

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

OF THE NEWPORT NEWS CITY COUNCIL

HELD IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

2400 WASHINGTON AVENUE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024, 7:00 P.M.



MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div.; Mayor Phillip D. Jones; Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E.; Councilwoman Tina L. Vick; Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury; Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III; and Councilman John R. Eley, III

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

A. Call to Order

Mayor Jones called the meeting to order and extended a welcome to all.

Mayor Jones stated the City Code identified the procedure for citizen participation regarding items on the Council agenda, as well as the opportunity for citizens to address City Council on matters germane to the business of the Council and were advised to register in the foyer. He explained matters that were germane to the business of Council meant matters that the City Council, by law, were empowered to act upon. This did not include announcements that were personal to an individual, business, or organization, including campaign information. He pointed out copies of the ordinance highlighting citizen participation and encouraged citizens to review the document.

Mayor Jones requested that cell phones and electronic devices be silenced or turned off.

B. Invocation

Mayor Jones advised that it was the practice of the Newport News City Councilmembers to stand for the invocation and pledge. He welcomed all in attendance to also stand but indicated they were under no obligation to do so.

The invocation was rendered by Pastor Riley Halliday, Manna Church, 401 Lucas Creek Road, Newport News.

C. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Councilman Eley.

D. Presentation

1. Adopt-A-Spot Award Presentation

Mayor Jones invited Mr. Frank James, Director, Department of Public Works, to join him at the podium.

Mayor Jones indicated the Adopt-A-Spot program was formed to encourage citizen participation in litter cleanup of designated areas in the community at regular intervals. Individuals, organizations, or businesses commit to keep a designated area (other than a highway) cleared of litter for two years. In exchange, program participants were provided materials to help with the cleanup and a sign bearing their name to be posted in the area. Participants were required to complete four cleanups per year. The City would not be all it could be without the dedicated and selfless service provided by the citizens who devote their time, energy, skill, and ability, without anything approaching adequate compensation.

Mayor Jones, on behalf of the members of the Newport News City Council, and a grateful community, recognized two groups that exceeded the four required cleanups during Fiscal Year 2023.

The groups included the following:

- (1). The Rotary Club of Warwick at City Center completed nine cleanups. The individuals accepting the award were Mr. Michael Gleason, and Mr. James Probsdorfer. As a member of the Rotary Club of Warwick, Councilman Long joined the members at the podium.
- (2). Newport News Police Department completed seventeen (17) cleanups. The individual accepting the award was Master Police Officer Matthew Jensen.

E. Public Hearings

None

F. Consent Agenda

Moved by Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, seconded by Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, adoption of the Consent Agenda, Items F1 and F2, all inclusive, as shown below.

1. Minutes of the Work Session of January 9, 2024

(No registered speakers)

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., Mayor Phillip D. Jones, Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III, and Councilman John R. Eley, III

2. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 9, 2024

(No registered speakers)

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., Mayor Phillip D. Jones, Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III, and Councilman John R. Eley, III

G. Other City Council Actions

1. Item 1 of 2: Resolution Authorizing and Directing the City Manager to Execute and the City Clerk to Attest, a Memorandum of Understanding by and among the City, the Economic Development Authority of the City of Newport News, Virginia and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Supporting Encroachment Mitigation at Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, THAT CERTAIN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BY AND AMONG THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS, REGARDING THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR ENCROACHMENT MITIGATION ACTIVITIES IN THE VICINITY OF JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS. This resolution authorized the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding by and among the City, the Economic Development Authority of the City of Newport News, Virginia (EDA) and the Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Veterans and Defense Affairs (VADA), Supporting Encroachment Mitigation at Joint Base Langley-Eustis.

Authorization of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between VADA, the City, and the EDA outlining the responsibilities of the parties as to the utilization of funds for encroachment mitigation funds as requested.

The City would receive \$700,000 from VADA to support encroachment mitigation property acquisitions around Joint Base Langley-Eustis.

The City Manager recommended approval.

