbert says "Mr. Mayor, Mr. City Manager, let me if I may ask you for your recommendation, because there's a fair amount of nuance to these different options. I think as I read the Pocahontas community, they would be delighted with any of the options, because they're good. Each of the options is going to take the heavy truck traffic off Rolfe Street and Saponi Street and run it straight down Pocahontas Street and behind the Pocahontas community. So I think this is, as I said at the meeting in the chapel, I see this as a chance of a lifetime. It's been 75 years in coming, and at last it's arrived, and I think we're blessed to have the opportunity. We want to seize the opportunity. But I would, I for one, would like to know, Mr. City Manager, which of these alternate routes would you recommend? There's not an awful lot of difference between them?"

CM Altman responds. "What I would say, Councilman Cuthbert, I think we would speak around the one that

was designed... [when] we talked with Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson about, that would be, that was what was designed. And we have actually construction drawings for which, like you say they're not great variations amongst these minor turns here or curves there. Overall, I would say there's a need to look at the truck traffic that's going down very narrow streets right now on the Island, and the impact that that's having, while certainly it is a known condition and it has been like this forever, it does not mean that which should continue that way. So this is an opportunity, I think, for us, if we move forward with the construction of the road, or signaled to South Central wastewater authority, we were supportive of that. It would allow... it would open the site up. It would create opportunities for public access. And I think as we look forward with the grant, as we're using some of that space as passive recreation, it really provides an opportunity for our residents to get there and really utilize that space and then figure out how to use that space in conjunction with Mr. McCormick has going on the opposite side, to really marry those two pieces together and create one large area of citizen activity. So, think there's an opportunity here, particularly if the money is there for someone else to pay for the construction we would pay a portion thereof. But I think there's an opportunity here. But really would be interested in knowing what Council's thoughts are before we take any kind of action."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Well, which of these options, then, Mr. Altman, are you recommending? Is it the one that at the bottom of the page is titled road alignment exhibit?"

CM Altman responds. "The one that we would have is, and I don't think it's the it looks like the concepts at the that come out at the end, you have the Folar concept, and ultimately, there's a combination between what the original concept and a site change with Folar. And I think what was designed looks similar to the original concept, but there are sidewalk, and I think bike lanes added to, because of the comments by Folar."

So there's a combination thereof. I would say the design would be the design of record that South Central wastewater authority has and move forward with their engineers on."

Council Member Cuthbert continues "And so that I and the rest of council knows what we're talking about. Where do we find the recommended design in our packet? I think Mr. Wilson, Mr. Robert Wilson, is waiting for us to get back to him with a specific and I hate to lose the opportunity and lose the momentum.

I'd love for us to be able to come to some consensus, either tonight or at the meeting on September 17, as to which of these we are recommending to Mr. Wilson and the wastewater treatment people."

CM Altman retorts with "So what I would suggest Mr. Cuthbert is we would table the item this evening, move it to and have it come back at the next meeting, and we put that design in here specifically so there are no other options. Great. This is the one, and then that way it's not confusing."

Council Member Cuthbert responds "I think that would be great if you would put in our packet for September 17, Mr. Mayor, if that makes sense, if that's okay, and then we'll have the specific plan in front of us that the administration is recommending, and then we'll there'll be no ambiguity if Council approves that, and we can forward that to Mr. Wilson and he will know that he's got clear direction from us and from the Pocahontas community as well."

CM Altman commends Council Member Cuthbert for his question.

Council Member Cuthbert ends his time and Mayor Parham recognizes Vice Mayor Hill.

Vice Mayor Hill says "Mr. Mayor, Members of Council. Just looking at the diagram, of course you can't really see. Just want to make sure that we have enough room for trucks to turn around and come back out and make sure that we had to have the proper signage that they're not to go on those other roads through the neighborhoods because the way it's going around, just want to make sure they're being to turn around wherever it is and then come back out, because I have a street in Lakewood right now that it goes to a dead

end and everybody gets stuck, even the fire trucks have gotten turned around and what have you got to have enough room for them to turn around, or some type of way that they can navigate.”

CM Altman responds “So, yeah... let's...we'll assume that council wants to move forward, we certainly would put up a truck route sign to keep the trucks out of the neighborhood that that road goes in and connects to the existing road through the basketball court, and then the trucks will take the right to go into the wastewater treatment plant and then come back and come around. So we would definitely sign it appropriately to make sure the trucks stay out of the neighborhood, if that's the decision that Council makes.”

