



## REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL, HYATTSVILLE MD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021 7:00 PM

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Kevin Ward, W1, Interim Mayor  
Carrianna Suiter, W3, Council Vice President  
Bart Lawrence, W1  
Robert Croslin, W2  
Danny Schaible, W2  
Ben Simasek, W3  
Edouard Haba, W4  
Daniel Peabody, W4 (*arrived at 7:08 p.m.*)  
Joseph A. Solomon, W5  
Erica Spell Wolf, W5

Absent: None

Also present were the following City staff members:  
Tracey Douglas, City Administrator  
Jim Chandler, Assistant City Administrator  
Ron Brooks, City Treasurer  
Lesley Riddle, Director of the Department of Public Works  
Laura Reams, City Clerk  
Sean Corcoran, Deputy City Clerk  
Deputy Chief Scott Dunklee, City of Hyattsville Police Department  
Cheri Everhart, Recreation, Programs, and Events Manager  
Vivian Snellman, Director of Human Resources  
Kate Powers, City Planner

### Meeting Notice:

As we continue to take precautions due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, the Hyattsville City Council will hold its meeting on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 remotely via video conference. The Council meeting will be conducted entirely remotely; there will be no in-person meeting attendance.

The meeting will be broadcast live on cable television channel 71 (Comcast), channel 12 (Verizon), and available via live stream at [www.hyattsville.org/meetings](http://www.hyattsville.org/meetings).

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Public comment may be made using the e-comment feature at [www.hyattsville.org/meetings](http://www.hyattsville.org/meetings) or by emailing [cityclerk@hyattsville.org](mailto:cityclerk@hyattsville.org). All electronic comments must be submitted by 5:00 PM on February 16, 2021. Comments received will be read by City staff during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Members of the public who wish to attend the virtual Council meeting must register in advance using the link below.

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_B1XDTQ-TQUevsLgRj\\_aB2A](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_B1XDTQ-TQUevsLgRj_aB2A)

### 1. Call to Order and Council Roll Call

**Interim Mayor Kevin Ward** called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.



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**2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**3. Moment of Silence**

**4. Approval of Agenda**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Suiter
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Simasek
<b>AYES:</b>	Ward, Suiter, Lawrence, Croslin, Schaible, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Solomon, Spell Wolf
<b>ABSENT:</b>	None

**5. Approval of the Minutes**

**5.a) Approval of the Minutes**

[HCC-218-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** At the request of the City Administrator

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Minutes Jan 19, 2021 PH FINAL](#)

[Minutes Jan 19, 2021 CM FINAL](#)

[Minutes Feb 1 FINAL](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council approve the minutes of the Public Hearing and Council meeting of January 19, 2021 and the Council meeting of February 1, 2021.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Suiter
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Croslin
<b>AYES:</b>	Ward, Suiter, Lawrence, Croslin, Schaible, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Solomon, Spell Wolf
<b>ABSENT:</b>	None

**6. Public Comment (7:10 p.m. – 7:20 p.m.) Complete Speaker Card, Limit 2 minutes per speaker**

Deputy City Clerk Sean Corcoran read the public comments submitted electronically.

Ward 3 resident Chuck Perry addressed the Mayor and Council expressing concern about terminology used by staff during a City Committee meeting which praised the Hyattsville Police Department stating that the position is perceived with inequitable bias.

Ward 3 resident Chuck Perry addressed the Mayor and Council stating that a majority of City funding goes to the Hyattsville Police Department for safety resources and training and that such funds should be provided to the people and not to aid in additional incarcerations.



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Mr. Perry addressed the Mayor and Council associating “duck and cover” with the American Cold War era and relating it to the responsibilities of the Hyattsville Police Department.

Mr. Perry addressed the Mayor and Council expressing his preference that the City be required to publish its arrests by race, ethnicity, and gender monthly.

Mr. Perry addressed the Mayor and Council referencing the Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network (MCIN) and promoting that a comparison be made between funding provided for public safety with the results of the Capitol insurrection of January 6, 2021.

Alexis Chancellor addressed the Mayor and Council expressing concern regarding the ongoing crimes in the City and sought detail regarding its mitigation and oversight.

Ward 3 resident Jimmy McClellan addressed the Mayor and Council citing a previous conversation held during a Council meeting regarding the construction of the new Hyattsville Middle School (HMS) and endorsed further conversation to assess instituting sustainable products and practices that contribute to an environmentally friendly, sustainable, community.

Ward 2 resident David Marshall addressed the Mayor and Council through the chat function of the webinar interface expressing opposition to the proposal of a mural painted in the City relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and the regulation of leaf blowers stating that the items were fiscally irresponsible and overregulating.

Joseph LaHood addressed the Mayor and Council in relation to the St. Joseph’s House for Children agenda item for review that evening. Mr. LaHood relayed that his family had moved to Hyattsville in 2018 and intended to move their childcare facility to the City and provided details about their business. He stated that he was grateful for the opportunity.

### **7. City Administrator Update (7:20 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.)**

City Administrator Tracey Douglas addressed the Mayor and Council with an update of programming, news, and events in the City of Hyattsville reporting that COVID-19 infection rates had slightly subsided and the Hyattsville vaccination site was active as capacity to distribute the vaccines was adequate, however, supply of the vaccine was insufficient. She noted that discussions had taken place to assess partnerships with pharmacies and other businesses that could potentially distribute the vaccine as well but cautioned that there were many individuals who were seeking and receiving the vaccination before attaining eligibility.