(No registered speakers)

Moved by Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, seconded by Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., approval of the resolution.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., Mayor Phillip D. Jones, Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III, and Councilman John R. Eley, III

2. Item 2 of 2: Department of Development – Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Veterans and Defense Affairs (VADA) Funding for Joint Base Langley-Eustis (JBLE) Encroachment Mitigation – \$700,000

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST, ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, THAT CERTAIN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BY AND AMONG THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS, REGARDING THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDING FOR ENCROACHMENT MITIGATION ACTIVITIES IN THE VICINITY OF JOINT BASE LANGLEY EUSTIS. This resolution appropriated \$700,000 in funding for encroachment mitigation activities in the Joint Base-Langley-Eustis vicinity.

The Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$700,000 to the City through the Commonwealth's Department of Veterans and Defense Affairs (VADA) for the purpose of supporting encroachment mitigation around Joint Base Langley-Eustis. The funding would support property acquisitions in the vicinity of Fort Eustis, including along Dozier Road.

The City could coordinate with and through the EDA to facilitate voluntary property acquisitions. These activities would ensure the safety of Fort Eustis and continued successful military operations in the City of Newport News. Responsibilities connected with the VADA funding are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between VADA, the City, and the EDA.

Appropriation of the \$700,000 in funding from VADA was requested.

The City Manager recommended approval.

(No registered speakers)

Moved by Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, seconded by Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., approval of the resolution.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., Mayor Phillip D. Jones, Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III, and Councilman John R. Eley, III

3. Resolution of the Council of the City of Newport News, Virginia Establishing a Policy for Remote Participation in City Council Meetings through Electronic Communication Means

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA ESTABLISHING A POLICY FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS THROUGH ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION MEANS. This resolution established a policy for remote participation of its members by electronic communication.

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3708.3 allows a public body to adopt a written policy allowing for and governing the participation of its members by electronic communication.

City Council requested a written policy for remote participation in City Council meetings to provide for more flexibility in its operations.

The City Manager recommended approval.

(No registered speakers)

Moved by Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, seconded by Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., approval of the resolution.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., Mayor Phillip D. Jones, Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III, and Councilman John R. Eley, III

Nays: Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury

Councilwoman Woodbury advised the reason that she could not support the aforementioned resolution, explaining if Councilmembers were elected officials, they should perform official duties and vote in person, unless there was a drastic reason to be absent, such as an illness.

4. Resolution to Comply with the Budget Public Hearing Notice Provisions of Chapter 25 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as Amended, Entitled Budgets, Audits and Reports

A RESOLUTION TO COMPLY WITH THE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 25 OF TITLE 15.2 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, 1950, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED BUDGETS, AUDITS AND REPORTS. This resolution established compliance with the Budget Public Hearing Notice Provision of Chapter 25 of Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia, 1960, as Amended, Entitled Budgets, Audits and Reports.

As had been the practice in the past, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 City Manager's Recommended Operating Budget was planned to be submitted to the City Council at its second regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 26, 2024. At this same meeting, City Council approves a resolution setting the dates for the state-mandated Public Hearings on the proposed budget.

While State Code required only one (1) Public Hearing on the proposed budget, the City customarily continued this Hearing to a North District location in order to accommodate citizens at both extreme ends of this uniquely shaped City. For the FY 2025 budget cycle, the tentative dates for the Recommended Budget Public Hearings were scheduled for Tuesday, April 9, 2024 and Thursday, April 11, 2025. Keeping with past practices, the first Public Hearing is held at a regularly scheduled City Council meeting in City Council Chambers (at the first meeting in April) and the continued second Public Hearing is scheduled at a northern location and was planned for the Denbigh Community Center.

There existed a conflict between the State Code and the City Charter on the number of days prior to the Public Hearing on the proposed budget that the statutory hearing must be advertised. The State Code required seven (7) days' notice, while the City Charter mandated fifteen (15) days prior to the hearing. With the proposed budget planned to be submitted at the second City Council meeting in March, there were not sufficient days between March 6, 2024, and April 9, 2024 to meet the City Charter's advertising requirement. The attached resolution allowed for the City to comply with

the State Code requirement of seven (7) days, and thereby allow sufficient time for the Budget Public Hearings to be advertised, and still be within the practice of holding the hearings while avoiding the necessity of convening a special City Council meeting to submit the City Manager's Recommended Budget.