Vice Mayor Hill thanks CM Altman for answering his question and then ends his period.

Council Member Cuthbert interjects and ask a question.

Council Member Cuthbert ask “Okay, and Mr. Mayor, one other thing, will there be a public hearing on this on the 17th? Mr. Altman, I'm sure the Pocahontas citizens would like to know whether we go have a public hearing on the 17th or not.”

CM Altman responds “I had not planned a public hearing, but if council wants to have a public hearing, well, if and if we're adopting an ordinance or resolution, the citizens are typically allowed to comment on those without there being an actual form of public hearing.”

Council Member Cuthbert says “Okay, all right now, Mr. Mayor, would you call on Ms green to comment on this. I'm not quite sure what her thoughts are.”

Marlo Green comes up to the podium stating “I just want to make a comment that we have an elderly; most of the people living in the neighborhood are up in age, right? And I've been asked multiple times to bring people here, and we bring people out. And this has been going on for several years when the treatment plan originally had this great plan about building this road back in 2020-21 when they said this road be done in 2024 and they were asking for elderly people to come back out again. And this thing has been going on for years. It's like, you know, the city council keeps requesting folks to show up, but when we show up, nothing gets done. How many more times do we need to show up before you guys realize that this needs to be done? You're at home, in your homes, drinking your water, loving the water, drinking it in tap, whatever. And here we're in a neighborhood where these trucks are coming through our neighborhood every flipping morning. It's about 30 flipping tractor trailers coming through the neighborhood every day, you know. And while you're sitting comfy in your house looking out your window, you're not looking at Tractor trailers. You're not smelling the funk from the treatment plant. You're not dealing with the settlement issues. You're not dealing with it when you pull out your daggone driveway. You got to wait 20 minutes for the tractor trailer to go before you. I mean, how many years people are getting up in age?

We just had somebody pass away this week. That was a part of this when these initial conversations were being had. So how many times do I have to keep asking people to come out and nothing gets done. I mean, you guys, you make the decision, right, and you've seen the plans on several occasions. Matter of fact, I have a copy of the picture. I mean, why can't we get this thing settled today? I mean, I feel like we keep kicking the can down the road, waiting for people to pass almost and nothing's getting done. This has been going on for ages in this community, even since the 2014 study that was prepared by VCU that we spent money on as a city, and we didn't make any decisions, not one of those things the VCU came up with out of that plan were done. This is like one of many things that Pocahontas Island has given false hope for, and then you keep asking us to come back out, we keep showing up, right? But we're losing people, and we need to get this stuff done. It's an older population of folks living on this island who've been sold a dream for over 20-30 years, and nothing has been done. How many more times we got to show up?”

Council Member Cuthbert says “Well, thank you Ms. Green, and I understand and I share your frustration. One of the things that I've learned is that things move slowly they shouldn't, but they do. We're almost at the finish

line. I think what I'm hearing is that we've got to have we've got to invite the public to speak. The public doesn't have to show up to speak. The public doesn't have to speak if they show up. But as I understand the process, Mr. Altman, you are going to bring a recommendation to council of a specific plan, and the public, it will take a resolution. Is that correct?"

CM Altman responds. "Yeah, you're just adopting a plan. You're actually going to have to have an ordinance when you actually dedicate the right of way. But right now, you're just adopting a plan.

Council Member Cuthbert asks "So just a resolution. So we and as part of the resolution process, we invite the public to speak. Is that correct?"

CM Altman responds with "Council offers public comment on all of its resolutions.

Council Member Cuthbert says "So it's not really a public hearing, but the public will have an opportunity to speak. Is that correct?"

CM Altman responds in the affirmative.

Council Member Cuthbert responds. "Okay, well, that's fine. I think we know what we're going to do. I think I know what I want to do. I want to follow the city manager's recommendation, but we've got several different routes with slight differences before us, and we need to give Mr. Wilson some clear direction, and that's why we're not in a position, I think, tonight, to make that decision, but we expect to make the decision on the 17th. I mean, you'll present the recommendation to us, right?"

