

The Work Session meeting of the Petersburg City Council was held on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, live streamed. Mayor Parham called the meeting to order at 12:42p.m.

1. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Council Member Charles H. Cuthbert, Jr.
Council Member Treska Wilson-Smith
Council Member W. Howard Myers
Council Member John A. Hart, Sr.
Council Member Darrin Hill
Mayor Samuel Parham

Absent: Vice Mayor Annette Smith-Lee

Present from City Council Administration:

Interim City Kenneth Miller
City Attorney Anthony C. Williams
Clerk of Council Nykesha D. Jackson

2. PRAYER:

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

Council Member Hill led the council meeting in prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

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

4. DETERMINATION OF THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM:

A quorum is present.

Vice Mayor Smith-Lee is absent.

5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (TI INCLUDE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING/S):

- a. A request to schedule a public hearing and consideration of a supplemental appropriation for Petersburg Public Schools in the amount of \$2,514,841. (1st Reading)
- b. First reading for consideration of an appropriation for Federal Grant 2019-014 for Transit Operating Budget for \$186,023.
- c. First Reading for consideration of an appropriation for Federal Grant 201-014 for Transit Preventative Maintenance Budget for \$256,000.
- d. Consideration of an appropriation for an additional \$14,703 for FY 2021 state aid to Petersburg Public Library. (1st Reading)
- e. To schedule a public hearing on an ordinance to amend and re-adopt Chapter 2 Sections 2-1 through 2-571 of the Petersburg City Code in furtherance of the City's Comprehensive Code update.
- f. Schedule a public hearing on an ordinance to request that the General Assembly approve amendment of Section 2-7 of the City Charter pertaining to Council Salaries.

*Audio available upon request.

- g. ABC Application for The Topsy Sommelier LLC
- h. ABC Application for Essential Market, LLC
- i. ABC Application for Local Vibe Café LLC
- j. City Council Minutes – February 16, 2021 Special Regular City Council Minutes; March 2, 2021 Closed Session Minutes; March 2, 2021 Work Session Minutes; March 16, 2021 Closed Session; March 16, 2021 Special Regular City Council Minutes and March 23, 2021 Special Regular City Council Minutes.

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “I ask that item ‘5i’, that is the ABC application for the Local Vibe Café, be removed from the consent agenda and discussed by council later in the meeting. And Mr. Mayor thank you but as to anything more dealing with zoning issues in the life I think the best way to proceed would be for me to ask that it be included as an agenda item at the business meeting on April 20th.”

Council Member Cuthbert made a motion to approve the consent agenda as proposed with the exception of item “5i”. The motion was seconded by Council Member Myers.

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, “I wanted to know if we can add on another item. An item ‘k’, which would be a first reading from the sheriff’s department for monies for crime prevention for seniors. Which she had requested back in February. This grant must be approved by the end of April. In order to do so we would have to put it under the consent agenda now and discuss at the next meeting.”

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

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

6. SPECIAL REPORTS:

- a. CARES Act Update

David Myers, representative with audit team, gave a brief update on the CARES Act with a PowerPoint presentation.

Key points:

- On March 2nd, the Interim City Manager contacted the pre-audit team to assist the City administration with providing pre-audit and accounting services to evaluate the CARES Act funding the City had received and expended over the past 12 months.
- The City received official notification of the award of \$5,469,636 of CARES funding to be distributed in two rounds of \$2,734,818.
- The City created a CARES Committee to develop a CARES application for departments and outside entities to apply for and receive CARES funding, an application review process, and a process to track all CARES revenue and expenditures.
- The City did not receive notification until December 23rd that the period to expend the CARES funds had been extended from December 2020 to December 2021. By that time, the City had worked “extremely” quickly to use these funds as effectively as possible given the condensed original timeline. By that date, the City had expended over \$5.1 million of all the allocated funds.
- CARES Act requires that the payments from the Coronavirus Relief Fund only be used to cover expenses that are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

*Audio available upon request.

b. Presentation on Bond Rating & Fund Balance -Davenport & Company

Roland Kooch and Dave Rose, Davenport & Company, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Bond Rating and Fund Balance.

Key points:

- Because the City had been using its unassigned fund balance and had a history of unbalanced budgets, its credit rating was downgraded in 2014 to “BBB” from “A+”.
- By 2016, the City’s finances had reached a critically low point, which resulted in a further credit rating downgrade to “BB” from “BBB”.
- Over the past four years the City’s fiscal health has rebounded and as such unassigned fund balance levels have dramatically improved. Over the same period, the city has received three credit rating upgrades which they are currently at “BBB+”.
- The City is rebuilding a sound financial position, including increased reserves and liquidity, such that short-term cash flow borrowing (RAN) is no longer necessary.
- The unassigned fund balance serves as the single most important factor for credit ratings. It enables the City to borrow at lower interest rates, which in turn provides for lower debt service and potential refunding opportunities for debt service savings.
- Continue the momentum with structurally balanced budgets and continue to revisit financial policies as the City’s finances and needs evolve.
- Revisit the City’s unassigned fund balance policy levels to include potentially higher targets and concepts of budget stabilization fund.
- Position the City to undertake essential capital investment for both general and utility enterprise needs. Davenport to work with the City to undertake capital planning debt capacity and debt affordability analysis for the general fund in anticipation of potential capital investment which may include financial system upgrades as early as FY2022.
- Davenport will work with City staff in the analyzing and implementing funding through various programs for utility capital needs.