The City Manager recommended approval.

(No registered speakers)

Moved by Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, seconded by Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., approval of the resolution.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., Mayor Phillip D. Jones, Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III, and Councilman John R. Eley, III

H. Appropriations

None

I. Citizen Comments on Matters Germane to the Business of City Council

Ms. Yugonda Sample-Jones, 2115 Madison Avenue, Newport News, shared that she was a proud resident of the East End Community, and Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI). She addressed a matter of great concern that affected the community, which was coal dust from Dominion Terminal Associates, LLP, located at 600 Harbor Road. While recognizing the significance of the terminal as a self-proclaimed world-class coal-shipping and storage facility, it was crucial that the environmental impact on the neighborhood be addressed. Ms. Sample-Jones advised that the Southeast Community was undergoing a transformation with new development, such as a Pre-School on 16th Street and Jefferson Avenue; new homes from the CNI, and a brand new seafood market overlooking the waterfront. She stated the presence of the coal dust settling on the promising projects was concerning. She urged members of City Council to consider the responsibility of Dominion Terminal Associates, LLP in protecting the air from the particles emitted by their operation. In striving for progress and a better quality of life, Ms. Sample-Jones indicated it was essential that the well-being of the residents was given priority. She strongly recommended that City Council encourage Dominion Terminal Associates, LLP to explore and implement effective measures such as a wind fence or domes to mitigate the spread of the coal dust. This proactive approach would align with the shared commitment to a cleaner and healthier environment for all. Ms. Sample-Jones trusted that together a solution could be found that would benefit the community.

Mr. Malcom Jones, 710 West 34th Street, Newport News, stated as a concerned citizen of the Hampton Roads region, father, and community advocate, he wanted the best for his family and community. He advised that health was wealth, and reiterated the remarks by Ms. Sample-Jones about the coal dust in the area. He urged City Council to take advantage of the opportunity to take environmental justice seriously for the legacy of the residents' future for families and children, who all deserved quality of

life. Mr. Jones shared that the issue of coal dust existed for years, but 2024 is the time to fix environmental issues in the area by tackling coal dust.

Mayor Jones advised, the United States Office of Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights announced the largest single investment in environmental justice in history, funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act. Approximately \$2 billion in funding was made available to support community-driven projects that would deploy clean energy, strengthen climate resilience, and build capacity for communities to tackle environmental and climate justice challenges. The U.S. EPA's Community Change Grants were the single largest investment in environmental justice going directly to communities in history, and would advance efforts to achieve a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future for all.

Mr. Adam Morrow, 800 Lombardy Avenue, Apt. 8417, Newport News, extended thanks and commended the City of Newport News for the swift work on correcting the City's website which included a list of shelters and food pantries. He mentioned the issue where citizens continued to request a resolution to support a ceasefire in Gaza, and seeking international humanitarian aid. It was his hope that the City would be just as fast responding to that matter.

Captain Patrick Wright, 941 Shore Drive, Newport News, shared history on the development of the City of Newport News, advising without the C & O railway and the coal brought to the area for export, the City would have been different. (A copy of Captain Wright's comments are attached in full and made a part of these minutes). He advised that reality of coal was it was a toxic and polluting 19th century energy source that was phased out at the end of World War II. He stated that clean coal was a myth. Coal spewed a blanket of pollution and environmental degradation. Captain Wright advised that the residents of the Southeast Community were familiar with the matter that flew off of the huge coal piles soiling homes and leaving a black coating on window sills and ledges. Southeast Community residents worry about the health effects on themselves, their children, and the elderly. Citizens believed that the coal piles were a contributing factor to the high rate of asthma in children, which was reported to be twice as high as other areas of Newport News. Captain Wright advised that positive action to protect the health of citizens and the environment should be taken. Although coal played a large part in promoting prosperity in the early days of the City, its liabilities demand that it be replaced with clean, carbon-free energy sources.