CM Altman responds "Mr. Cuthbert, yes, sir,

Council Member Cuthbert comments and says "And it'll be up to council, whether council wants to adopt that recommendation or not. But we are almost there. And I realize it's been a long, long time, but we are almost there. We are on yard line."

Marlo Green interjects "I'm just tired of this game."

CM Altman comments that "So it's not a game. It's not a game. So tonight's the work session, which we talked about. Council doesn't take action at their work session, so we have the next meeting where we'll take action.

Marlo Green and CM Altman have conversation before Mayor Parham recognizes Council Member Jones.

Council Member Jones says "So timing is everything, and I'm wondering, with all due respect to anybody up here that's running for election, if this would be a hot topic, if it wasn't an election year, because it don't make sense for to be sitting as long to be dealt with. Now, given you had changing of the guards, we had just as many city managers we did superintendents. You know, I'm new. I wasn't here when this stuff started, but I'm familiar with Pocahontas because my family is on Pocahontas kicking the can down the road. Now we don't do decisions on our work session, right? But I was here when this thing was first brought up, and we claim we take anything serious but that first plan was the plan for to put the road in that we talked about to bypass going through the neighborhood. I know we can't do anything tonight, but I share the frustration on just waiting.

This ain't just happened this month or last month. We probably could have done some when she first gave us a packet and pictures a couple of months ago. You know, this is why it's important that we make sure we reach out to our kids sister, which is make sure things is brought to us and handled right then, not kicking the can down the road. And I'm not pointing the finger at nobody. I'm just saying, you know. And then on the flip side, the road ain't going to if we pass, it isn't going to be built tomorrow, you know. But it's going to be built, but it won't be built tomorrow, you know. I'm saying so again, as a community, we all got a responsibility, everybody up here and everybody out there, and we were we bless you. We have a responsibility to understand too. We got to understand that frustration Council. We have to understand their frustration, and we have to educate them so they can understand the process. It's just that simple. But we cannot keep kicking things down the

road and tabling stuff. You know, when we can take action, that's all I got."

Mayor Parham thanks Council Member Jones for his comment and reminds the audience and council that the matter will be on the September 17th Business Meeting.

Mayor Parham closes Item 7 and the end of the special reports.

8. MONTHLY REPORTS

9. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT

a. Finance & Budget September Update

Mayor Parham brings up Garry Cozier, the Budget Director for the Finance Department, for the September Report.

Garry Cozier, the Budget Director begins with greetings then begins with presenting the September update.

Garry Cozier says, "Let's get right off into it. Okay, so our agenda for tonight will be going over our real estate payment plan. We'll be going over utility collection, personal property collection, and then we'll end it on the earned interest update.

So at the back of your packet, there should be a draft copy of the payment plan letter that I'll be talking about in this presentation should be the last page of that. So the payment plan for real estate taxes, it will be offered 30 days after the due date of the current tax period, and we'll be sending out a letter to all delinquent taxpayers. That letter is there, the draft version that you have. We will be sending up a follow up letter 30 days after the initial letter is sent, and the follow up letter will just talk about, you know, not paying your property taxes may result in your property being foreclosed. And then every 30 days, up until one year has passed, there will be a reminder email related to the payment plan that that citizen has entered into.

"So, the current year, the performance measures. So, our goal for the current year, we first want to contact the taxpayers to determine how much they are willing to address their delinquent tax liability. We want to determine where they reside, and then we want to determine if they are regular contributors to the city. After 120 days, we would be contacting them again to document the situation of the taxpayer specifically as it relates to that statement above. So how much they're willing to pay where they live, and if they're contributors. We will also be establishing a committee to determine how many accounts and which accounts should be submitted to our third party collection agency for collection activities, and that includes tax auction or sale, and then review the collection amount of delinquent taxes monthly to ensure the success of the program and make adjustments if necessary.

Talking about the prior year. So that same letter will be utilized for the prior year. This is for anyone who is owing taxes from the previous tax year and before so it will also be offered to those delinquent taxpayers and ones that have not already been forwarded to the third party collection agency. And same thing, a letter will be sent to them, providing them with that opportunity to enter into a payment plan, and letting them know that if they fail to pay, their property may be foreclosed. And we will provide numerous communications to inform delinquent taxpayers of our commitment and understanding of financial hardships by providing a pathway to get delinquent taxes current. So we're not trying to come down on anybody, but however, it does take money to run the city, and if everyone in the city decides to not pay their taxes, we would not be a city. So that's something to note there."