Ms. Douglas reported that food distribution events in the City would continue each Tuesday and the City had partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow the distribution of fresh produce, proteins, and milk and other dairy products. She added that the City had received 20K diapers from the Greater DC Diaper Bank to be distributed the following Monday and Wednesday and registrations and reporting requirements were mandatory to be an approved recipient.



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Administrator Douglas acknowledged an increase in crime nationally and particularly in armed car robbery relaying recommendations to be aware of surroundings, trust instincts, avoid dark or vulnerable areas, be weary of deceptive requests to pull vehicles over, and the best practices to safely deal with a robbery attempt.

Ms. Douglas announced that bulk trash services would be available beginning on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and the third Wednesday of each month thereafter. She provided information regarding food drop-off stations for composting and stated that the final inspection of the new Department of Public Works (DPW) was nearing, and the project would soon be completed. Ms. Douglas reported that construction on Wells Boulevard would begin in early Spring and communicated that DPW staff and resources were aware and prepared for the incoming inclement weather.

City Administrator Douglas addressed the Hyattsville City election noting the deadline for candidate registrations, scheduled candidate information sessions, where to find information for candidates and voters and explained that the election would be primarily Vote-by-Mail. She stated that ballots would be mailed to all registered voters in early April and election day was May 11, 2021.

City Clerk Laura Reams introduced a video produced by Video Coordinator Matt Carl which provided awareness and instruction regarding how to pursue and achieve candidacy for elected office in the City.

**Ward 2 Councilmember Robert Croslin** inquired as to how to help seniors with mobility challenges in obtaining the COVID-19 vaccines to which Ms. Douglas responded that staff had been working on outreach to seniors in need through many methods including the compilation of phone numbers of senior residents who required specific assistance. Emergency Services Coordinator Reggie Bagley replied that the most effective way for seniors to receive assistance is to use the 3-1-1 emergency platform adding that there were intentions to reimplement the senior bus service to provide transfer for vaccination appointments. Ms. Douglas relayed that there was a partnership pending that would help seniors who are unable to leave their homes.

**Ward 5 Councilmember Joseph Solomon** expressed his disagreement with the use of the term “crime of opportunity” arguing that it implies that the fault lies on the victim and requested that the terminology be augmented. He requested that there be a greater focus on the investment of video technology, lighting, and other means to deter crimes to which City Administrator Douglas concurred with the opinion and was amenable to investigating other resources to improve the safety of residents.

**Ward 2 Councilmember Danny Schaible** agreed with the sentiments of his colleague and expressed support for compost drop-off locations. He commended the work and production of the candidate information video.

**Ward 4 Councilmember Edouard Haba** advised about some of the disadvantages of the 3-1-1 system noting that it is not always directed to the most suitable response team to which Ms. Douglas confirmed that staff would examine the details of the routing of 3-1-1 calls and reminded the Body of the City operated COVID emergency line.



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**8. Presentations (7:30 p.m. - 7:50 p.m.)**

**8.a) Landy Development Phase II Presentation**

[HCC-220-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** At the request of the City Administrator

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Landy Phase 2 - Presentation Memo JC1](#)

[Landy Property Phase 2 - Updated City Presentation\(3982182.1\) JC2](#)

[Landy Property Phase 2 SOJ JC3](#)

Presentation Only

Assistant City Administrator Jim Chandler introduced the item recognizing representatives on behalf of the builder, Chris Hatcher and Brandon Gurney. Mr. Hatcher began the presentation noting that the City was very familiar with the project and each step of the way had been reviewed by all parties. He showed an illustrative document that displayed an aerial view of the Landy Project area describing that the development consisted of 331 homes and 131 of those were under phase 1 of the project and the remainder would be addressed in phase 2. Mr. Hatcher stated that the City Park element of the project was an important one to all associated parties.

Mr. Hatcher introduced three (3) more slides that showed the approved architecture of the homes in the development stating that the developer was able to meet the requests of the City. He showed an overhead view of the area to be affected in phase 2 which included the layout of homes, landscaping, and the different models that would be implemented.

**9. Proclamations (7:50 p.m. - 7:55 p.m.)**

**9.a) Proclamation in Support of the Mayors' Monarch Pledge**

[HCC-224-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** At the request of the City Administrator

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Mayor's Monarch Pledge 2021](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council adopt a proclamation in support of the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. The pledge affirms the City's commitment to increasing the wildlife habitat and public awareness for the monarch butterfly in support of our objectives for sustainable communities.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Suiter
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Solomon
<b>AYES:</b>	Ward, Suiter, Lawrence, Croslin, Schaible, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Solomon, Spell Wolf
<b>ABSENT:</b>	None



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**10. Consent Items (7:55 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.)**

**10.a) Hyattsville COVID-19 Restaurant Relief**

[HCC-233-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** Suiter

**Co-Sponsor(s):** Lawrence, Simasek, Spell Wolf, Ward  
[Hyattsville COVID-19 Restaurant Relief Suiter](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council amend the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Special Revenue Funds Budget and re-appropriate \$66,000 of the remaining \$74,000 originally allocated to Employ Prince George’s from the Hyattsville Pandemic Relief fund to support regionally and locally owned full-service restaurants, distilleries, breweries, and wineries/meaderies in the City of Hyattsville. This funding will provide \$2,000 to each qualifying restaurant to be used towards rent, utilities, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), takeout supplies, and other pandemic related overhead. These funds should be allocated by April 30, 2021.