Dr. Carmen Johnson-Martel, 2016-25th Street, Newport News, President and Founder of The Tree of Life Clinic, coming soon, advised the targeted population would be the homeless and underserved. She advised they had almost passed all inspections with the City's Department of Codes Compliance, which had been very expensive. She shared that the building was purchased December 2022, and she had exhausted all resources (personal, savings, 401K, etc.). She shared that she had applied for two grants – a community support grant in October, and a Community Block Grant in January 2024. She had reached out to many in the community who suggested approaching City Council after totally funding operations themselves. The tradesmen were commercial tradesmen and were quite expensive. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was another issue. The organization was approximately \$20,000 short before opening, with two inspections left. Dr. Johnson-Martel shared they wanted to serve and help other non-profit organizations in the community, providing basic primary care, basic dental services, mental health,

counseling, showers, and clothes. The Tree of Life also partnered with the Four Oaks Day Services Center. Dr. Johnson-Martel advised that she would perform a homeless count within the next five days to help identify patients and those at greatest risk. She appealed to members of City Council for any available assistance.

Ms. Frega Azza, 122 Kristin Court, Newport News, shared words from Mayor Jones' twitter account of October 10, 2023, "Newport News City Hall will be lit blue and white all week in support of Israel. There was information about a Rally for Israel where the community would come together in solidarity with our friends and family in Israel." Ms. Azza asked since Mayor Jones, on behalf of the City, had taken a public stance in support of Israel, whether Councilmembers would support Israel when they had murdered 25,000 Palestinians, including 10,000 children. She further asked Councilmembers whether they would support Israel when they indiscriminately bombed Gaza in order to defend itself. She asked whether Councilmembers would support Israel when they cut off access to food, water, electricity, and medical supplies to 2.3 million Palestinians. She further asked Councilmembers whether they would support Israel when they bombed hospitals, schools, universities, churches, and mosques. She further asked Councilmembers whether they would still support Israel if they were found guilty at the International Court of Justice alleging that Israel committed genocide and manifest by violation of the Genocide Convention. Ms. Azza indicated if the answer was yes to the aforementioned questions, she was disappointed in them as humans and elected leaders, and they had failed their civil duty to represent the people, and their solidarity was never about humanity, but personal motives. Addressing Councilwoman Woodbury's remarks from the January 9, 2024 Regular Meeting of City Council when she mentioned as politicians, it was important to represent every side of the situation, represent the community, and remain unprejudiced, Ms. Azza expressed disappointment that the City of Newport News did not abide by Dr. Woodbury's powerful words and misrepresented the community. As a City that interjected their views on an international conflict to openly show support for Israel, they stood with genocide, ethnic cleansing, in support of war crimes. She stated, until the City of Newport News retracts its statements, condemns war crimes, and passes a Ceasefire Resolution, they were all complacent in this genocide. After 108 days, and 25,000 Palestinians killed, the City of Newport News continues to stand on the wrong side of history.

Ms. Ann Creasy, 527 Maryland Avenue, Norfolk, shared that she lived and worked among coal dust from Norfolk Southern, trains transporting and dumping onto ships in the Elizabeth River in Lambert's Point. She stood in solidarity with Newport News residents, having spoken to many over the years and listened to the testimony and impacts of coal dust of their health and homes, and their concern for their children, and local schools that often had higher rates of asthma. Many of the pollutants were made of tiny particles so small they could pass through one's lungs and into the blood stream. Tests showed that coal dust contained arsenic, lead, mercury chromium, nickel, selenium, and other toxic heavy metals. Exposure to coal dust was linked to decreased lung capacity, an increase in childhood bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, emphysema and heart disease. Areas with high levels of coal dust pollution had increased the mortality rate and decreased life expectancy. She commended Mayor Jones and City Manager's pursuit of environmental justice funding at the federal level. Ms. Creasy urged members of City Council to pursue any available pathways to address coal dust in Hampton Roads. She advised that she worked for the Sierra Club, who had submitted a petition to the EPA to enact stricter regulations regarding coal pollution from open-top rail cars which transported coal in larger open top rail cars which deposited coal into waterways. This was not in compliance with the Clean Water Act.