Mayor Parham interjects to say "Thank you."

Garry Cozier continues, "So the for the prior year performance measures. Right now, we have over 200 properties with outstanding taxes, and the value of that exceeds \$2 million so that is a lot of money we're talking about. So as opposed to implementing an aggressive tax auction to sell process where we would just

be trying to force people out. We're implementing a delinquent tax payment plan to address that issue. So 45 days after the letters are sent to the delinquent taxpayers, the collections division will contact them to determine their willingness, same as with the current year, we'll be establishing a vetting committee, and then we'll also be reviewing the collection amount monthly to ensure the success of the program. So there's not much differences between current year and prior year taxes that are owed as far as the payment plans that we'll be offering, Moving onto utility collection. So right now, utilities are read monthly by technicians. The meter read totals are sent to utility billing by the IT department. Those totals are then reviewed and adjustments made if necessary, and then they're uploaded into the system. The printed billing statements are review for accuracy. Bills are mailed to the customers by outsource mailing company, and then customer care and collections receives payments from customers and applies to customer accounts.

So, challenges and opportunities for utility collections, so some challenges we have, the meter reading process will be greatly enhanced if we stalled advanced metering infrastructure. Structure, which is AMI, known as AMI meters. So AMI meters allow real time automated meter readings. Currently, they're manually going out and looking at what's on the meter to report that. So there may be several meter readings that need adjustments based on customer complaints.

There is a statute of limitations on how far you can go back for billing of taxes that are owed, and that's five years. So they're only valid for five years after that cost is incurred, so the billing records need to be reviewed for accuracy in the statute limitations opportunities. So right now, we're currently pursuing a grant to install AMI meters in the city, which will enhance this process. The process will include identifying meters that have high usages, which are typically in our industrial or business areas, and then we'll follow up with residential after that; a revised meter review process between utility billing and customer care and collections is being established, and an external review of the current records is being considered to discover erroneous records and to eliminate billings that have passed the statute of limitations timeline.

So, for personal property collection, just a note, they're divided into two payments and submitted to the customer, tax paying customers on February the 28th and June the 10th. Currently, the delinquent notices are mailed to customers about 45 days after the second installment; 30 to 60 days after delinquent notices are mailed, if the payments are not paid, then the account is forwarded to tax. Customers who accounts are with tax are allowed to pay their delinquent balance in full directly to the city, but they are charged an additional 20% fee by tax, and then DMV stops our issue for delinquent taxes. So we will put a DMV Hold on a taxpayer account to try to encourage them to pay their tax.

So challenges for personal property collection, the collection process for personal property tax has not been reviewed for effectiveness. In years, there's been no audits or anything of the system. So we're looking to look into that and fix this, the tax collection effort is expensive, that also needs to be assessed. Some opportunities we have as customer care and collections will be discussing different strategies to make the personal property tax collection process more customer friendly. We'll discuss any proposed changes with the city manager, and then personal property collections assessment has a high priority status, and that will be reviewed on as soon as possible basis and then regularly maintained.

And last, we're going to end on a plus with our earned interest update. So right now, this is a snapshot of different funds we have invested for the city. So the main one is our investment account, which is the LGIP, also known as the local government investment pool. If you can recall, we placed 1.4 million as a projection for how much interest we would earn based on the 35 million that we put into the investment account.

This is our first update since then. So I'm happy to report that in the two months that that has been in there, we have earned \$323,431 in interest alone for SNAP. So this is the remaining proceeds from a 2015 vra bond that we have is about 5.8 million there that has earned from July and August, \$53,345 and then the Petersburg demands. So we converted our... excuse me...we converted our regular bank account into a interest earning account that we use for city operations. So since we have done that, we have accrued about \$81,022 there in interest. So this is a plus where we're looking really good here. If we keep this trend, we'll be in a really good spot. And that is all."

Mayor Parham commends Gary Cozier on the presentation and then opens up the floor for questions.

Council Member Jones begins the session.

Council Member Jones begins with commending Gary Cozier on his presentation and offering greetings. He then begins his line of questioning "All right. First, I want to start off with this letter right here. This is I really like this because it helps all of our citizens, and then it prevents the sale of their property when they're in hardship and things of that nature. So my hats off to you all for designing this letter. I got some questions about it. One of the questions is how this letter in this plan work in harmony, as far as communication with the Commissioner Revenue, the Treasurer and the City Manager slash collection, how will we communicate make sure none fall through the cracks? And you know, with this plan, how you guys communicate with each other?"

