



# COUNCIL

## Communicates

### Highlights from City Council Meetings

**April 15, 2025**

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.

1. Roll Call  
**All present on roll call except Councilman Jones.**
2. Closed Session  
The purpose of this meeting is to convene in the closed session pursuant to:
  - a. §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; and
  - b. §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 Regarding Petersburg Circuit Court Case No.'s: CL25-282; CL25- 257; CL24-715; and Actual or Probable Litigation; and
  - c. §2.2-3711(A)(29) of the Code of Virginia for the Purpose of Discussion Regarding the Subject of Award of a Public Contract Involving the Expenditure of Public Funds, and Discussion of the Terms or Scope of Such Contract, Where Discussion in an Open Session Would Adversely Affect the Bargaining Position or Negotiating Strategy of the Public Body; and
  - d. §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.

3. Adjournment

**City Council Regular Meeting**

5:00 pm

1. Roll Call  
**All present.**
2. Prayer  
**Led by Vice Mayor Hill.**
3. Pledge of Allegiance  
**Led by Mayor Parham.**
4. Determination of the Presence of a Quorum  
**Quorum present.**
5. Proclamations/Recognitions/Presentation of Ceremonial Proclamations
6. Responses to Previous Public Information Posted  
**Council Communicates.**
7. Presentations
  - a. Crater Area Coalition on Homelessness (CACH) - Shaskia Bryant, Executive Director and Dawn Scott, St. Joseph's Villa Homeless Systems Navigator  
**Moved to May 6, 2025, meeting.**
8. Approval of Consent Agenda (to include minutes of previous meetings):
  - a. Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):
    - April 1, 2025 Closed Session
    - April 1, 2025 City Council Work Session**Approved.**
9. Official Public Hearings
  - a. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY25 Petersburg City Public Schools Budget, in the Amount of \$4,523,723.  
**No comments.**  
**Approved.**
  - b. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Amendment to the FY25 Grants Fund in the amount of \$49,200 & the FY25 Streets Fund in the amount of \$4,000,000  
**No public comments.**  
**Approved.**

c. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Deed of Easement to Virginia Electric and Power Company Across the Property Located at 1937 Johnson Avenue

No public comments.

Approved.

d. A Public Hearing for Consideration of an Ordinance to Authorize the Conveyance of an Easement to Virginia Electric and Power Company in Furtherance of the City of Petersburg's Poor Creek Pumping Station Project Located at 16 Raleigh Avenue

No public comments.

Approved.

e. Public Hearing of an Ordinance Request by Crater Center, LLC to Amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg to Allow Recreational Substance Retail Uses in the B-2, General Commercial Zoning District with an Approved Special Use Permit and At Least 1,000 Linear Feet from the Property Line of Any Child Day Care Center or Public, Private, or Parochial School

Presenter: Naomi

Public Hearing

Joe Battison

Mr. Battison expressed his opposition to vape shops operating within the city. He cited concerns such as ordinance violations, improper garbage disposal, and illegal signage. Additionally, he shared an incident where one of their customers reportedly threatened his tenant with a firearm.

Kenneth Pritchett – School Board Chair

Chair Pritchett highlighted a concerning rise in vaping among middle and high school students, leading to disciplinary actions, including suspensions. He noted that some vapes contain illegal substances and warned about the potential health risks, such as popcorn lung. He questioned how children are obtaining vapes, questioning whether proper ID checks are being enforced. Chair Pritchett also cited instances of elementary school students bringing vapes to school.

A motion to deny was approved.

f. Public Hearing of an Ordinance for a Request by Alexander Graham, Jr., on behalf of the Warrenton Group, to Rezone Property at 2233 Halifax Road, Parcel ID 076030800, from the A, Agricultural, District to the M-1, Light Industrial, District with Proffers

Public Hearing

Jim Beck

Mr. Beck stated that he and his wife have lived next to the property for 52 years and are opposed to using the site for a data center, although they are not opposed to data centers in general. They do not want one located next door. He also expressed concerns about the Planning Commission's lack of transparency and due diligence. Furthermore, he mentioned there is no evidence that the Warrington Group has

experience operating data centers, and suggested they may be speculators intending to resell the land after rezoning.

Approved.

g. Public Hearing of an Ordinance for an Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Petersburg Pertaining to the Introduction of Civil Penalties for Violations of the Zoning Ordinance

Public Hearing

Mary Howard

Ms. Howard said there is a need for a better breakdown of violations and penalties.

Gary Talley

Mr. Talley suggested that business licenses be revoked until they comply.