The Sierra Club urged local officials to support the petition to bring the transportation of coal into compliance to reduce the amount of coal dust emitted into the environment.

Councilwoman Woodbury inquired about the Sierra Club's petition, and the difference in the transportation of the coal. Ms. Creasy responded that the petition did not propose a solution beyond seeking that train companies would need a permit for the discharge of coal. Any further solutions were not covered in the petition. Arguably, there was an unregulated discharge of coal from trail cars, so they need to get a permit to be brought into compliance with the Clean Water Act. Councilwoman Woodbury questioned the possible suggestions. Ms. Creasy replied the suggestion was to obtain a permit, but it did not explore a long term solution.

Ms. Frepa Listin, 122 Kristin Court, Newport News, commented that it had been 108 days of ongoing genocide against Palestinians. Over 25,000 Palestinians had been killed and more than 10,400 children were killed. Three college students in Vermont, a 6-year old boy in Illinois, and a doctor in Texas were all killed for being of Palestinian, Arab or Muslim descent. Students at Columbia University had been sprayed with "skunk" by former Israeli soldiers at a Pro-Palestine protest. The idea that this was an idea outside of the scope of City Council was neglectful. Ms. Listin questioned Councilmembers whether it would take a "hate incident" to occur in the City of Newport News for them to break their silence, or whether they would be proactive in showing solidarity. She advised there were only six ambulances left in Gaza for 2 million people. Israel killed two mother every hour. Ninety percent (90%) of Gaza's population (1.8 million) had been displaced and fifty-five percent (55%) in Gaza faced famine and one in every four in Gaza were starving. Every mosque in northern Gaza had been destroyed. Every hospital in Gaza was destroyed. Despite hundreds of emails calling for City Council's support for a resolution calling for a ceasefire, Ms. Listin stated that Councilmembers had deliberately made the choice to remain silent. She advised that President Biden was being sued for failure to prevent genocide in Gaza. South Africa was preparing a case against the United States for complicity in war crimes and genocide in Gaza. Complicity was participation in a wrongful act. Israel committing genocide is a wrongful act, and the City of Newport News lighting up City Hall in support of Israel indicated association, and therefore, Newport News was complicit, and the City was on the wrong side of history. She and others attended each City Council meeting giving Councilmembers the opportunity to be on the right side of history, yet there was only silence and an empty promise. She asked Councilmembers to act on their words and have Newport News entered into the right side of history. Councilmembers were voted into their positions to represent constituents, but with regard to Palestinian voices, it did not seem to go too well. Since the City had chosen to show solidarity with Israel, staying out of it and silent, was no longer an option. Their silence was complicity. She asked Councilmembers to check their values and to choose humanity. They each had power and influence and had the opportunity to be on the right side of history or to go down in history as a city supporting war crimes by remaining silent. A resolution calling for a ceasefire and an end to the killing and bombing from any and all sides is a stand with humanity and sent as clear nationwide and international message that the people and the government of the City supported humanity and stood against the killing of civilians.

Reverend Lathaniel Kirts, 112 Robinson Drive, Newport News, shared that he was a concerned citizen and local Pastor in the Southeast Community (Pray First Mission Ministries). He commented on health and well-being, a pressing issue that affected the community – the presence of coal dust in the City. He advised there should be a

collective responsibility to ensure that Newport News continued to be a healthy place for all people. He had heard numerous stories about families who were tired of power washing their houses, car washes for coal dust, and changing the filters in their homes. He heard about censors and monitors being placed in homes. He advised that was a good beginning but what was needed was a wind fence and a coal dome to enclose the coal and block the coal dust from blowing into the water and lungs of the children or elderly. Reverend Kirts stated this is a common humanity matter as we all breathe the same air. The coal dust would affect the respiratory abilities of the citizens as well as the asthma rates in the community. He advised the asthma rate in the Southeast Community was twice as high as any other community in the City of Newport News and the Commonwealth of Virginia. He urged City Council to figure out a way to correct these and other issues in the City and how to fight for the citizens by providing sensible regulations on Kinder Morgan coal terminals and Dominion Terminal Associates, LLP.