Garry Cozier responds with "Yes, that will be a part of our vetting committee also, and then we'll have regular, constant communication with those departments. It helps that we're all in the same building. Aside from the Treasurer, the Treasurer is a walk right there, but customer care, commission, of revenue, finance, budget, we're all housed in the same building, and it makes that very easy for us to collaborate and communicate in that sense."

Council Member Jones thanks Garry Cozier for his answer and then continues.

Council Member Jones says "You said something about the meter readings. I know firsthand that they don't come out and read these meters, not all of them, anyway, and so I guess just AMI, meters will help solve that problem, correct?"

Garry Cozier confirms and then says "Yeah, they'll be automated. So it wouldn't require folks to go out and actually put eyes on it, because it would be constantly sending notices to the system. And then you would essentially go out to maybe verify if something that's wrong, or spot check something like that."

Council Member Jones continues, "So my next thing is, Mr. City Manager, is any way you could get the finance department to do a comprehensive report analyzing the implications of transitioning from a monthly collection to a bimonthly collection, with assessment of the potential impact on the cash flow and the impact administration costs and customer satisfaction with this new system."

CM Altman responds "So the new system you're referring to is just the collections piece, not AMI?"

Council Member Jones confirm, "Collection of the water bills."

CM Altman confirms.

Council Member Jones responds "And reason why? Because I think it's a stress. It's taxing on it, on the workers you're trying to process this month, and next thing you know, you got the next month, when we used to do it every other month, and everything was running smooth, far as getting the money in and everything. So we went away from every other month to monthly, and I think it's been causing hardship as well to the people. So that's why I said, we want to look at the assessment potential the impact on cash flow, administration costs and customer satisfaction, what the people would think about it."

CM Altman says "I'll certainly look at what that impact would look like from moving from monthly to bi monthly billing."

Vice Mayor Hill interjects and says "No, we did that already. We already had the study."

CM Altman says "I'd say Councilmember..."

Council Member Jones interjects "If you had that study, I wasn't here right?"

Mayor Parham states "I think what Vice Mayor Hill was saying was that, I think they broke it down from bimonthly to monthly, because most people's bills are about...if you have a one inch meter, is about \$160 so every two months, you'll be getting a \$300 type of bill."

Council Member Jones asks "So is that because we went to the gallons versus?"

Mayor Parham continues "It just goes, goes back to the cost of sewer that we're treating, the rates went up so high, and the bills increased so and to keep the shot the sticker shot down. That's why we went to the monthly bill. So people won't be getting instead of \$100 bill, they'll see a \$200 bill every two months."

Council Member Jones asks for confirmation asking "So I'm kind of lost on that, because I can remember the monthly bill that we get now is almost double to what they used to get when it was two months, right?"

Mayor Parham answers with "And that's because we had to catch up with what was about over 20 years of stagnant rates. That's kind of what, what led to, to the whole financial debacle, was because we weren't keeping up with the cost of treating, buying water and treating those, those sewer costs. So it was going up at such a huge rate. That's why the cost of it went up here. And you know how we have these, these huge breaks, these water breaks, the cost went up to match the expense it is for us to be able to fix those \$250,000 breaks that we have typically every Winter, when Southern construction comes. So you have to have enough income coming in to be able to react to those breaks, pay for the extra cost, and the fact we have a 200 year old system here."

Council Member Jones says "So the reason why I brought it up, because, from my understanding, before I got on council, the reason why we went to a monthly bill, because we changed the meters, and the meters was, was a whole meter fiasco. And because I'm seeing something about new meters, I'm understanding that these new meters may be more efficient and read better, and they may not have, you know, a higher bill and what's normal with this new meter reading system."

CM Altman interjects "But what I would say, counselor to this is, we will get more accurate readings. And you may be, you could be exactly right. That number could drop, but I would be cautious to make any changes today. Let us get the meters installed, see how that's going, and then we can look at potentially changing. And I we can certainly the mayor and other members of council went through this issue long before I arrived on scene, and I appreciate the historical backdrop, I would have probably just easily answered it's probably easier for our residents to pay monthly than to pay a big bill every two months or every three months. And then on top of that, if we get into a delinquent situation, it's caught sooner rather than, 6-8-9-12 months down the road."