There was discussion among City Council, Davenport & Company, and staff.

c. Personal Property Tax Motor Vehicle Exemption – Disabled Veterans

BACKGROUND: The Commissioner of Revenue has drafted an application for eligible disabled veterans to apply for the personal property tax exemption. This law is retroactively affected to January 1, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that City Council passes the proposed ordinance after the second reading during the regularly scheduled meeting on April 20, 2021.

Ms. Adams-Jacobs stated, “I just want to give you all a brief update on this item. I have worked with the Commissioner of Revenue on this item as well as the City Attorney. This was an outcome of our past General Assembly Legislative Session which I will give a further update on as we move a little bit further in the agenda. But we want to talk about this one a little bit more specific because it did impact one of our constitutional officers. So, a little bit of a background. The Senate Bill 1130 of Motor Vehicle of Disabled Veterans passed the General Assembly this last session. The Governor did sign it. This law will go into effect on July 1, 2021 and be retroactive of January 1, 2021. This law effects disabled veterans who are now eligible for the exemption of one vehicle through the City so that they do not have to pay those fees for that vehicle. Ms. Flowers and her office were really on this early on they worked on creating an application for personal property tax exemption
*Audio available upon request.

for those qualifying veterans of armed services or Virginia National Guard with 100% service-connected permanent or total disability or total 100% disability rating for unemployment. So, she worked on that application. It is currently on the City's website under Commission of Revenue form and new form 2021. She is also taking the liberty to reach out to those initial veterans. There are 131 of those. We will get to that a little bit later in the presentation. They have been notified and they know that now one of their vehicles will be eligible for this exemption. And word is spreading that this program is now available. More veterans are coming in to get applications. So, as we mentioned we responded very quickly to this response to this state mandate."

More key points:

- Commissioner of Revenue, City Manager's Office and City Attorney collaborated to discuss impacts of legislation.
- They collaborated to draft proposed ordinance for City council adoption to comply with state law.
- Due to the state mandate, it was projected that there are 131 eligible vehicles.
- The revenue adjustment will be included in the FY21/22 proposed budget. It will be a \$94,625.90 revenue loss.

Council Member Cuthbert stated that he believes that the process was done the wrong way and that City Council has not approved the ordinance or the process of exemption for veterans for personal property taxes.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

d. Presentation and Update on District 19 Community Services Board

Jennifer Tunstall, Executive Director of District 19 and Terrelle Stewart, Director of Community and Crisis Services of District 19, gave a PowerPoint presentation on District 19.

Key points:

- Mission is to improve the quality and productivity of the lives of individuals who experience, or are at risk of experiencing, mental disabilities and/or substance abuse.
- They are licensed by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Services to provide mental health, intellectual/developmental disability, substance abuse and prevention services to the citizens of the cities of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell and Petersburg, and the counties of Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry, and Sussex.
- They have a volunteer Board of Directors that provides oversight to District 19 and there is a vacancy with the City of Petersburg.
- They also offer emergency services for people in crisis, early intervention services for young children, and prevention services to reduce risk and promote wellness.
- In FY20, they provided direct services to 4,722 individuals.
- They provide adult services of Mental Health Case Management, Psychosocial Rehabilitation, Substance Use Services, I-Work Program, Psychiatric and Nursing Services, Transitional Living/Supportive Housing and PACT (Program for Assertive Community Treatment).
- They provide child and adolescent services of school-based therapy, juvenile corrections, prevention, mental health case management, court services, and early intervention.
- They finance their work through a combination of public and private sector funding. Funding comes from federal, state, and local entities. District 19 began accepting some commercial insurances for services in February 2019.
- Marcus Alert System – Mental health awareness response and community understanding services alert system. This initiative was named after Marcus Davis Peters who was shot and killed by Richmond police in 2018 during a behavioral health crisis. It is a series of protocols

*Audio available upon request.

aimed to divert to the behavioral health system or respond with a specialized law enforcement response, including protocols to divert from 911 to crisis call center, MOUs for law enforcement backup to a crisis response and minimum standards for law enforcement response.

- They are taking steps toward readiness by researching similar geographical areas and multijurisdictional models across the state and country w/similar initiatives in place.
- During the first year, they may determine a plan for team coverage (mobile crisis vs. community care vs. co-responder)
- They will submit plans for approval to implement by July 1, 2022.

There was discussion among City Council and representatives from District 19 Community Services.

e. Petersburg Area Transit Operational and Financial Overview

BACKGROUND: Petersburg Area Transit (PAT) is committed to improving the riding experience and availability of public transportation in the Southside region for residents, businesses and visitors of Petersburg, Hopewell, Colonial Heights, and the surrounding counties. PAT offers connections to downtown Richmond through GRTC and the greater United States via Greyhound from the Petersburg Multimodal Passenger Station.

RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation – Information Purposes only.