J. Old Business, New Business and Councilmember Comments

Councilwoman Woodbury presented AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE AND THE CITY CLERK TO ATTEST ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, AN EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE POSITION OF CITY ATTORNEY BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA, AND ROBERT E. PEALO. This ordinance authorized the execution of a contract to employ Mr. Robert E. Pealo as City Attorney, effective February 1, 2024.

Moved by Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, seconded by Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, approval of the ordinance.

Carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Councilman Marcellus L. Harris III, D. Div., Mayor Phillip D. Jones, Councilman Cleon M. Long, P.E., Councilwoman Tina L. Vick, Councilwoman Dr. Patricia P. Woodbury, Vice Mayor Curtis D. Bethany, III, and Councilman John R. Eley, III

City Council extended Congratulations to Mr. Pealo, followed by applause.

City Attorney Collins P. Owns announced his retirement from the City, effective January 31, 2024.

Mayor Jones, on behalf of his colleagues on the Newport News City Council, extended thanks to City Attorney Owens for all he had done for the City of Newport News, for his wisdom and guidance, and wished him well on his retirement.

City Attorney Owens first extended congratulations to Robert "Bob" Pealo on his appointment to the position of City Attorney. He stated it had been a privilege and an honor to serve as an Attorney for the City of Newport News for 39-1/2 years (and as the City Attorney since 2012). He indicated that he worked with wonderful people – throughout the City Attorney's Office, departments in the City and for City Council. He advised that he enjoyed working for everyone and for helping the City of Newport News for four decades. It had been a great experience. City Attorney Owens received applause and a standing ovation.

City Manager Archer shared updates that had been shared at the earlier City Council Work Session of January 23, 2024: (1) Dealing with homelessness in the City and efforts to engage with others in Newport News and surrounding communities to look at new approaches to put forth new solutions to solve the problem of homelessness; (2) the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) agreed to fund a regional homelessness study to identify new solutions to address homelessness on the Peninsula. The City would complete a required funding application and select a contractor to undertake the scope of work. He looked forward to sharing more in the weeks ahead about the regional approach, sharing specifically with residents in Newport News how they could become a part of the study; and (3) the City was finalizing actions with regard to a contractor who would review the City's operations and services at the Four Oaks Day Services Center. A formal announcement was expected soon. The contractor would address the Department of Human Services goal of designing and sustaining a homeless response system for persons experiencing a housing crisis with a concentrated focus on reducing unsheltered homelessness and improving operations at the center. The scope of work identified performance objectives of enhanced client engagement. There was an increasing challenge in the community for those needing outreach in order to encourage them to pursue services, enhance client engagement, reduce unsheltered homelessness, and accelerate access to successful housing outcomes.

City Clerk Washington Jenkins extended thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens for his legal advice and friendship; and best wishes in his future endeavors.

City Clerk Washington Jenkins wished Councilmember Dr. Patricia Woodbury Happy Birthday (Dr. Woodbury celebrated her birthday on January 27th); and Happy Birthday to Councilwoman Tina Vick (Councilwoman Vick celebrated her birthday February 3rd).

Councilman Eley extended thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens for his service as City Attorney in the City of Newport News – always leading Councilmembers in the right direction and ensuring the City had the best reputation.

Councilman Eley extended thanks to the new City Attorney, Robert E. Pealo, knowing that he would continue to lead and advise the Council to make sure the City was moving in the right direction.

Councilman Eley extended thanks and appreciation to the citizens for their attendance and participation. He stated that it was always good when citizens attended and expressed their concerns. He shared his belief that the Council and the citizens were on "one" team.

Councilman Eley invited citizens to attend a Parent & Child "Vision & Goal Board" party on Monday, January 29, 2024, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., at the Brooks Crossing Innovation and Opportunity Center (550 – 30th Street). The event was sponsored by the City of Newport News and What's Next. This event was an opportunity for parents and children to discuss their goals and visions. The event was free and open to all, promised to be fun, and included dinner. He asked for donations of old magazines, which could be dropped off at Brooks Crossing.

Councilman Eley announced a South District Town Hall Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 6:00 p.m., at the Main Street Library, 110 Main Street. The meeting would be hosted by South District Councilmembers (Councilman John Eley and

Councilwoman Tina Vick) and School Board Members (Dr. Terri Best and Ms. Maritsa Alger) in an effort to continue moving Newport News forward.

Councilman Harris extended congratulations to City Attorney Owens on his retirement, and thanks for his guidance and advice. He offered congratulations to the new City Attorney, Robert E. Pealo, on his new role.

Councilman Harris reminded citizens about the upcoming Winter Carnival, in partnership with the City's Department of Parks and Recreation, scheduled for Saturday, February 3, 2024, at the former Kmart site, 401 Oriana Road in the Denbigh area of the City.

Councilman Harris advised that the 7th Annual Re-Up School Supply Drive would also be held during the Winter Carnival on February 3, 2024. School supplies would be distributed beginning at 9:30 a.m. Disc jockeys would be on site; Books-on-Bikes would be present to distribute books.

Councilman Harris indicated that school supplies for the Re-Up School Supply Drive continued to be sought. Items needed included tissues and hand sanitizer. Citizens were asked to contact Councilman Harris at (757) 274-1708 or the City Clerk's Office at (757) 926-8634.

Volunteers were welcome to stop by the Denbigh Community Center to assist on Thursday, January 25, 2024, and Friday, January 26, 2024, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. to assist with preparation for the Re-Up School Supply Drive.

Councilman Harris acknowledged Mr. Noah Walker, a 1st grade student at Saunders Elementary School. Mr. Walker informed Councilman Harris that he loved playing football, video games, and being outside. His career aspiration is to be a police officer. Mr. Walker is a phenomenal young man doing things at a young age. He asked everyone to help encourage our youth, such as Noah, to keep them on the right track.

Councilman Harris advised that his Councilman's Corner scheduled for January 22, 2024 had been cancelled and would share a new rescheduled date soon.

Councilman Long extended thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens for his service as City Attorney in the City of Newport News, and answering his numerous questions as a newly elected Councilmember. He also extended best wishes to City Attorney Owens in his future endeavors.

Councilman Long extended congratulations to the new City Attorney, Mr. Robert E. Pealo, on his new role, and advised that he looked forward to working with him.

Councilwoman Vick extended thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens for his service as City Attorney in the City of Newport News and advised that he had been a part of the City for the majority of her City Council career. She extended best wishes and continued success to City Attorney Owens and his family.

Councilwoman Vick extended congratulations to the new City Attorney, Mr. Robert E. Pealo, on his new role, and advised that she looked forward to working with him.

Councilwoman Vick reiterated Councilman Eley's announcement regarding the South District Town Hall Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 6:00 p.m., at the Main Street Library, 110 Main Street. She was excited as this was the first time partnering with the Newport News Schools. There was a full agenda for the meeting hosted by South District Councilmembers (Councilman John Eley and Councilwoman Tina Vick) and School Board Members (Dr. Terri Best and Ms. Maritsa Alger). There would be an update on the Huntington Middle School project, and summer employment and activities for the youth in an effort to keep them out of trouble.

Councilwoman Vick advised that she was working with the H.O.P.E. Foundation out of Hampton. She announced there would be a youth conference, "Our Youth, Our Future" on Saturday, February 17, 2024, at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, 9:30 a.m. There would be a series of workshops for everyone. The event was free and open to the public. Lunch would be provided.

Councilwoman Vick extended congratulations to Mr. Frank James, Director, Department of Public Works, on receipt of the Adopt-A-Spot award, garnering the efforts to keep the City clean. This effort helped everyone understand the importance of responsibility and accountability. She hoped that more citizens would get involved in the Adopt-A-Spot program to help keep the City beautiful. She commended Mr. James for the great work he continued to do.

Councilwoman Vick wished her colleague, Councilwoman Dr. Patricia Woodbury a Happy Birthday. She shared that the two of them had run for City Council together and won together and celebrated their birthdays together. (Councilwoman Woodbury celebrated her birthday on January 27th and Councilwoman Vick celebrated her birthday on February 3rd.)