Joe Battison

Mr. Battison explained that, as a member of the ARB Board, he has made efforts to assist homeowners who inadvertently violate regulations. He noted that some residents are unaware they live in a historic district. Additionally, he expressed concern that the courts do not consistently support Petersburg's efforts, emphasizing the need to improve the city's image.

Mary Bullock

Ms. Bullock agreed with the motion and raised concerns about individuals facing numerous penalties. She noted instances of dishonesty in court proceedings and emphasized the need for implementing civil penalties.

Marlo Green

Ms. Green stated she supports the motion and asked if this applied to outbuildings.

A motion to accept the code was approved. Councilman Jones voted no.

h. Public Hearing for the Consideration of a Resolution Allocating the Remaining \$132,090 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) COVID CARES Act Funds to Support Social Services

Public Hearing

LeVerie Talley

Ms. Talley supports the funds being given to Social Services.

A motion was approved to give \$100,000 to Petersburg Parks & Rec and decide on the remaining funding distribution at the May 6 Council meeting.

I. Public Hearing of an Ordinance to Authorize the Purchase of Property Located at 530 E. Washington Street – Tax Parcel ID No. 012280013

Public Hearing

Barb Rudolph

Ms. Rudolph questioned the purchase of the property from Dave McCormick. She also asked whether the building would be demolished and the associated demolition costs.

The City is now receiving estimates for the cost of demolition.

A motion to purchase the property was approved.

10. 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 will be removed from the consent agenda

Rev. Eugene and Tamara Blow

They stated that short-term rentals in residential areas are in high demand, contributing to economic growth and job creation. However, short-term rentals within R1 zoning require a special use permit.

Marlo Green

Ms. Green requested an update on relocating the road on Pocahontas Island to the Roper property. She shared that she has launched the Petersburg Experience, an initiative promoting local businesses. This effort includes creating a package to market to companies, featuring experiences such as a "date night" and "Stories by Candlelight" at the train station. The Candlelight event will include a string quartet and will take place on June 26 at 7 pm, with free tickets available through the Council.

City Council has voted down a road being constructed on the Roper property in a floodplain.

11. Business or reports from the Mayor or other Members of the City Council  
Councilman Cuthbert  
He asked the City Manager for an update on the completion of South Side Depot and the Class/Comp Study on Wages for city employees.

Councilman Jones

He discussed the tools used to remove a house that had been blighted by a fire and thanked Ken Miller and Code Compliance.

Councilman Westbrook

The City Clean-Up is scheduled for May 10. Before raising concerns, residents are encouraged to take personal responsibility by maintaining their properties, such as cutting the grass and keeping their homes neat. The City is launching a summer internship program beginning June 17, encouraging engagement through Parks & Recreation initiatives. Recent highlights include a successful Donamatrix weekend and the Garden Tour. Looking ahead, the City should host an annual race. Collaboration with the school board to achieve shared goals remains a priority.

Councilman Myers

There will be an upcoming joint meeting for Wards 1 and 5. The date and location will be announced soon.

Councilwoman Smith-Lee

She encouraged residents to take a drive through Ward 6 to witness the ongoing transformation, particularly on McKenzie Street, and the Farmer Street Park, where improvements include a freshly painted pool area. She asked to continue to keep the City, the Country, and federal employees in our thoughts and prayers during these uncertain times.

Vice Mayor Hill

He thanked the Street division for cleaning areas, signs, etc.

Mayor Parham

Petersburg thrives with new business openings, showcasing its reputation as a City of Opportunity. Highlights include the grand opening of an ice cream shop, the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Cool Beans Café, and the announcement from Ansal McCal. The Live Casino Vendor Fair also drew an impressive crowd.

12. Items removed from the Consent Agenda  
**None.**
13. Finance and Budget Report  
a. Department of Finance Monthly Update  
**No action taken.**

14. Unfinished Business
  - a. Consideration of an Ordinance Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Option Agreement and Convey Property Upon Satisfaction of Terms for 3501 Halifax Road  
**Approved, minus 5 acres.**
  - b. A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Amendment to the Purchase Agreement Between the City of Petersburg and ECIMED-1, LLC for the Development of 101 West Washington Street Located in Petersburg, VA  
**Approved. Councilman Cuthbert voted no.**
15. New Business  
**None.**
16. City Manager's Report and Special Reports  
**The City Manager advised residents to exercise caution when receiving telephone scams asking for money. He encouraged everyone to call the Sheriff's office and report the scams.**
17. Business or reports from the Clerk  
**The Clerk encouraged applications for Boards.**
18. Business or reports from the City Attorney  
**None.**
19. Adjournment