Council Member Jones continues "So I understand and I appreciate that. I just wanted to have that study lease on the books and where we where I can look at it, because, like I said, this stuff happened before I got here. So I want to be able to look at that analysis and say, okay."

Mayor Parham and CM Altman concur that it could still be done.

Council Member Jones continues "I just want to see it written out. I want to see the difference. You know what I'm saying, what that would look like."

CM Altman responds "What that would look like. We're about to go through a process of doing another rate study so that I can ask to see if they could look at the billing cycle and what that may have as an impact, how that may impact our collections and the billing. What the bills look like for our residents. I would say, in general, with all of these items this evening, real estate, personal property and utilities, this would be, this was what was going to be one of our topics for discussion at your advance. So we're kind of rolling out some of those items to get them moving. If Council has any comments questions, if you'd please pass them along to me, and I can get with staff before we finalize everything. And that way, if there's any questions or anything we'd like to tweak or change, we have the opportunity to do that with y'all."

Council Member Jones ends his line of questioning and Mayor Parham recognizes Council Member Cuthbert to speak.

Council Member Cuthbert thanks the Mayor for recognizing him and then begins to talk about the earning of interest using the investment funds.

Council Member Cuthbert says "It's titled earned interest update. At last, it took us 10 months to do it, but we finally put \$35 million into the local government investment pool, and we've already earned since June, \$323,00 dollars, which, if you figure, if we'd done that right after Davenport recommended it, we probably would be \$1.5 million to 2 million ahead. But in any event, it finally got done. Let's look at the next line. SNAP is \$5 million \$5.8 million there. Why is that money invested in the LGIP?

Garry Cozier says "So the SNAP is a form of LGIP.

Council Member Cuthbert calls for clarification.

Garry Cozier responds "SNAP is specifically for a form of LGIP specifically for bonds and proceeds. So, yeah, that is invested. The original amount was not 5.8 million, but after the interest that is accrued, it has reached 5.8 million."

Council Member Cuthbert asks when did this account come into existence.

Garry Cozier responds, "I would not know of the exact date, but beginning of the fiscal year."

Council Member Cuthbert continues "This fiscal year, so sometime after June 30, since the beginning of the inception of the bond, since the beginning of the inception of what the bond?"

CM Altman interjects "The \$5 million represents a bond issue from 25th 2015 correct. So the proceeds that are in the in there now that weren't spent of that bond, or what is still in SNAP, gaining interest."

Council Member Cuthbert ask "All right, so that money has been in this relatively high interest bearing account for eight years?"

CM Altman responds "Well, we got to remember, interest rates for a long time were little to nothing."

Council Member Cuthbert ask "When was it put in?"

CM Altman continues "Well, it would have been when we purchased the bonds. Let's say we purchased the bonds in 15 and before and before you go and spend them, those dollars sit in the SNAP account, and then you access those dollars as you spend on the on the project. These would be the funds remaining from that issuance back in 15 for a long time, up until recently, interest rates were, you know, 1,2, 3% now we're at that 5% so we're gaining some real interest, as you could see on the up top, because if we push that 160 out over 12 months, it's about 1.9 million. But the money here is from that 2015 issuance, the money that we... the \$32 million that we issued last year, that's in a SNAP account. That isn't a part of this 5 million here, but it's gaining better interest today than the life of this one because of the interest rates being so low for long time."

Council Member Cuthbert says "The third row, this may be the juiciest. Petersburg Demand Atlantic union sweep. We've got \$23 million in a checking account. Is that correct?"

Garry says "So that is our regular account that we operate, city operations off; payroll, things like that, special assistance checks, all of those come out of that account, our main city account."

Council Member Cuthbert ask "And what kind of interest rate does Atlantic Union Pay us on this?"

CM Altman says "We established, we made the change with the account, with the treasurer, after we had this discussion during the budget process of making sure we're gaining interest on our accounts. So that's when we made the change for this fiscal year."

Garry Cozier responds with "They said 3% overnight sweep account."

Council Member Cuthbert interjects saying "All right okay, but the..."

Garry Cozier continues "Typically, the going rate is about 2.3% and we're getting 3%."