**10.b) Memorandum of Understanding Between Prince George’s County and the City of Hyattsville**

[HCC-217-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** At the request of the City Administrator

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A  
[MOU PD](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council amend the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Special Revenues Funds in the amount of \$40,000 for the Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network (MCIN) grant. I further move the Mayor and Council authorize the City Administrator to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Prince George’s County Police Department and the Hyattsville City Police Department for FY21, upon the review and approval by the City Attorney for legal sufficiency.

**Councilmember Solomon** interjected that he was a sponsor on the item and was in complete support of the measure.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Suiter
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Solomon
<b>AYES:</b>	Ward, Suiter, Lawrence, Croslin, Schaible, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Solomon, Spell Wolf
<b>ABSENT:</b>	None



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**11. Action Items (8:00 p.m. - 8:20 p.m.)**

**11.a) DSP-20013: St. Joseph's House**

[HCC-219-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** At the request of the City Administrator

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Memo - St. Joseph's House](#)

[Letter from Applicant - DSP-20013](#)

[A-SOJ-DSP20013](#)

I move the City Council authorize the Mayor to provide correspondence to the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (MNCPPC) in support of Detailed Site Plan (DSP) 20013 and the issuance of a Special Permit to permit the operation of a Family Day Care facility on the property.

City Planner Kate Powers provided an overview of the item stating that the site was located on the eastern side of 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue and was proposed to be a childcare center to serve seven (7) to eight (8) children after school hours. Ms. Powers noted that the LaHood family had operated the business since the 1980's and served over 55 families and were requesting an addition to the home of approximately 432 square feet facing Oliver Street.

Ms. Powers explained that the addition required a Detailed Site Plan (DSP) as it was a new use of the property and City staff did not identify any concerns as no parking spaces were required, the unit was Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, and the non-profit was a welcome and needed resource in the community.

**Councilmember Schaible** expressed support for the service noting that his son was autistic and that he was aware of the need for this type of service and its scarcity. He urged all to support the measure and any other similar services.

**Councilmember Solomon** stated that he would be interested in hearing from the nearby residents about the item but would assume from his colleagues comments that there were no resident concerns.

**Ward 3 Councilmember Ben Simasek** expressed support for the measure opining that it would be a very valuable addition to the community.

**Council Vice President Carrianna Suiter** echoed the sentiments of her colleagues expressing support for the addition and acknowledging the great need for the type of services that would be provided.



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<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Suiter
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Croslin
<b>AYES:</b>	Ward, Suiter, Lawrence, Croslin, Schaible, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Solomon, Spell Wolf
<b>ABSENT:</b>	None

**11.b) Purchase of BolaWrap Devices and Cartridges**

[HCC-214-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** Solomon

**Co-Sponsor(s):** Ward, Spell Wolf, Simasek, Schaible, Peabody, Haba

[BolaWrap Pictures](#)

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize the expenditure in the amount of \$12,039 to East Coast Tactical for the purchase of 10 BolaWrap devices and 90 cartridges to be divided between each squad and our Emergency Response Team. The funding source for this purchase is the speed camera special revenue fund.

I further move that, upon procurement, the Hyattsville City Police Department move swiftly to adequately train and staff members of each squad and the Emergency Response Team on the appropriate use and deployment of the BolaWrap Device.

**Ward 1 Councilmember Bart Lawrence** expressed opposition to the item questioning the lack of positive performance data, testing, and implementation. He expressed that he was appreciative of the direction of the motion, but without evidence of its effectiveness he could not support the purchase.

**Councilmember Croslin** expressed support for the purchase of the devices stating that it was a source of non-lethal detainment and that he would prefer it be at the disposal of City officers rather than not having the option and noting that further examination of other, more efficient, options would be explored.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [9 – 1]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Suiter
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Croslin
<b>AYES:</b>	Ward, Suiter, Croslin, Schaible, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Solomon, Spell Wolf
<b>NAYS:</b>	Lawrence

**12. Discussion Items (8:20 p.m. - 9:50 p.m.)**

**12.a) FY22 Budget Initiative: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**

[HCC-221-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** Ward

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[FY22 Budget Initiative - CERT - Ward, Kevin](#)





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### FOR DISCUSSION:

I move that the Mayor and Council include \$20,000 in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget to establish a Community Emergency Response Team.

**Interim Mayor Ward** introduced the item explaining that it was an issue that had been discussed for some time and that the motion would start the process of creating a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in collaboration with neighboring areas to assist in emergency situations such as a recent fire at the Friendship Arms apartments and recent flooding.

Emergency Services Coordinator Reggie Bagley elaborated on the item describing the collaborative manner under which the team would function. City Administrator Douglas added that the exact cost for implementation was unknown, but research was being conducted to provide answers to those types of questions to the Body.