Councilwoman Woodbury expressed appreciation to the citizens for their attendance and participation and expressing their concerns. She advised that City Council took everyone's concerns seriously.

Councilwoman Woodbury extended thanks and appreciation for the many words, prayers and acts of kindness extended since her husband's death.

Councilwoman Woodbury further thanked the citizens for being involved, particularly since she continued to voice her desire to have City Council meetings held not only in the South district, but throughout all areas of the City. She encouraged citizens to consider serving on one of the many Council-appointed boards and committees to make a contribution, which was important for all citizens.

Councilwoman Woodbury extended thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens for his service as City Attorney in the City of Newport News and extended best wishes in his future.

Vice Mayor Bethany extended thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens for his service as City Attorney in the City of Newport News. He stated the bar had been set high since Mr. Owens was the only City Attorney he had known.

Vice Mayor Bethany extended congratulations to the new City Attorney, Mr. Robert E. Pealo, on his new role, and advised that he looked forward to working with him and continuing to make Newport News the best City.

Vice Mayor Bethany thanked the citizens for their attendance and participation and sharing their concerns. He reiterated the comments by his colleagues to the citizens, their voices were heard and did not fall on deaf ears.

In appreciation for teachers, Vice Mayor Bethany shared the CNU Men's Basketball hosted Educators Appreciation Day on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at the Freeman Center. All Newport News educators (teachers, administrators, staff, bus drivers, etc.) with valid school identification, would receive two general admission tickets to the game while supplies last. Tickets could be redeemed at the CNU Athletic Ticket Office located in the Freeman Center one hour prior to tip-off. He encouraged citizens to enjoy the basketball game of the defending State Champions.

City Manager Archer offered thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens for his support in Mr. Archer's role as both Acting City Manager, and City Manager; as well as to the department heads who had come to depend on the City Attorney's Office for guidance. City Manager Archer stated that municipal service was a unique calling, and as someone who was as committed as City Attorney Owens after more than 39 years, spoke volumes to his degree of service, integrity to the community, and his commitment to the City of Newport News. On behalf of the entire administration, City Manager Archer extended thanks to City Attorney Owens for his dedicated service to the citizens of Newport News.

Mayor Jones shared that he attended a meeting at the White House with Mr. Greg Jackson and Mr. Rob Wilson, Deputy Directors for the Office of Gun Violence Prevention Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. He was accompanied by City Manager Archer; Newport News Police Chief Steve Drew; Mr. Adrian Cook, Executive Director, Let Our Voices Empower; Ms. Chanell Ketchmore, Executive Director, Ketchmore Kids; and Mr. Troy Ketchmore, Director of Programs, Ketchmore Kids. He thanked the aforementioned for accompanying him to the White House. He stated that youth were very important, and the City should be able to leverage the new connection. In looking at the summers jobs program, the 24/7 recreation centers, and many things that would happen in Newport News for the first time, the youth was of most importance as a foundation.

Mayor Jones, wearing an "I VOTED" sticker, shared that citizens were able to vote in the Presidential Primary either at City Hall in the Voter Registrar's Office, 6th floor, 2400 Washington Avenue or at City Center, in the Warwick Room, 700 Town Center Drive, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. He encouraged all to make sure their voices were heard.

Mayor Jones, in speaking to City Attorney Owens, the man of the hour, reminded those present that the Mayor sat on many different teams, i.e. City Council, federal and state teams, as well as the team of the 4 horsemen, consisting of the Mayor, City Manager, City Attorney, and the City Clerk. He expressed appreciation for the zoom calls. City Attorney Owens had provided great advice and had taught him it was great to send an email but a phone call was better; but nothing was better than an in-person meeting. Mayor Jones extended thanks and appreciation to City Attorney Owens and bid "fair winds and following seas."

K. Adjourn

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS

Mabel Washington Jenkins, MMC
City Clerk

Phillip D. Jones
Mayor
Presiding Officer

A true copy, teste:

City Clerk

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