Mr. Lyons stated, “Mr. Mayor is it possibility that we can move on to the next one and we can come back to this one?”

Mayor Parham stated, “Alright. Yes, we can. Let’s go on and move on to the ERP Update.”

f. ERP Update

BACKGROUND: City Council provided direction to staff to proceed with acquiring a new ERP system. This is an estimated 3–4-year project, and we are currently in the early stages of moving with an RFI in Q2 2021 and then a formal RFP process to conclude in Q3/Q4 2021.

RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation – Information Purposes only.

Mrs. Adams-Jacobs gave an overview of the ERP Update.

Key Points:

- Enterprise resource planning (ERP) is a type of software that organizations use to manage day-to-day business activities such as accounting, procurement, human resources, risk management and asset management.
- Staff met to define the procurement process and the RFI was issued on March 29th. The deadline of the responses is April 26.
- The fund balance currently exists but it is a negative appearance to credit agencies. The debt issuance is great for overtime pay and it does not impact fund balance but reduces borrowing capacity and interest payments.

Council Member Cuthbert asked, “Mrs. Adams-Jacobs, when do you expect to report back to council again on progress that has been made in pursuing this idea of the ERP?”

Mrs. Adams-Jacobs stated, “I would anticipate the first meeting in May. And because you all cannot take action at that meeting; I would bring back our results from the RFP by April 16th. We should have most of
*Audio available upon request.

that information and have that in to be able to give you all an update and then have a concrete recommendation in terms of funding for your first actual meeting where you can take action at.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “That would be great. And one feature of this new ERP that I would like to see would be a feature that makes it a lot easier to match up payments that citizens make with the account that the citizen is paying. That is some type of payment slip that would accompany the check just as an example. I believe that it happens with many other periodic payment situations. For example, my credit card. When I pay my credit card, I send back in the piece that I tear off for preparation. And if I do not send that piece that I have torn off at the bottom then that check will get returned to me. And I think that it would help staff to make sure that payments are credited to the right account. Because this is a mandatory requirement by the City that the citizen have some type of documentation to accompany the payment on where the payment is to be applied. If that is available and if that it is commonly done. I expect that it is available and commonly done. But I think that would help to minimize misallocations of payments and real service to the paying public. Thank you.”

g. Update: Special Events, Recreation and Volunteerism

RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation – Information Purposes only.

Tami Champ Yerby, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated, gave an update on special events, recreation, and volunteerism.

Key points:

- Youth Recreation Summer Program provides a safe haven for City youth to engage in programs/ activities that will enhance their social, educational, and cultural development.
- Petersburg Recreation Summer Program – Delta Dare Enrichment Reading Program, Golden Girls Gardening and Continental Societies, Inc, STEM Enrichment Program.
- The City partners each year with Kiwanis for fishing activity.
- The City provides summer fitness and healthy meals to 100-150 campers per day.
- There is summer employment with Parks and Recreation each year.
- Parks and Recreation is looking forward to the 2021 Student Development Academy in which it will igniting interest in City Government Careers.
- Petersburg Links and Parks and Recreation brings National Society of Black Engineers to the City.
- The commonwealth of Virginia had an overall response rate of 99.8% as of October 6, 2020 for the Census 2020.
- Youth Summit on May 8, 2021, 9am to 12pm (Virtual Summit) (Grades 8-12)
- Juneteenth Virtual Celebration on June 19, 2021
- Petersburg Voices of Civil Rights will have Zoom Sessions on July 14th, 21st, 28th and August 11th, 18th, and 25th at noon.
- The Outreach to Recreation Program Seniors during the pandemic in which they did wellness calls, provided food from food bank, and provided the status of vaccines.

Petersburg Area Transit Operational and Financial Overview

Mr. Koonce and Mrs. Harris gave an overview of Petersburg Area Transit Operations.

Key points:

- The vision is to provide Petersburg & the community with safe, reliable, and accessible transit service to expand access to opportunities and enhance the quality of life.

*Audio available upon request.

- A goal is to provide a safe and dependable transportation service for the Petersburg community, improve awareness of PAT services to increase ridership and access to service, increase mobility throughout the Petersburg community and surrounding area through convenient access to employment area, medical facilities, shopping centers, schools, and community agencies.
- And to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service to better meet the transportation needs of the community and strengthen organization processes to ensure continuity of services.
- Accomplishments for FY20 & FY21: Cured all FTA Findings from 2016 and 2019 Triennial Reviews, established an internal Human Resources Department to manage Federal EEO Requirements, created comprehensive policies and procedures including Financial Management, Equal Opportunity Employment, Asset Management, and Americans with Disabilities.
- PAT developed a regular schedule of reimbursement requests to FTA and State to recoup funding owed to the City of Petersburg.
- PAT established an ongoing partnership with People's Advantage Credit Union.
- PAT provides fixed-route transit and ADA Paratransit Services throughout the Cities of Petersburg and Hopewell and portions of Colonial Heights, Prince George, Dinwiddie, and Chesterfield counties.
- FY22 Budget Highlights- Provide a livable wage to all employees – no employee wages budgeted under \$15.00 per hour; reduce turnover by addressing salaries below market rate and rewards tenure from the top-down; eliminate bus fare – after providing notice to patrons PAT may collect during the fiscal year – when it is safe to do so and sustain new freedom route without DRPT Grant.
- Total proposed budget for FY22 Budget is \$5,593,585.
- PAT was awarded \$3,581,786 in CARES Funding.
- Going forward they would like additional connections to Virginia Beach, Suffolk, Newport News, Hampton Roads via Williamsburg Area Transit Emporia Greenville.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

h. Presentation regarding the development project at 712-714 High Street

Mayor Parham stated, "That leads to 'Item H', and it has been stricken from the agenda. So, we are moving to monthly reports."

7. MONTHLY REPORTS:

a. Legislative Update – General Assembly Regular and Special Session I 2021

BACKGROUND: City staff provided the last update at the beginning of the General Assembly session in January. This is a close out report from the regular session and special session.

RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation – Information Purposes only.

Mrs. Adams-Jacobs gave briefing on General Assembly Regular and Special Session I 2021.

Key points:

- November 2020 – Request infrastructure funding for immediate business site development readiness at Petersburg Pharmaceutical Park Phase 1 (\$750,000). February 2021 – City was successful with securing \$10M in final state budget, awaiting the Governor's signature.
- There is still discussion on the Governor moving up the legalization of marijuana to this summer.

*Audio available upon request.

They are moving into a reconvene session and they will be discussing this in length. It is proposed to be legal by 2024.

- Governor Northam amended legislation on March 19, 2021 to prohibit skill games. Skill games will be prohibited effective July 1, 2021.
- Local Cigarette Taxes bill directs the Department of Taxation to establish a task force to develop methods for modernizing the local cigarette tax collection system and provide assistance as appropriate to localities seeking to form new regional cigarette tax boards. The Governor signed into law on March 11, 2021 and it is effective July 1, 2021.
- Municipal Elections bill has shifted all City, town, and school board elections to November, and it is effective January 1, 2022. The Governor signed the bill on March 12, 2021.
- Blight & Derelict Buildings Bill gave the City more teeth in classifying buildings as a nuisance or a derelict building.
- The Removal of Clutter bill provides that a locality may by ordinance require the removal of clutter from property, except on land zoned for or in active farming operation after reasonable notice to have the clutter removed by its agents or employees. This bill is effective July 1, 2021 and the Governor signed into the law on March 18, 2021.
- In March 2021, the House Appropriations Committee announced that the committee will accept requests for community project funding (CPF), formerly known as earmarks, for the Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations process. This type of direct funding to specific governmental entities, nonprofit organizations or geographic locations has not been permitted in congressional appropriations in a decade.

b. COVID 19 Update

Ms. Tyus gave an update on COVID 19.

Key points:

- We were last at a death total of 74 and now the City of Petersburg is at a total of 77.
- There is still COVID-19 testing at Pathways.
- Mobile Vaccination Unit will do a pilot Wednesday and Thursday of this week to test efficiency of the mobile units. Next week they will begin addressing the Crater homeless population. The City is working on this initiative in partnership with Vaccinate Virginia, Crater Health Department, Homeless Advocates (Crater Area Coalition for the Homeless, Saint Joseph Villa, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and Central Virginia Legal Aid Society.
- Governor Northam announced that all individuals in Virginia 16 and older will be eligible by April 18 to the COVID-19 vaccine, ahead of the May 1, which is a nationwide goal set by President Biden.
- The City call center is continuously adding constituents to the state waitlist. Call center number is 804-733-2550. Call center will be adding individuals to the waitlist at the following locations: Lafayette, Serenity Manor, Pecan Acres, Pin Oaks, and Henry Williams Townhomes.

Mayor Parham stated, "The question that I have that I am getting from a lot of citizens is when are we going to open back up and put the basketball hoops back up at the parks. I know that we have been working on getting a plan together on how to phase that back in. Can you brief us on the action that you have on that so far?"

Ms. Tyus stated, "Yes, I can. So, we met with our internal team. That internal team is police, fire, special events and the entities in the City who are responsible in keeping us all safe. While we are still experiencing spikes and while Petersburg remains at the highest level of hospitalizations, our recommendation is that we continue to pay attention our case load and our hospitalization rate as we give recommendations.

*Audio available upon request.

So, we recommend right now that we do not open our public facilities to the public yet. We are being flexible in terms of events outdoors and we are not comfortable putting up the basketball rims and things like that right now. So, we want to take a little more time to pay attention because we continue to be at the top of the infection rate.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Thank you.”

8. FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT:

a. Presentation of the FY2021-22 Proposed Operating Budget.

Kenneth Miller, Interim City Manager and Robert Floyd, Director of Budget, and Procurement, gave a PowerPoint on the proposed FY2021-22 Operating Budget.

Key points:

- This Proposed Operating Budget is recommending all non-seasonal employees be brought up to \$15/hour by FY2022-23.
- Organizations Changes to the City’s Executive Team
- Budgeted \$750,000 to be transferred to the Courts Capital Fund for the construction of the new court building.
- Realigned the funding sources for positions to align with where they work.
- Level funding for Petersburg Public Schools (\$10,000,000)
- Adhered to City’s Financial Policy of budgeting \$500,000 towards fund balance and \$500,000 towards Capital Improvements.
- There will be two budget work session in May with the potential to have a Saturday meeting on the budget.
- Changes are due from City Council by April 30th, 2021.

Council Member Hill stated, “No questions. I just want to thank the team, Mr. Miller, our Interim City Manager, along with Mr. Robert Floyd and his team. One thing that was refreshing about this budget was the salary increase for the lower paid individuals. That is something that we look forward to and I know publicly and privately that a lot of people were thinking that a City of this size was top heavy. And in some cases, I agree and in some cases I disagree because we had so much work to be done. And it took a lot, but that this point right now whereas we can scale back on some things. And this is no particular dig at anybody in particular. But a City this size I am glad that we are going back to this model right here with having one deputy manager. Of course, we already talked about this budget in our own meeting. And I like the fact that if someone works in a particular department that the budget would be in that department and the salary would be in that department instead of being somewhere else. It just makes better for record keeping purposes. Kudos to the staff. I do not see anything right now for me to be asking for a change. I know that I may get some phone calls that may say what about this department and what about that department. I know that if we could have probably given more to the schools. Right now, I know that we are giving \$10 million as of right now. I do know that I believe that they will be getting some COVID Relief just like we will be. They will get COVID money, and we will be getting COVID money as well. So, hopefully where we may come up short, they may can use their money to finagle their budget as well. But I am happy with this budget as of now. Thank you, Mr. Mayor and Members of Council.”

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, “Thank you Mr. Miller, Mr. Floyd and team. I applaud you. This is a good budget. Thank you for listening to me and spelling out what contractual services are, what it means and what it intel’s. Thank you so much for that. I have a question about process. Now, when council members met individually with you and we shared our concerns, do we wait until that point in the process of making changes

*Audio available upon request.

or did you take what we already said in advisement and made changes. For instance, I asked about a grant writer. Do we wait for that to happen or have you already looked at it?"

Mr. Miller stated, "It is already in there. It is in the City Manager's Budget. We found funding for that."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "So, the budget that you put online then includes that?"

Mr. Miller stated, "Yes."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "Okay. It was not in our original one so that is why I did not know. I did have another question. When we looked at general fund revenue on page 51 and we got to gifts and donations, we have for 2021 amended \$8,000. Now, I know, and maybe I am in the wrong department, but I know that Councilman Myers and Councilman Parham raised money last year for water billing to a tune for about \$17,000, I think. Would that not go here?"

Mr. Floyd stated, "If the money was raised for utility bills it would not have gone in the general fund it would go in the utility fund."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "I see that you changed up your page numbers on me too. I guess that is with the corrections."

Mr. Floyd stated, "Yes ma'am. And for a point of clarification one thing that our office will do is provide the City Council with an updated version of the document. As some of you knew when you came in the door, we had given out new pages because we had found minor typos that we had given and corrected and provided and you all. We will ensure that you all will have an updated book by the end of this week with the corrected numbers that I posted to the website."

There was more discussion among City Council and staff.

9. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

10. UTILITIES:

a. Utility Relief Assistance Program Update

BACKGROUND: On January 19, 2021, City staff provided the City Council with the program's guidelines and an update on the number of total applications. Staff also provided the City Council with two options for awarding funding. City Council elected for Option B, which provided the most equitable solutions for the community and awards based on a tiered approach.

RECOMMENDATION: No recommendation – Information Purposes only.

Mrs. Adams-Jacobs gave an update on the Utility Relief Assistance Program.

Key points:

- The City of Petersburg has been awarded federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funds for municipality utility relief to eligible Petersburg, VA customers from VHCD.
- These funds offer relief to utility customers who have been greatly impacted by the COVID-19

*Audio available upon request.

pandemic. This includes customers who have fallen behind on water and wastewater bill payments due to economic hardships from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The program will assist in covering water and wastewater bills that were 30-60+ days late between March 1, 2020 – December 30, 2020.
- It does not cover any penalties or fees assessed by locality.
- To be eligible you had to face hardships due to the pandemic, City of Petersburg resident with residential utility account, past due water and/or wastewater balance that began between March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020, minimum of \$20 and a maximum of \$1,500 past due bill and they must verify that they accept the funding.
- It does not cover refuse, stormwater, and tax. It does not cover penalties or fees assessed by the locality.
- There were 1,450 applications that were submitted. The deadlines for application online were January 8th and the deadline was extended for paper applications to January 29th.
- With Option B, assistance was awarded on a first-come first served basis based on established program criteria and submitted application completeness/accuracy.
- Proposed funding allocation breakdown would be approximately \$306,000 awarded on first come first serve basis to online applicants based on tiered system to attempt to spread funding as fairly and equitably as possible.
- Based on council direction and staff recommendation, a tiered award approach was applied to customer awards to promote equity and help assist the greatest number of customers as possible.
- They spent \$358,220.27 and it left \$24,273.43.
- Out of the 1,327 customers that were eligible, and the City was able to provide \$358,220.57 towards utility relief. There is still \$402,140.12 of arrears that the City was not able to address with the program.
- The next steps are to follow up gauge on how many customers have fallen behind after December 30, 2020 – March 3, 2021. Also follow up with the State on additional funding opportunities. And report back to City Council in May with an update.

There was discussion among City Council and staff.

Mayor Parham stated, “Mr. Williams, we had an item that was plucked from the consent agenda. When is the time that we can discuss that being that we have this work session? We typically on a regular council agenda have items removed from the consent agenda.”

Mr. Williams stated, “Yes. It should be brought up during this meeting before you adjourn. It is just removed from the consent agenda for discussion. So, it can be either moved further after discussed with the rest of them or not. Depending on how you determine it.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Okay Council Member Cuthbert, we will take this time to discuss it.”

Ms. Tyus stated, “After Council Member Cuthbert does his thing, I do have one update. It is not a presentation it is an update on streets.”

Mayor Parham stated, “Okay. Council Member Cuthbert we want to go back to item ‘5i’ on the Local Vibe Café.”

Council Member Cuthbert stated, “Thank you Mayor and council. Item 5i is what we are talking about and it is on page 114 -116. And it is an application for wine and beer on and off premises, mixed beverage restaurant license for the Local Vice Café. I think we all know where the Local Vibe Café is. It is a nice small

*Audio available upon request.

restaurant. It is 414 North Market Street. And my concern is that the off-premises portion of the request. I believe that none of the restaurants in Old Towne currently have a license that authorize off premises' sale of alcohol. Now it is true that because of COVID, by order of the Governor by temporary basis, restaurants are allowed to sell alcohol to be consumed off premises. But I anticipate that it will end soon and certainly it is only short term. So, setting that aside we are faced with the first ever request for off premises sale of alcohol in Old Towne. And I think that is a bad precedence. If the ABC Board grants it, I think that it is going to be hard to say no in other circumstances. And if we do not oppose the off-premises portion of this request I think that it is going to be inconsistent of us to oppose off premise request in the future. So, what I would like us to do is to instruct the City Manager to write the ABC Board and express to them that we are opposed to the off-premises portion of this request. And that we do not oppose the on premises but that we are concerned that this will create a bad precedence within the Old Town restaurant and entertainment area. And consequently, we ask the ABC Board to no approve the off-premises portion of the application. I do not know what success that request will have but I think that we should try to make the request. I do not know Mr. Mayor whether this requires a motion."

Mayor Parham stated, "Right now the item was not approved and was taken from the consent agenda. So, at this time do you want to add it on with those stipulations."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "That would be great. If the City Manager would forward that to the ABC Board as a concern of City Council that we do not want to establish a precedence of the off-premises sale of alcohol in the Old Towne restaurant area. That would be super."

Mr. Miller stated, "Yes. That would not be a problem at all. I can have the letter our by Thursday."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "That would be great. Thank you, Mr. Miller, and thank you Mr. Mayor."

Council Member Wilson-Smith stated, "I have a concern now. Can a letter technically go to them stating that council is against? There seems to be one council person who is. But none of the other council members have stated that we are. So, would a letter stating that be active?"

Mr. Williams stated, "I would recommend that you take a vote of council to get a consensus to direct the manager one way or another based on Councilwoman Wilson-Smith."

Mayor Parham stated, "And we need a vote to add it to the consent agenda as well."

Council Member Myers made a motion to put the ABC Application for Local Vibe Café on the consent agenda and for the letter to be sent out from the City Manager on council behalf opposing the off-premises sale of alcohol. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cuthbert. There was discussion on the motion. The motion was approved on roll call. On roll call vote, voting yes: Cuthbert, Myers, and Parham; Voting No: Wilson-Smith and Hart; Abstain: Hill; Absent: Smith-Lee

11. STREETS:

Ms. Tyus stated, "Good afternoon Council. Just a real quick update. Streets is supervising a contractor who is working on the COVID at Poor Creek from East Washington Street to East Wythe to take a deeper dive into cleaning out and descending that particular creek. We will prepare it, and this is to get in front of whenever the next rain is and hoping that we have a positive impact on the flooding that takes place on Bank Street whenever it rains. We are comparing it to light rains for the next couple to see if there are positive impacts. And that was it. Thank you, guys."

*Audio available upon request.

12. FACILITIES:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

13. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

14. CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA:

a. City Manager's Report

Mr. Miller stated, "You have my report Mr. Mayor. If you have no questions, then that will be all that I have for you."

Council Member Hill stated, "Mr. Mayor, can I have the City Manager or Mrs. Innis speak to the delay of the trash pickup while the citizens are on the line. I know that we have a lot of people who trash has not been picked up. Can you just give some clarification on that?"

Mr. Miller stated, "Mrs. Innis would be the best person for that."

Mrs. Innis stated, "I have been working with Central Virginia Waste Management Authority who has informed us that quiet a few of their drivers has contracted COVID-19. Which resulted in a delay of many of our trash routes throughout the City. So, the entire tri-city area was impacted. They provided several updates throughout this week saying that trash is being picked up. As of right now they are up to their last route which I believe is in the downtown area. But they assured us that everyone's trash has been picked up other than that particular route. I will send out another notification before we leave today."

Council Member Cuthbert stated, "Mrs. Innis I got a phone call that North and South Plains has not been picked up. And I know that I sent you all an email about Lakewood."

Mrs. Innis stated, "CVWMA has notified me that they have went out to Lakewood, North and South Plains. I will make sure and follow-up and make sure that they are done today."

Council Member Hill stated, "Thank you, Mrs. Innis and Mr. City Manager."

15. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CLERK:

Ms. Jackson stated, "I have one item and it is from Vice Mayor Smith-Lee. She stated that she received a letter in regard to her ward with a pavilion being named after Willie Fobbs at Farmer Street Park that she is going to bring up at the next regular City Council Meeting for consideration and approval. But she wanted me to give you guys that information that she will be bringing it forth."

16. BUSINESS OR REPORTS FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY:

*No items for this portion of the agenda.

17. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Kelsi Jewel, 271 High Street, stated, "Thank you for calling on me. I have two questions. I must have missed this at the beginning of the meeting. But why was section '6h' removed from the agenda? And then my

*Audio available upon request.

second question is in regard to Local Vibe offering off premises alcohol sales. I know that this is already voted on from City Council but as a resident and homeowner on High Street I would like to point out the fact that the only other ABC off premises purchase option in the Old Towne district is Bucket Trade which is over by Trapezium. I know from my standpoint and my neighbor's standpoint it would be nice to walk to some places and purchase alcohol and take it back to our homes instead of taking our business to Colonial Heights to the Wawa. So, that may be something for you all to consider from a business standpoint and not necessarily detracting business from me going to Longstreet's and having a beer. It is giving me another option to bring beer back to my home to drink instead of taking my business outside of the City."

Norma Williams, Array Business & Technology, stated, "Couple of comments and I have made notes as we have gone through the presentation today in no particular order. So, I apologize in advance if I seem to be jumping around. Now critical positions in regard to the budget. I would ask consideration of the budget and looking to streamline even further when you first identify critical positions or critical staff. And perhaps once you have identified those critical positions or critical staff members then you can look at what positions are unique. What does that individual bring that is unique? Because we can train individuals to do any type of job in all honesty. And perhaps why that is important because when you look at the budget we want to ensure, and I did not see anything on employee incentive programs. We want to make sure that we do retain employees. A couple of other things that I noticed that I wanted to comment on was the public safety and social services that we are spending. One penny can go a long way when you are looking at such a large budget. But when we are looking at the cost of that dollar how do we get social services and reducing that amount that we put into social services. The individuals that may be getting benefits from social services we need to get them trained and employed. The location of a new court room and courthouse. We are talking \$750,000. Do we have to allocate it all in one year or could we perhaps allocate half? When is it expected to be built and will it be accessible to the people? Let's let at the top-level positions again in the budget. We want to do incentive programs and factor in the automatic pay increase. Whether it be 2 or 3% increases each year for each employee. And in regard to the water, I know that we said that we would look at communicating with those individuals in the first quarter 2021 in January, February, and March. We need to look at those now. Because those individuals that may have gotten assistance, they have been getting funds. It is not going to be around forever, and we need to utilize those funds in the most beneficial way. If it means offering a budgeting class to them as well. Again, we cannot wait, and we need to act on that now. Because it looks like we average \$221 out of 1,619 applicants for that March 2020 to December 2020. We need to reach out to them again now. Thank you all very much."

Marcus Omar Squires, 1701 Monticello Street, stated, "I am just wanting you all to start addressing some of these blighted City owned properties. You have the bathhouse at the gate keeper's cottage at Wilcox Lake. You have the Titmus Optical Complex, and you have Peabody, and you have Ion's Hall. When is the City going to start addressing some of their blighted assets? And then regarding the private sector, why the City allowing for blighted homeowners to paint their front door and not have them address the holes in their roof. Some of these individuals are painting the siding while back parts of the structure are collapsing. I am not sure if the code and compliance department is actually going around and looking at the back of the homes. And they just see a nicely painted front door and think that the properties are well taken care of and that is not the case in the City. I know that the City does own some drones. I do not know if we can start implementing those drones in the property inspection. And I hope that the City will continue to focus on some positive things that are going down in Old Towne. HPF is having walking tours. There was a great event this weekend in regard to an easter egg hunt. Let's continue to make Petersburg a destination. Thank you."

Barbara Rudolph, 1675 Mt. Vernon Street, stated, "The City Manager recruitment. I understand that the position closed on March 31, 2021. I was looking at the City employment website. I understood that the city Council was using VML for part of the recruitment. I never saw an ad on VML website, but I may have missed it. And if you have talked about this already today, please forgive me because I missed the beginning of the meeting. But my question would be can City Council involve in the citizens in the process of the selecting the next City Manager. I know that if you look around at a lot of the efforts that the previous City Manager made to

*Audio available upon request.

get employment in another place, everyone of those places that we read about they all had some kind of meeting where they did give citizens some roles in talking with the candidates. It would be the top candidates. But I am just asking, and I hope that council will consider that. I think that people have a lot of interest in it, and we are all wanting to get the best possible person to lead us going forward. Thank you.”

Cory Harris, 236 Anderson Street, stated, “I wanted to touch bas on a couple of subjects. First, I wanted to talk about COVID-19. I have been following the numbers of COVID-19 since the very beginning. I have listened to the struggles of Americans on Facebook and it is troubling. I want to go back to December. In December, the Progress-Index did a story about 170 cases in the City of Petersburg. And the Crater Health District said that it was back logged. Let’s go two months after December 30th. We had over 2,000 cases in two months. That is alarming. But the Crater Health District said that we were backlogged. Are we still back logged? I really wish that the City of Petersburg would focus more on prevention it is more than just wearing a mask. And it has bothered me for quite some time. I had friends who has died from the disease. I have listened to calls of some of my friends that were in hospitals and it was not pretty. We need to do more in this City to focus on prevention. We need to tell the story of those who suffered from the disease so that people can get a better understanding of the disease. This is not about politics it is about saving lives. And we need to do more to focus on that. The second thing that I want to talk about is a project that I am doing. It is a celebration of black excellence not history. It would be a 501(c) program and it will tell amazing stories about African Americans in the City of Petersburg. Stories that have been overlooked. Stories that expand well over 200 years. We have accomplished some amazing things in the City of Petersburg, but we have ignored it and that ends today. It will also help our young people with possible scholarships. We are a nonpartisan City, but the partisan politics have consumed us. People are dying in the City of Petersburg and I am getting tired of the foolishness. Goodbye.”

Patrick Ingram, 836 South Gillfield Drive, stated, “I wanted to start off by discussing something that I heard of echoed today. And that is in regard to the impact of COVID-19 in our community. We have had individuals on council unfortunately and there are members of the community, families and loved ones who have had died because of this pandemic. And so, I come back to a question of still wanting information of when we received PPE from Richmond. I am still waiting on information regarding appropriations of those resources. Were they leveraged and provided to two areas in Petersburg where they have lower and poor health outcomes? Also, I want to congratulate and thank the Interim City Manager Miller on a fantastic presentation. But more importantly focus on restructuring organizational structure but more importantly providing a necessary pay adjustment that we so desperately needed. It is great to hear the proposal finally having folks having increased wages. I also want to talk about the fact that I hope that we can address and maybe have a proclamation for Youth HIV/AIDS Awareness Day approaching. Young people are just proportionally affected by HIV/AIDS. And if we can celebrate it should be rightful that we have days that we can focus on the diseases and situations that impact Petersburg residents every single day. I hope that the next opportunity, the Planning Commission had meetings lasty year in regard to the City’s vision and we saw no council member present throughout any of those meetings while we discussed the future of our City. I hope that at the next opportunity we see more council members. And finally, one of the words that I heard today was precedent and there were votes on precedence. And one of the things that I have asked for and I have not heard any discussion or feedback is the ability to have other politicians who were born in Petersburg to have the opportunity to have a Positive Petersburg moment of their own. We have Jennifer McClellan who was born here then Kirk Cox who was also born here. As a non-partisan City I think that they should have the opportunity to come and talk about their experiences and what they want to do to address the needs of Petersburg. We saw that with Jennifer Carroll Foy who was fully endorsed by our Mayor and Vice Mayor. I do appreciate a lot of the commentary that was discussed today. I look forward to constituent needs being met and I hope that Ward 6 council member can address our needs. Thank you.”

JaVonni Brustow, 119 Crater Woods Court, stated, “And I just had a few questions. One is in regard to late last summer there was a council meeting where it was discussed that \$1.2 million dollars had been moved

*Audio available upon request.

to an account in the Mid-west. I believe that the Mayor said that he would asking the City Treasurer to come before the council to discuss this. And I have attended most of the meetings since then and I do not recall this coming back up. So, I do not know if an effort had been made to reach out to him. I know that there is a bit of history of the relationship of the other council. So, I just would like an update about that. Also, there is a Tri-City Transit Authority. I may have the title off, but I believe that the Mayor and a council member possibly attends. It is designed to better the public transit in the greater Richmond area. I have been in this area for three years and I do not think that I have ever heard anything mentioned about this. So, I was just curious if there was some type of update on that organization. Because transportation is one of the major pools for younger people for growing City's like Petersburg. And I also wanted to ask about the public library addition. I know that there will probably be some people that may be upset at my question, but I believe that I heard someone from the Library Foundation mention at one point that no public dollars would be going forth. And I have had documentation since then to show otherwise. And I have discussed it with several other people to see if they had heard similar. I just wanted to come to you all to hear from the horse's mouth on if that was true. If the original intentions were to have this to be 100% funded by private dollars and not have any public dollars go towards or if that has changed? And if so, what is the reasoning? And lastly, I will double back on something that the last speaker mentioned regarding the Jennifer Carroll Foy candidate who spoke to the council in January. I know that she was former Delegate, and she was speaking about things that she has done for the State and she spoke on her candidacy for Governor. But at the same time if that same courtesy would be extended to other statewide candidates who are running as well. And I believe that is all that I have for now. Thank you."

18. ADJOURNMENT:

City Council adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Clerk of City Council

APPROVED:

Mayor