**Councilmember Simasek** inquired as to whether grant funding would be available for use in the endeavor to which **Interim Mayor Ward** replied that other funding outside of the City budget would be sought and that it was a regular practice to explore partnerships and grants whenever possible.

Mr. Bagley supplemented that actions to move forward with the plan and funding allocated for it would be beneficial during the application process and compel approval.

**Councilmember Lawrence** recalled that a CERT had been previously considered and inquired as to why it was disbanded or ceased to which Assistant City Administrator Jim Chandler responded that he was correct in his recollection but was absent the details of their actions, results, or discontinuation. Mr. Chandler relayed that staff would investigate the details as it would be helpful to the preparation of the new initiative.

**Councilmember Schaible** proposed using the same structure as City Committees in which the group would meet on a monthly basis to receive training and hold discussions to which **Interim Mayor Ward** added that the motion before them was to lay down a foundation to put actions into motion and allocate funds to develop a team through partnerships, conduct research, and collect resources.

**Councilmember Haba** commented that CERT usually have their own structure in partnership with the County Emergency Preparedness Team.

The Body agreed to move forward with the item confirming that details of the previous CERT would be sought as well as attempting to identify best practices.



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**12.b) FY22 Budget Initiative: Hyattsville Property Tax Credit Review and Assessment**  
**[HCC-222-FY21](#)**

**Sponsor:** Schaible

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Hyattsville Property Tax Credit Review and Assessment Motion DS1](#)

[Hyattsville Ordinance 2008-07 Homeowners Property Tax Credit Program DS2](#)

[State of MD Property Section 9-104 DS4](#)

[State of MD Property Section 9-105 DS5](#)

FOR DISCUSSION:

I move that the Mayor and Council authorize expenditures of up to \$10,000.00 in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget to provide for necessary legal review and technical support to formulate recommendations for revisions to existing Municipal Property Tax Credits, including revisions to Municipal tax credit programs authorized under Maryland Code, Tax-Property §9-104 (“Homeowner’s Property Tax Credit”) and Maryland Code, Tax-Property § 9-105 (“Homestead Tax Credit”).

**Councilmember Schaible** introduced the item explaining that it was related to two (2) property credit programs describing eligibility requirements and stating that the proposed \$10K would be for legal review and technical support to conduct a report to examine options for low-income or fixed-income residents. He stated that City Treasurer Brooks would be involved in the guidance and recommendations for the measure and invited questions and recommendations from his colleagues.

**Councilmember Haba** asked about the necessity of a legal review and what it would entail to which **Councilmember Schaible** stated that the laws regarding each of the property tax credits was very dense and detailed with many caveats and confirmation of legal sufficiency was imperative. He added that having a clear understanding of the financial implications and effect on revenues would behoove the Body before moving forward with the motion.

City Treasurer Ron Brooks agreed with the comments of **Councilmember Schaible** stating that there needed to be an assurance that staff and Council were operating in compliance with State regulations and laws. Mr. Brooks continued that the funds allocated for the item would be used for the cost of the study, legal review, and an internal study if deemed necessary.

**Councilmember Haba** suggested contracting with an organization that was experienced in affordability as they were likely to have the technical capacity and familiarity with tax laws, while implementing the expertise of the City Treasurer.

Treasurer Brooks concurred with the comments of the Councilmember reiterating that the funds in question would be a placeholder in the case that up to \$10K was needed and confirmed that any associated decision would have to be approved by the Council.



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**Councilmember Lawrence** confirmed with Mr. Brooks that the City Attorney would perform the legal review and expressed opposition to the motion stating that the motion seemed vague and confusing to which City Administrator Tracey Douglas contributed that the amount of work required would need to be assessed as well as the consideration of contracting with a firm to assist with research. She explained that once more details had been realized, at that point the Treasurer could hold conversations with Council to determine how, if at all, to move forward.

**Councilmember Lawrence** questioned the inclusion of an external consultant and asked if a lower percentage for taxpayers should be considered to which **Councilmember Schaible** replied that the purpose of the motion at the current stage was to assess the revenue impact of various percentages so the Body and staff could decide the best course of action after adequate data was collected.

**Interim Mayor Ward** expressed the understanding that the motion would potentially set up a group much like a foundation in which feasibility would be explored and discussions with stakeholders would be held followed by the collective information being presented to the City Council to determine whether to take legislative action.

**Councilmember Solomon** suggested editing the language to exclude legal review and replace it with contracted services for technical support to formulate regulations and increasing the amount of funding from \$10K for a thorough review. He expressed general support for the motion.

**Councilmember Schaible** recalled conversations with a former Treasurer in which he was told that in 2008 the percentage was set at 8% and expressed the importance of further research and noted that he was flexible in regard to some of the working aspects.

**Councilmember Solomon** inquired as to feedback regarding what an appropriate amount for the type of contract would be to which City Treasurer Brooks responded that the amount of funds was simply a placeholder at that time, and he had extensive personal experience with the Homestead Tax and similar initiatives and, without a search by staff, the answer regarding cost was not easily attained.

**Councilmember Solomon** clarified that his understanding was that the motion would initially be a directive to staff to perform research and incorporate an assisting firm if needed. He continued that he felt it was important to have allocations early on as the motion would continue into the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Budget and be subject to additional recommendations and adjustments.

