



# COUNCIL

## Communicates

### Highlights from City Council Meetings

**April 16, 2024**

Petersburg Public Library

#### City Council Members

Ward 1

**Marlow Jones**

[mjones@petersburg-va.org](mailto:mjones@petersburg-va.org)

Ward 2

**Darrin Hill**

**Vice Mayor**

[dhill@petersburg-va.org](mailto:dhill@petersburg-va.org)

Ward 3

**Samuel Parham**

**Mayor**

[sparham@petersburg-va.org](mailto:sparham@petersburg-va.org)

Ward 4

**Charles Cuthbert**

[ccuthbert@petersburg-va.org](mailto:ccuthbert@petersburg-va.org)

Ward 5

**W. Howard Myers**

[whowardmyers@petersburg-va.org](mailto:whowardmyers@petersburg-va.org)

Ward 6

**Anette Smith-Lee**

[alee@petersburg-va.org](mailto:alee@petersburg-va.org)

Ward 7

**Arnold Westbrook**

[awestbrook@petersburg-va.org](mailto:awestbrook@petersburg-va.org)

#### **Please Note:**

These are not the official minutes of the City Council meeting.

The official minutes and agendas can be accessed on the city website:

[www.petersburg-va.org](http://www.petersburg-va.org)

Please note that the official minutes are not posted until approved by City Council.

#### **Closed Session**

3:00 pm

1. Roll Call  
**All were present except for Councilman Jones and Councilwoman Smith-Lee at rollcall.**
2. Closed Session  
The purpose of this meeting is to convene in the closed session pursuant to:
  - a. §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia for the purpose of discussion pertaining to performance, assignment, and appointment of specific public employees of the City of Petersburg, specifically including but not limited to discussion of the performance, assignment, and appointment of a specific public officer of the City of Petersburg; §2.2-3711(A)(7) and (8) of the Code of Virginia for the purpose of receiving legal advice and status update from the City Attorney and legal consultation regarding the subject of actual or probable litigation and specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by the City Attorney, specifically including but not limited to discussion of requirements of Code of Virginia Title 25.1 Chapter 2 Article 2; a disputed claim concerning stormwater utility payments; and other matters requiring the legal advice of the City Attorney; and pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia for the purpose of discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and the disposition of publicly held real property where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, specifically including but not limited to the acquisition and disposition of real property.

3. Adjournment

Motions approved to add resolution for collecting stormwater fees and settlement of disputed the claim on stormwater fees.

**Regular City Council Meeting**

5:00 pm

1. Roll Call

Councilman Myers absent. All other members present.

2. Prayer

Led by Vice Mayor Hill.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Mayor Sam Parham.

4. Determination of the Presence of a Quorum

Quorum present.

5. Proclamations/Recognitions/Presentation of Ceremonial Proclamations

- a. 2024 National Library Week and National Library Worker Day Proclamation
- b. 2024 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week Proclamation

6. Responses to Previous Public Information Posted

Council Communicates.

7. Approval of Consent Agenda (to include minutes of previous meetings):

a. Minutes:

- Minutes of April 2, 2024 - City Council Closed Session
- Minutes of April 2, 2024 - City Council Work Session

b. Resolution of Support for Safe Streets and Roads for All Planning Grant 20-21

Approved.

8. Official Public Hearings

- a. A Public Hearing and Consideration of an Ordinance Requested by City Council to Amend and Readopt Article 24 Nonconforming Uses and Article 25 Supplementary Height, Area, and Bulk Regulations, as Set forth in the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg, to Allow the Rehabilitation and Continuation of Noncomplying Structures as Defined and to Clarify the Allowance of Single-Family Dwellings and Accessory Improvements on Non-Conforming Lots Recorded Prior to Adoption of the Zoning Ordinance (Second Reading)

Public Hearing

Mike Packer

Suggested removing the language regarding certificates.

Dr. Kenneth Lewis

He stated he has ongoing concerns about empty lots and being taxed for someone who built their house 7 feet onto his property.

Jasper Lewis

Approves the ordinance.

JaJa Parham

He supports the code amendment.

**Motion approved. Councilman Jones abstained.**

b. A Public Hearing and Consideration of an Ordinance to Amend and Readopt Section 2-108 of the Petersburg City Code Pertaining to Responsibilities of the Clerk with Respect to Published Ordinances (Second Reading)

**No public comment. Motion approved.**

c. A Public Hearing and Consideration to Amend Chapter 106, Taxation, Article III, Real Estate, Division 3, Exemption for Elderly and Disabled (Second Reading)

Public Hearing

Barb Rudolph

She stated Petersburg's relief is generous compared to other localities, but she supports it because many struggle to remain in their homes.

Cynthia Wallen

She is a single mom and applied for help but was denied.

**Approved.**

d. A Public Hearing and Consideration of an Ordinance to Adopt the Real Property Tax Rate (Second Reading)

Public Hearing

Robert Anderson

Stated that keeping the current rate will hurt people who are renting or on fixed incomes.

Barb Rudolph

She stated that more information was shared a couple of years ago when the rate was lowered from \$1.35 to \$1.27. The additional revenue by keeping the

same rate will be almost \$3.5M. She has a problem when you don't know how the extra money will be spent.

Cynthia Wallen

She moved to Petersburg on faith about 6 years ago, bought her first home, and said she could get rid of private insurance. Keeping the current tax rate with the new assessment could increase her mortgage.

Dr. Kenneth Lewis

He has no issue with the tax rate but has a problem with assessment.

Genevieve Lohr

She feels the City is unsafe, and citizens are being asked to pay more. She wants to know how the extra money will be used.

Mike Packer

He asked the Council to lower the rate. He stated that it is good news that values are up. Lowering the tax rate will attract new business and industry. The rate was \$1.45 when he came to work for Petersburg.

Barbara Hoosier

She understands that market values have increased, but people should not have to fear losing their homes. Residents spend money on an appeal. Many Petersburg citizens are on fixed incomes, which could be creating another level of homelessness.

**Motion approved to table. Councilman Jones abstained.**

9. **Public Information Period**

A public information period, limited in time to 30 minutes, shall be part of an Order of Business at each regular council meeting. Each speaker shall be a resident or business owner of the City and shall be limited to three minutes. No speaker will be permitted to speak on any item scheduled for consideration on the regular docket of the meeting at which the speaker is to speak. The order of speakers, limited by the 30-minute time period, shall be determined as follows:

- a. First, in chronological order of the notice, persons who have notified the Clerk no later than 12:00 noon of the day of the meeting,
- b. Second, in chronological order of their sign up, persons who have signed a sign-up sheet placed by the Clerk in the rear of the meeting room prior to the meeting removed from consent agenda.

Amanda Green

She asked that the proposed budget be prepared and presented earlier. She also requested a traffic study on Pocahontas Island and to contract a historic study for use of the Jarratt House.

Barb Rudolph

She questioned the City withdrawing from CVWMA and how much more it will cost residents for the City to contract with Meridian Waste, when other surrounding localities are moving services to Waste Management.

Linwood Christian

He stated that City Council is holding state money for teachers. **City Council is not holding state funds for teachers.**

Otis Hill

He stated he is still waiting for the fire department to install fire and carbon detector alarms in his home. He asked for the City to launch an app for weather warnings. **The Fire Department has offered to install battery-powered detectors. The police app does issue weather warnings.**

Brandon Riley

He advocates for casino funding to go back to the community. Each ward should be given an amount of those funds. **Voters must first approve a referendum for Petersburg to have a casino.**

Genevieve Lohr

She asked what the city was planning to do with casino money. People need safe places. Community policing makes it safe.

Dr. Kenneth Lewis

He stated the Cooper family still lives in Petersburg, and Cooper Field at Willcox Lake is not maintained. He also asked about the dam at Willcox Lake. A group still wants to preserve the former Peabody School complex. **A design plan has been completed to repair the Willcox Lake dam. A construction grant application has been submitted.**

Cynthia Wallen

She wants better customer service from the water department. She stated bills are too high because of old meters. All residents should have water testing kits. She also stated that the computers at the Library are not updated and that the internet is slow.

10. Business or reports from the Mayor or other Members of City Council

Councilman Cuthbert

He discussed a success story of code enforcement at 130 N. Jefferson Street. More community meetings on STARS (85/95 exit and Graham road) are needed. Goal is safety first.

Councilman Jones

He stated he was glad to see a packed house at the Council meeting. He encouraged citizens to appeal reassessments to the City Assessor. Citizens were reminded that there are many needs in Petersburg that take money, but the return of morals and values is needed.

Councilman Westbrook

He reminded citizens to Cut their grass.

Councilwoman Smith-Lee

She is concerned by the aggression at the meeting. Citizens appear negative about everything. People should talk with each other, have a heart, and come together to make things better.

Vice Mayor Hill

He reminded citizens that things are getting better, people should concentrate on the positive and respect one another.

Mayor Parham

No comments.

11. Items removed from Consent Agenda  
**None.**
12. Finance and Budget Report
  - a. Proposed FY25 Budget Calendar  
**Motion approved to adopt budget dates.**
13. Unfinished Business  
**None.**
14. New Business
  - a. Presentation of Blighted Properties  
**Motion approved to adopt the demo list.**
15. City Manager's Report and Special Reports
  - a. UVA Introductory Presentation  
**No action taken.**
16. Business or reports from the Clerk  
**Thanked Council and City Manager for hiring her as clerk and executive assistant to the City Manager.**
17. Business or reports from the City Attorney  
**None.**
18. Adjournment