Council Member Cuthbert continues "All right, let me go to couple of other details. We offer payment plans regardless of income and regardless of whether we dealing with an absentee landlord or homeowner. Is that correct?"

Garry Cozier says "So the payment plans will be offered, like I said, depending on the situation, we'll be contacting the taxpayers to figure out what's going on, and we'll figure it out kind of at that point. It won't necessarily be offered to just every single person who is delinquent."

Council Member Cuthbert says "So we will offer payment plans to absentee landlords. Is that correct?"

Garry Cozier responds "It'll go before a committee on a case by case basis."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Well, that was a concern also. So we've got human intervention. I'm your friend. You are my friend. I'll give you I'll let since you're my friend, I'll extend a payment plan to you. Or since the city councilman crawled up your spine and said, offer this person a payment plan and you'll offer them a payment plan, I don't like that kind of subjective decision making. I think we ought to have a rule that leaves out favoritism and buddy system and this committee stuff seems to me to be open, wide open, to abuse this vetting committee. I think we ought to have one rule, and everybody plays by it. Is there some way to retool this?"

Garry Cozier says "Yeah, this is still in draft form. I mean, we have not started sending out letters or anything like that, so if you have recommendations, we can take those and possibly consider them."

Council Member Cuthbert responds "Yeah, all right. this is a work session. I don't know the way other members of council feel, but I feel pretty uneasy about having a vetting committee that's making subjective decisions, and certainly it's conceivable that friendship could enter into those decisions. Would you agree?"

Gary Cozier says "Not necessarily, because when you have a vetting committee, I mean, that's specifically what that committee should be for. I wouldn't say that one person would be the friends of everybody on the committee who was from different facets of the organization."

Mayor Parham interjects and says "So I totally agree. It's not one person who has a friendship there would you have a committee? It's just like this council here is a collection with individuals. I don't think it falls down to one person making a favor. You know, I trust the finance staff would do right and make the appropriate decision. I mean, until I'm proved wrong, I'm optimistic that it will work."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Well, I don't share your optimism."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Now, what is meant by the term contributors to the city of Petersburg? Am I a contributor? Or am I not a contributor?"

Garry Cozier says "So a contributor would be the opposite of absentee landlord, right? So absentee landlord is not a contributor, regular contributor to the city. So that would be one of those things, the criteria that we will be looking for before we would offer a payment plan to them."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Well, could you redefine that term so that it's objectively understandable. I mean contributor to me doesn't necessarily mean homeowner, but you mean homeowner. Is that correct?"

Gary Cozier says "Not necessarily just a homeowner, but who contributes regularly to the city paying their taxes?"

Council Member Cuthbert interjects "Well, if they paid the taxes, they wouldn't be getting this letter."

CM Altman says "So we're talking about homeowner or a rent or that's paying taxes, not not an absentee someone local, is what I think they're mean here."

Council Member Cuthbert retorts with "Now, wait a minute, runners don't pay taxes, do they?"

CM Altman says "Not real estate taxes. But I think the terminology is crossing over with other fees and taxes that are paid. But I think in this instance, what they're talking about with regard to is someone local, but not an absentee landlord or property owner."

Council Member continues with his line of questioning. "Someone local, but not an absentee landlord. So if I own a piece of property on the other side of town and I'm not paying my taxes, am I deemed to be a contributor to the city of Petersburg?"

CM Altman says "You're not an absent from what I can understand, you're not an absentee owner, so you're a contributor because you're a local, you're locally, you're here, you're not living out. So, if I understand correctly, your concern was you didn't think absentee landowners should be allowed into the program. I think that's right. I think we're particularly concerned about homeowners. We want to protect the homeowner, right? And what Mr. Crosier said was absentee landowners aren't considering it considered a contributing member, so therefore it would be only homeowners that we're dealing with, all right?"

Council Member Cuthbert says "Well, can we substitute homeowner for..."

Gary Cozier says "Yes, we can change the language. We can change it to make it more specific."

Council Member Cuthbert says "I think that's objectively measurable. We get into this fuzzy contributor stuff. I, you know, I lead a Boy Scout troop. Am I a contributor? Some would say yes. Some would say no. So would you please make that substitute homeowner? That would be, I think, great. Now, what would what's the maximum length of a payment plan?"

Garry Cozier replies with "One year."