City Administrator Douglas recalled conversations with Councilmembers and the City Treasurer in which the item was perceived as a staff assignment, but funds for a contracted consultant or consulting and research team should be set aside in the case that the workload became too overwhelming considering the immense amount of responsibility held by staff aside from the addition of the work associated with the project in question.



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**Councilmember Croslin** commented that the items before the Council were for discussion and that the current motion needed further detail. He reminded his colleagues that the purpose of the discussion portion of the meeting was to decide as a Body whether the proposed items were worth pursuing or should be dismissed.

**Councilmember Simasek** questioned the number of residents who were eligible for the tax incentives against those who participated stating that the fluctuating numbers could diminish accuracy regarding revenues to which Mr. Brooks responded that he had received several calls over his tenure with the City inquiring about eligibility for the Homestead Act and each time he conducted the research he found that the inquirer was, in fact, receiving the Homestead Act Tax Credit and were not aware. He suggested that residents may be better served by creating criteria in which communication is made to those residents upon their eligibility. He added that it was part of the recommended research that had to be performed to determine the amount of citizens benefiting from the financial relief.

**Councilmember Haba** expressed general support for the item providing his historical knowledge of the tax benefit process stating that the work would begin with Mr. Brooks followed by a legislative conversation after one (1) or two (2) years.

Mr. Brooks addressed an earlier question from **Councilmember Simasek** noting that the gross estimated value of all of the property in the City less the first adjustment is the Homestead Tax exemption and, in reply to **Councilmember Haba**, repeated that \$10K was a generous placeholder and he did not expect to spend that amount of money when contracting with a team of additional researchers.

**Interim Mayor Ward** echoed the comments of **Councilmember Croslin** reminding the Body that the items were those of discussion requiring much further work and the purpose of the meeting was to determine if the items were worthy endeavors.

**Councilmember Solomon** asked whether two (2) motions were required to support the item and to authorize staff to begin the pertinent work to which **Councilmember Schaible** replied that he supported leaving the motion as it was and beginning the process.

The Body agreed to discuss the item further at a future Council meeting to establish criteria and process.

**12.c) FY22 Budget Initiative: HCPD Mental Wellness Check-in Program**

**[HCC-223-FY21](#)**

**Sponsor:** Peabody

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

**[HCPD Mental Wellness Check-In Program - FY22 Budget Proposal DP1](#)**

FOR DISCUSSION:



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I move the Mayor and Council include in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget an expenditure of up to \$50,000 to support a universal quarterly mental health check-in program for officers and dispatchers.

**Ward 4 Councilmember Daniel Peabody** introduced the item describing that it was a mental wellness program for City of Hyattsville Police Department personnel and emphasized that City residents require law enforcement professionals and first responders that are able to operate with a clear and cognizant perspective.

**Councilmember Peabody** explained that mental health was of the utmost importance in law enforcement as the profession contributed to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression at a rate five (5) times higher than other fields of work. He continued that similar programs were finding increasing support at departments in the area and throughout the country.

**Councilmember Peabody** relayed the results of surveys performed that showed that over 86% of those polled felt they had a responsibility to report concerns about colleagues they deemed to be suffering from poor mental health or excessive stress, more than 48% did not think they had an outlet to report their concerns without causing a colleague professional harm, and 61% stated that meeting with a therapist four (4) times a year would be a helpful and positive initiative.

**Councilmember Haba** expressed support for the measure and recommended expanding the program to City staff recalling that previous discussions regarding therapy for City staff had taken place during the planning stages of the pandemic relief fund.

**Councilmember Lawrence** inquired as to whether this type of program would be covered in employee's medical benefits to which **Councilmember Peabody** responded that it was not covered by traditional medical insurance stating that it would be a mandatory check-in that was convenient to all and could also serve as an assessment to gauge the potential need for additional attention and therapy.

**Councilmember Croslin** expressed support for the motion commending the work of **Councilmember Peabody** and Media Relations/Mental Health Programs Manager Adrienne Augustus and stated that the City had been in support of mental wellness sponsoring sessions and suggested a collaboration that would remain effective and be cost efficient.

City Administrator Tracey Douglas confirmed that the Health, Wellness, and Recreation Advisory Committee (HWRAC) offered mental health session to all residents, but the proposed item would make sessions mandatory and specialized for particular issues that regularly affected police personnel.

**Councilmember Schaible** stated that the statistics and evidence raised a strong argument for the motion but noted that it should be formulated carefully as there was great scrutiny on financial support for law enforcement in general and expressed concern regarding the uncertainty of costs. He asked about the possibility to explore different meeting schedules or specific therapist selections to minimize expense.



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**Councilmember Peabody** stated that while his colleague's comments were pertinent, the item's primary focus was ensuring that officers were at their best when serving and protecting the community. He continued that the number of sessions annually could be reexamined after implementation and adjusted as needed and reiterated that the program would be outside of what was regularly offered, and the most beneficial aspects would be identified.

**Councilmember Solomon** expressed support for the motion and asked if the budgets of the Committees and their offerings had been relayed to which Administrator Douglas replied that staff liaisons were in the process of identifying budget priorities and the introduction of the budget was scheduled for March 15. She stated that she would investigate the status of budget proposals from Committees and provide them to Council.

Council agreed to move forward with the item.

**12.d) FY22 Budget Initiative: Memorial Bench Program**

**HCC-225-FY21**

**Sponsor:** Croslin

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Croslin\\_Memorial Bench Program](#)

FOR DISCUSSION:

I move that the Mayor and Council include \$30,000 in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget for a cost sharing project to install memorial benches the in the City.

**Councilmember Croslin** introduced the item explaining that it was an idea conceived by a resident several years ago in which plaques could be affixed to park benches in memoriam of residents and family members who had passed.

**Interim Mayor Ward** inquired as to institution a Committee or group that could oversee the process and prevent any tribute to an endorser of divisiveness or prejudice to which **Councilmember Croslin** replied that he would be open to forming a Committee or implementing a current one.

**Councilmember Simasek** thanked his colleague for the item and expressed concerns regarding the number of benches that would be placed in the City stating that the proposal would approve 50 benches and he wanted to be sure that locations had been identified. He suggested starting the process incrementally and making assessments and adjustments at the time of review.

**Councilmember Haba** suggested a two (2) phased approach in which the logistics are determined, and the budget portion addressed several months after. He shared concerns about the locations and space allotted for the benches and suggested other mediums such as sidewalks and buildings to memorialize former residents.

**Councilmember Croslin** was amenable to the proposed options and stated that he had no intention of inundating the City with benches.



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**Councilmember Solomon** expressed support for the idea but expressed concerns about the benches being used for actions other than their purpose and suggested exploring ways to aid funding for families who were unable to expend their share of the cost.

**Councilmember Schaible** expressed support for the motion but recommended that the memorialization be limited to residents of Hyattsville and not those with indirect or vague associations with the City and prohibiting anything political.

**Council Vice President Suiter** noted a message in the chat and supported including trees in the motion stating that it was another option that could be included with the benches.

The Council agreed to move forward with the motion.

**12.e) FY22 Budget Initiative: Race and Equity Coordinator/Advisor**

**HCC-226-FY21**

**Sponsor:** Croslin

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Croslin\\_Diversity Advisor Motion](#)

FOR DISCUSSION:

I move the Mayor and Council authorize the establishment of a Racial, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator/Advisor position and allocate \$60,000 in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget to support this effort. Staff shall investigate the possibility of full-time, part-time, or contract position in addition to cost sharing the position with neighboring municipalities.

**Councilmember Croslin** introduced the motion explaining that former Mayor Candace Hollingsworth had been instrumental in creating legislation associated with racial equity and proposed a position on behalf of the City that would be responsible for ensuring that the conduct and legislation of the City did not present unintended discriminatory issues. He stated that the position could be shared with other municipalities and could be contractual.

**Councilmember Haba** suggested that the responsibilities could fall under the purview of the City Attorney to which **Councilmember Croslin** opined that it should be an individual with extensive experience in the subject matter.

**Councilmember Peabody** was supportive of the measure recalling that Committees had discussed such a position previously and inquired as to the rationale that compelled a budgetary allocation of \$60K to which **Councilmember Croslin** responded that he perceived it as a part-time advisor that could be shared with neighboring municipalities. He stated that it was difficult to estimate an exact cost, but \$60K was a starting point that could be discussed and augmented.



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**Councilmember Schaible** asked if there was anyone on staff, possibly a liaison, that could help with coordination to which Ms. Douglas stated that there was no one available that met the criteria for all that was required in the position, but options had been and would continue to be explored. The Councilmember noted the benefit of the position and expressed support for collaboration with other municipalities.

**Ward 5 Councilmember Erica Spell Wolf** stated that the position was a result of an entire field of study and the person who assumed the responsibility would have to have particular experience and training. She recognized that similar or identical positions were becoming more evident at the federal level and expressed the need for the same representation at the municipal level.

**Councilmember Spell Wolf** stressed that the measure would require a great deal of work and was in support of partnering with neighboring areas expressing a viable need and full support for the motion.

**Councilmember Lawrence** raised questions regarding the proposed amount of funding for the motion and the necessity for a full-time position with the City suggesting the possibility of contracting with a consultant to create an equity plan for the City that had been discussed multiple times prior to the meeting.

**Councilmember Croslin** stated that the task could be handled, in part, by the Race and Equity Task Force emphasizing the importance of resident input.

**Councilmember Simasek** identified that there would be much work initially and suggested analyzing current ordinances and City practices to determine the presence of any equity issues. He expressed support for a set of standards to be reviewed when conducting any City business and gaining knowledge and experience before authorizing a full-time position.

**Councilmember Solomon** sought to confirm that a task force would develop a framework in addition to determining the specific responsibilities and role of an equity officer to which **Councilmember Croslin** answered in the affirmative.

**Interim Mayor Ward** stated that he had recently been involved in the hiring of an equity officer and offered his assistance to **Councilmember Croslin** in achieving the goals of the motion.

The Council agreed to move forward with the item.

### **12.f) FY22 Budget Initiative: Hyattsville COVID Sanitization Support HCC-227-FY21**

**Sponsor:** Solomon

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Council Motion\\_Solomon\\_Sanitizing\\_Final](#)

FOR DISCUSSION:





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I move that Mayor and Council include funding in the amount of \$15,000 in the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget for the Department of Public Works to purchase, install, and maintain six (6) mobile handwashing and sanitization stations for deployment within Hyattsville Business Corridors.

**Councilmember Solomon** introduced the item explaining that the motion proposed six (6) mobile handwashing and sanitization stations in the business corridor, West Hyattsville, and plaza area that do not require connection to commercial water lines and would allow residents to clean and sanitize their hands in a manner compliant with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. He cited that the project would cost approximately \$15K which would include the cost for the units, installations, and maintenance adding that it would be overseen by the Department of Public Works (DPW).

**Councilmember Solomon** recalled viewing similar stations in his travels and described some of the details including locations, abilities of the units, and frequency of use and relayed an inquiry he received regarding preventing individuals from using the stations and their contents for purposes other than intended. Director of DPW Lesley Riddle responded that the liquids and sanitizers are under containment and would not be accessible to anyone to ingest.

**Council Vice President Suiter** expressed the importance of having a station in the Prince George's Plaza area to which **Councilmember Solomon** reiterated that the stations would be located in three (3) corridors; Prince George's Plaza, Route 1, and the Business District recognizing existing similar stations in certain areas that may adjust the allocations.

**Councilmember Simasek** sought clarity regarding the responsibility of maintenance of the stations to which Director Riddle responded that the Parks Division of the DPW would maintain the stations and added that the stations were foot operated as to not risk contamination and spread of disease from the hands.

**Councilmember Simasek** expressed concerns about placement of the stations noting that some areas were not owned by the City to which **Councilmember Solomon** replied that next steps included DPW working with the County or State to manage the stations if they were not on City-owned land.

**Councilmember Simasek** expressed support for the motion and inquired as to their access during winter months in which the liquids could freeze to which Director Riddle explained that they would be moved inside and be inaccessible in such weather but would be readily available during temperatures above freezing.

**Councilmember Schaible** asked if the stations were equipped with paper towels to which Ms. Riddle stated that they did not, and paper towels would likely only be made available during City gatherings and events. The Councilmember expressed concerns about the stations being aesthetically displeasing or not maintained properly but expressed his full confidence in Director Riddle and her proven track record of positive and efficient service support for the asserting support for the motion.

The Council agreed to move forward with the item.



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**12.g) FY22 Budget Initiative: Hyattsville COVID Mural**

[HCC-230-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** Solomon

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Council Motion Form Solomon Mural Final](#)

FOR DISCUSSION:

I move the Mayor and Council allocate \$25,000 in the Fiscal Year (FY22) budget for the commission, design, and installation of a Hyattsville COVID Memorial Mural. The location of the mural should be determined in consultation with City staff.

**Councilmember Solomon** introduced the item describing that it would allow for the City to contract with a local artist to create a mural that would memorialize the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. He supplemented that everyone had been affected by the health crises to some extent and the mural would serve as a symbol of survival of the City while honoring those who succumbed to the virus.

**Councilmember Lawrence** declared that he would not be supporting the motion as the pandemic was still being experienced and that allocating \$25K was unnecessary and that such funds could be better spent on several other initiatives.

**Councilmember Simasek** expressed apprehension regarding the motion questioning whether the families of the victims would want to have their loved ones memorialized in that manner and whether the City should display the proposed mural or similarly themed artwork.

**Councilmember Solomon** responded that it would be a message of survival that would not showcase any specific people or their identities.

The item did not receive adequate endorsement from Council to move forward. **Interim Mayor Ward** relayed that the motion could be revised and re-introduced should the Councilmember choose to do so.

**12.h) FY22 Budget Initiative: COVID Support for Hyattsville Non-Profits**

[HCC-231-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** Solomon

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Council Motion Form Solomon Nonprofit Covid Fund](#)

FOR DISCUSSION:

I move that Mayor and Council authorize the City Administrator to provide reimbursements to non-profit organizations located in the City of Hyattsville who have expended resources on COVID support for Hyattsville residents.



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**Councilmember Solomon** introduced the item explaining that it was a budget initiative to establish a pandemic fund to support non-profit businesses within the City of Hyattsville.

**Councilmember Lawrence** expressed confusion regarding the motion stating that it seemed that Council would be authorizing reimbursements but lacked detail regarding the processes of the program, eligibility, rates and frequency of allocations, and the burden placed on City staff. He stated that he would like to be supportive of the general purpose of the measure but required further detail before he would offer support.

**Councilmember Solomon** explained that the motion would procure \$100K to the program and intended to earmark the funds in order to bring a more formal presentation of the detailed plan before Council for recommendations and approval.

Assistant City Administrator Jim Chandler stated that the City Attorney had not yet completed a full review and was unable to until he had a more complete understanding of financial parameters and eligibility requirements.

**Councilmember Lawrence** clarified that he wanted to understand if the Body was to vote on the item before it materialized and expressed his inclination that the Assistant City Administrator and the City Attorney would not support moving forward until vital, necessary details were realized.

**Councilmember Solomon** stated that programmatic guidance would be necessary once the scope of the budgeting was known and that Council would be able to review and edit at each step of the legislative process.

**Councilmember Lawrence** requested further detail and questioned how an amount for allocation could be determined absent critical details regarding integral aspects of the program.

**Councilmember Solomon** reiterated that staff would oversee the legislative process and the allocation of funds was the first step to give a better understanding of the allowances and capabilities of the program.

**Council Vice President Suiter** recognized the work and contributions of non-profit organizations during the pandemic and noted their importance but concurred with her colleagues that more information would be necessary before moving forward or assigning any responsibility to City staff.

**Councilmember Croslin** sought clarity regarding which of the many non-profits in the City would be eligible noting that none were cited in the motion language to which **Councilmember Solomon** responded that the program would operate under an application process in which applications could be reviewed and the determination of eligibility would be made.

**Councilmember Haba** inquired as to the capability of the City to track and identify active non-profit organizations within the incorporated limits of the City of Hyattsville to which Assistant City Administrator Chandler stated that non-profits were not required to register with the City and, therefore, there was no way to accurately gauge any statistics. Mr. Chandler added the term “non-



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profit” is a very vague term that could include any number of types of businesses and did not seem to reach a clear definition of what is intended in with the motion.

**Councilmember Haba** stated that the process was on in which the validity and interest would be assessed to determine if it was a worthwhile cause, after which the details could be established.

**Interim Mayor Ward** reminded that Body that the item could be augmented and presented again at a future Council meeting.

The Council did not approve of the motion as written but were amenable to reviewing a revised version when it became available for presentation.

### **12.i) Updating Scope of Pandemic Relief Fund Designed for Artists** **[HCC-232-FY21](#)**

**Sponsor:** Solomon

**Co-Sponsor(s):** Spell Wolf, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Suiter

**[Motion to Expand Working Artist Fund](#)**

FOR DISCUSSION:

I move that the Mayor and Council update the eligibility for applicants to the Hyattsville COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund Grants for working artists to include barbers, cosmetologists, pet groomers, and tattoo artists licensed by the State of Maryland and currently working in a business registered within in the corporate limits of the City of Hyattsville. I further move that the maximum award for Working Artist applicants be adjusted to \$500 per award.

**Councilmember Solomon** introduced the item and explained that the motion would expand the current pandemic relief fund to include the eligibility of skilled tradespeople and adjust the maximum allocation amount to \$500. City Administrator Douglas supplemented that the term “artists” needed to be amended as it was too vague a premise and would need have a more specific designation before it would garner staff support.

**Councilmember Croslin** expressed his agreement with the change in terminology and highlighted that he would like to set a prerequisite that only tradespeople who live or contribute to Hyattsville be included in the qualification for funding.

**Councilmember Lawrence** inquired as to the possibility of an individual receiving funding from more than one fund offered by the City to which Mr. Chandler stated that it was possible in theory and a valid concern, but City staff made every effort to ensure that no one abuses any charitable program.

**Councilmember Schaible** shared the concerns of his colleague and suggested including specific language to disqualify anyone who had been found to be benefiting from any other relief fund offered by the City. **Councilmember Solomon** replied that the relief funds would be available in multiple cycles in which funds could be received concurrently. The Councilmembers discussed the possibility of increasing the amount of funding and opportunities to apply for the funds.



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Mr. Chandler clarified that if an individual applied for multiple funds it would be recorded by City staff and noted that the distributing entities each keep record and account for who receives funding under which program.

**Councilmember Haba** described ways in which vetting could be performed and stated that receiving funds from multiple sources was not prevalent enough to cause any serious concern.

**Councilmember Croslin** sought confirmation that only those who benefited the City would be eligible to which **Councilmember Solomon** confirmed stating that the provision was included in the original language before the proposal of expansion.

**Interim Mayor Ward** noted that the item would return to Council as an action item on a future Council meeting agenda.

### 13. Council Dialogue (9:50 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.)

**Interim Mayor Ward** relayed a comment from Ward 2 resident David Marshall correcting an earlier comment and expressing opposition of funding for barbers and hairdressers.

**Councilmember Schaible** thanked the Body for there attention to the items and their hard work.

**Councilmember Lawrence** promoted the notion that everyone who was able to receive the COVID-19 vaccination should do so.

**Councilmember Haba** echoed the endorsement of vaccinations, wished all who were applicable a happy Palm Sunday and Easter season, and thanked everyone who wished him a happy birthday.

**Interim Mayor Ward** commended the group on the budgetary work, referenced the celebration of Fat Tuesday and asked **Councilmember Croslin** if he wouldn't mind sharing information regarding a documentary. **Councilmember Croslin** provided details on a documentary shown by Home Box Office (HBO) on former Hyattsville resident David Driskell.

### 14. Community Notices and Meetings

#### 14.a) Main City Calendar February 17 - March 1, 2021

[HCC-234-FY21](#)

**Sponsor:** At the request of the City Administrator

**Co-Sponsor(s):** N/A

[Main City Calendar Feb 17 - Mar 1 2021 FINAL](#)



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**15. Motion to Adjourn**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Croslin
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Suiter
<b>AYES:</b>	Ward, Suiter, Lawrence, Croslin, Schaible, Simasek, Haba, Peabody, Solomon, Spell Wolf
<b>ABSENT:</b>	None

The meeting adjourned at 10:59 p.m.

**ATTEST:**  
**March 15, 2021**

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**Laura Reams, City Clerk**

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**Sean Corcoran, Deputy City Clerk**