C. Cuthbert: "Okay, does the paper, I may have overlooked this...We're all seeing this for the first time, but does it say one year in here? It may well."

Garry Cozier says "18 months actually is the maximum of the life of the payment plan for repayment."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Yeah, okay, and it only gets to this point after it's been delinquent for a year. Is that correct?" It only gets to the point of falling into this evaluation eligibility for a payment plan.

Gary Cozier says "We'll be offering current comes customers payment plans as well. So it so once you're 30, about 30 to 45 days is what it's a regular bill will start that payment plan process."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Okay. We're not going to wait a full year?"

Gary Cozier says "No, sir."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Okay, sir."

Gary Cozier says "And that's meant to improve the collection. And who is, whose job is it to monitor this to know that, bam, 45 days have passed and we're sending out this payment. I guess we're talking about the payment plan letter that that Councilman Jones referred to, yeah, so that's coming. We're hiring right now some staff for the customer care and collections department, and then we'll have dedicated staff who are meant for that."

Council Member Cuthbert "All right, all right. Well, let's see how it works, and maybe a year from now, you can bring this thing back to us. And well, I'd like, I'd like to see a rewrite now, substituting owner occupant for contributor."

Council Member Cuthbert ask "Mr. Altman, could you bring that back to us?"

CM Altman responds "Yeah. So what we offered was for council to review the information. If you have any questions or comments, get them to us so we can address those and bring back a final copy of council for adoption of the program." Then when we can start moving forward.

Council Member Cuthbert says "All right, so when do you what's the deadline for us to get comments to you?"

CM Altman says "Well, it's a little I'm don't know that I'm in a business of putting deadlines on my bosses, but it'd be nice if we could have comments in the next couple weeks, next two weeks, so we can get moving forward and bring this back to you."

Council Member Cuthbert says "Bring it back to us when please?"

CM Altman says "Well, if we get comments in and we want to have a formal action taken, and we would be looking at your October 15 meeting for formal action."

Council Member Cuthbert responds with "Okay great."

Council Member Cuthbert thanks Mayor and the City Manager then ends his time.

Mayor Parham then recognizes Council Member Jones.

Council Member Jones starts by saying "I think I still think this is a great letter, man. You know, we're missing the whole point. I'm gonna bring... I want everybody to clear your minds for a second. Number one, I want to table this thing so that all of us can have opportunity to talk about it in our closed session. That's number one. Number two, just like my comrade over here is talking about, you know, friends that get involved and we could extend this letter to him and stuff like that. But on the flip side, friends can also get involved to go after people who are not their friends that own property. So we got to make sure we got to be fair, like I keep telling y'all across the board, we got to be fair. We can't be using our policies as a tool to go after people or to make more people punish more people. So this thing right here, regardless of who it is, is going to bring money into our pockets, whether this letter will get us tax dollars, one way or the other, is going to get us tax dollars. It's not going to say, well, you my friend, you ain't got to pay.

No. It's still saying, even if you're my friend, you got to pay this damn money. Give me my money, you know. So this friend stuff. You know, I hate to think about it like that, but if you think that way, then you got to think the opposite way too. We don't want to be Tools of Destruction for nobody. So if you got an absent landlord, or anybody like that, and you extending this to him, even if they don't respond, we taking it. You know what I'm saying, but if they respond, we getting the money. If we didn't have it at all, we'd be where we at right now, not getting anything. So with all due respect, we table this thing, Mr. City Manager. Don't do nothing until we tell you to do it after we finish with this meeting back here. That's all I got. All right."

Council Member Jones ends his statement and opens the floor for Mayor Parham.

Mayor Parham ends Item 9 session.

10. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

11. UTILITIES

- a. Department of Public Works & Utilities Report

Mayor Parham brings up the Utilities Packet, which is looked at by the leisure of the City Council Members and Administration; however, no discussion is held.

12. STREETS

13. FACILITIES

14. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

15. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK

Tangi Hill, the City Clerk states "The only thing is that we're currently taking applications for boards and commissions. So if you're interested, I'm sorry we're currently taking applications for boards and commissions. So if you're interested in serving, please visit our website. There's also some flyers in the back that you can scan the QR code."

17. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY

18. ADJOURNMENT:

The City Council adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Adopted: 10/01/2024

APPROVED:



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk