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HOUSE BILL NO. 1477

Offered January 23, 2026

A BILL to amend and reenact § 2, as amended, of Chapter 34 of the Acts of Assembly of 1918, which provided a charter for the City of Norfolk, relating to conformity with the zoning ordinance.

Patron—Askew

Referred to Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 2, as amended, of Chapter 34 of the Acts of Assembly of 1918 is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 2. Power of the city.

In addition to the powers mentioned in the preceding section, the said city shall have power:

(1) To raise annually by taxes and assessments in said city such sums of money as the council hereinafter provided for shall deem necessary for the purposes of said city, and in such manner as said council shall deem expedient, in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of this State and of the United States; provided, however, that it shall impose no tax on the bonds of this city.

(2) To impose special or local assessments for local improvements and enforce payment thereof, subject, however, to such limitations prescribed by the Constitution of Virginia as may be in force at the time of the imposition of such special or local assessments.

(3) Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of Virginia and of § 86, as amended, of this charter, to contract debts, borrow money and make and issue evidence of indebtedness.

(4) To expend the money of the city for all lawful purposes.

(5) To acquire by purchase, gift, devise, condemnation or otherwise, property, real or personal, or any estate or interest therein within or without the city or State and for any of the purposes of the city; and to hold, improve, sell, lease, mortgage, pledge or otherwise dispose of the same or any part thereof.

(6) To acquire, in any lawful manner, for the purpose of encouraging commerce and manufacture, lands within and without the city not exceeding at any one time 5,000 acres in the aggregate, and from time to time to sell or lease the same or any part thereof for industrial or commercial uses and purposes.

(7) To make and maintain public improvements of all kinds, including municipal and other public buildings, armories, markets and all buildings and structures necessary or appropriate for the use of the departments of fire and police; and to acquire by condemnation or otherwise all lands, riparian and other rights and easements necessary for such improvements, or any of them.

(8) To furnish all local public service; to purchase, hire, construct, own, maintain and operate, or lease local public utilities, to acquire by condemnation or otherwise, within or without the corporate limits, land and property necessary for any such purposes.

and property necessary for any such purposes.

(9) To acquire, in any lawful manner, in any county of the State, or without the State, such water, lands and lands under water as the council of said city may deem necessary for the purpose of providing an adequate water supply for said city and of piping or conducting the same; to lay all necessary mains; to erect and maintain all necessary dams, pumping stations and other works in connection therewith; to make reasonable rules and regulations for promoting the purity of its said water supply and for protecting the same from pollution; and for this purpose to exercise full police powers and sanitary patrol over all lands comprised within the limits of the watershed tributary to any such water supply wherever such lands may be located in this State; to impose and enforce adequate penalties for the violation of any such rules and regulations; and to prevent by injunction any pollution or threatened pollution of such water supply and any and all acts likely to impair the purity thereof; and for the purpose of acquiring lands or material for any such use to exercise within the State all powers of eminent domain possessed by railroad corporations under the laws of this State; provided that the lands and lands under water which may be held in this State by said city for such purpose shall not exceed, in the aggregate, 30,000 acres at any one time. For any of the purposes aforesaid, said city may, if the council shall so determine, acquire by condemnation, purchase or otherwise, any estate or interest in such lands or any of them, or any right or easement therein, or may acquire such lands or any of them in fee, reserving to the owner or owners thereof such rights or easements therein as may be prescribed in the ordinance providing for such condemnation or purchase. The said city may sell or supply to persons, firms or industries residing or located outside of the city limits any surplus of water it may have over and above the amount required to supply its own inhabitants.

(10) To establish, impose and enforce water rates and rates and charges for public utilities, or other service, products, or conveniences, operated, rendered or furnished by the city.

(10 1/2) To establish, in the manner hereinafter provided, adjacent to or near the lines of existing streets,

59 on either or both sides thereof, building lines, and to provide that no new buildings shall thereafter be erected
60 upon the property (hereinafter called the interlying property) lying between said building lines and the street
61 lines. Said building lines may be established for the whole or any part of a street (but not for less than one
62 block or the distance between two cross streets), as the council may determine. Before any such lines shall be
63 established, the council shall cause to be published, for at least 10 days in some paper of general circulation
64 in the city, a notice addressed generally, but without naming them, to the owners of the property on which
65 building lines are proposed to be established, stating that it is proposed to establish building lines thereon and
66 naming a day when a hearing will be had in respect thereof. After said hearing the council may proceed to
67 establish such lines, and the ordinance establishing the same shall be recorded by the city clerk and indexed
68 in the name of the street near which said building lines are to be established; and thereafter all persons shall
69 be deemed to be affected with notice of the establishment of such lines, and no permits shall be granted for
70 the construction of any building on the interlying property.

71 But the ordinance establishing said lines shall become null and void as against any owner of property
72 objecting thereto, unless:

73 (a) When the interlying property shall be unoccupied by buildings, the city shall, within 60 days after the
74 passage of the ordinance establishing said lines, purchase the same or institute condemnation proceedings for
75 the acquisition thereof; or

76 (b) When the interlying property is occupied, in whole or in part, by buildings, the city shall, within 60
77 days after receipt of notice in writing that the said buildings have been removed from said interlying property
78 (it being hereby made the duty of the said owner to give such notice), purchase said interlying property or
79 institute condemnation proceedings for the acquisition thereof, and thereafter complete its acquisition of
80 property in said proceedings.

81 The rights of the city shall not be prejudiced by any defect in the proceedings instituted under paragraph
82 (a) and (b) hereof, resulting in their dismissal, if within 30 days after said dismissal new proceedings shall be
83 instituted for the same purpose. Nothing herein contained shall be construed as limiting or abridging in any
84 degree the power of eminent domain now possessed by the city under existing law.

85 (11) To establish, open, widen, extend, grade, improve, construct, maintain, light, sprinkle and clean,
86 public highways, streets, alleys, boulevards and parkways, and to alter or close the same; to establish and
87 maintain parks, playgrounds and other public grounds; to construct, maintain and operate bridges, viaducts,
88 subways, tunnels, sewers and drains and to regulate the use of all such highways, parks, public grounds and
89 works; to plant and maintain shade trees along the streets and upon such public grounds; to prevent the
90 obstructing of such streets and highways, abolish and prevent grade crossings over the same by railroads;
91 regulate the operation and speed of all cars and vehicles using the same, as well as the operation and speed of
92 all engines, cars and trains on railroads within the city; to regulate the services to be rendered and rates to be
93 charged by busses, motor cars, cabs and other vehicles for the carrying of passengers and by vehicles for the
94 transfer of baggage; require all telephone and telegraph wires and all wires and cables carrying electricity to
95 be placed in conduits under ground and prescribe rules and regulations for the construction and use of such
96 conduits; and to do all other things whatsoever adapted to make said streets and highways safe, convenient
97 and attractive.

98 (12) To construct and maintain, or aid in constructing and maintaining, public roads, boulevards,
99 parkways and bridges beyond the limits of the city, in order to facilitate public travel to and from said city
100 and its suburbs, and to and from said city and any property owned by said city and situated beyond the
101 corporate limits thereof, and to acquire land necessary for such purpose by condemnation or otherwise.

102 (13) To establish, construct, maintain and operate public lands, public wharves and docks either within or
103 without the city; to acquire by condemnation or otherwise all lands, riparian and other rights and easements
104 necessary for the purposes aforesaid; to lay and collect reasonable duties or wharfage fees on vessels coming
105 to or using said landings, wharves or docks; to regulate the manner of using other wharves and docks within
106 the city and rates of wharfage to be paid by vessels using the same; to dredge or deepen the harbor or river or
107 any branch or portion thereof; to prescribe and enforce reasonable rules and regulations for the protection and
108 use of its said properties, whether within or without the city; and to impose and enforce adequate penalties for
109 the violation of such rules and regulations.

110 (14) Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of Virginia and of §§ 100, 104 and 105 of this charter,
111 both inclusive, to grant franchises for public utilities.

112 (15) To collect and dispose of sewage, offal, ashes, garbage, carcasses of dead animals and other refuse,
113 and to acquire and operate reduction or other plants for the utilization or destruction of such materials, or any
114 of them; or to contract for and regulate the collection and disposal thereof.

115 (16) To compel the abatement and removal of all nuisances within the city or upon property owned by the
116 city beyond its limits at the expense of the person or persons causing the same, or of the owner or occupant of
117 the ground or premises whereon the same may be; to require all lands, lots and other premises within said city
118 to be kept clean, sanitary and free from weeds, or to make them so at the expense of the owners or occupants
119 thereof; to regulate or prevent slaughter houses or other noisome or offensive business within said city, the
120 keeping of animals, poultry or other fowl therein, or the exercise of any dangerous or unwholesome business,

121 trade or employment therein; to regulate the transportation of all articles through the streets of the city; to
 122 compel the abatement of smoke and dust, and prevent unnecessary noise therein; to regulate the location of
 123 stables and the manner in which they shall be kept and constructed, and generally to define, prohibit, abate,
 124 suppress and prevent all things detrimental to the health, morals, comfort, safety, convenience and welfare of
 125 the inhabitants of the city.

126 (17) To inspect, test, measure and weigh any commodity or article of consumption or use within the city
 127 and to establish, regulate, license and inspect weights, meters, measures and scales.

128 (18) To extinguish and prevent fires and to compel citizens to render assistance to the fire department in
 129 case of need, and to establish, regulate and control a fire department or division; to regulate the size, materials
 130 and construction of buildings, fences and other structures hereafter erected in such manner as the public
 131 safety and convenience may require; to remove, or require to be removed, any building, structure or addition
 132 thereto which by reason of dilapidation, defect of structure or other causes may have become dangerous to
 133 life or property, or which may be erected contrary to law; to establish and designate from time to time fire
 134 limits, within which limits wooden buildings shall not be constructed, removed, added to or enlarged, and to
 135 direct that any or all future buildings within such limits shall be constructed of stone, natural or artificial,
 136 concrete, brick, iron or other fireproof material; provided, however, that by a vote of four-fifths of all the
 137 members of the council permission may be granted for storage sheds constructed on pile piers or wharves on
 138 the waterfront, the sides and roofs of which shall be covered with corrugated iron or other fireproof material.

139 (19) To provide for the care, support and maintenance of children and of sick, aged, insane or poor
 140 persons and paupers.

141 (20) To organize and administer public schools and libraries subject to the general laws establishing a
 142 standard of education for the State.

143 (21) To provide and maintain, either within or without the city, charitable, recreative, curative, corrective,
 144 detentive or penal institutions.

145 (22) To prevent persons having no visible means of support, paupers and persons who may be dangerous
 146 to the peace or safety of the city from coming to said city from without the same; and for this purpose to
 147 require any railroad company, the master of any ship or vessel or the owners of any conveyance bringing
 148 such person to the city, to take such person back to the place whence he was brought, or enter into bond with
 149 satisfactory security that such person shall not become a charge upon said city within one year from the date
 150 of his arrival; and also to expel therefrom any such person who has been in said city less than 90 days.

151 (23) To provide for the preservation of the general health of the inhabitants of said city, make regulations
 152 to secure the same, inspect all foods and foodstuffs and prevent the introduction and sale in said city of any
 153 article or thing intended for human consumption which is adulterated, impure or otherwise dangerous to
 154 health, and to condemn, seize and destroy or otherwise dispose of any such article or thing without liability to
 155 the owner thereof; prevent the introduction or spread of contagious or infectious diseases, and prevent and
 156 suppress diseases generally; to provide and regulate hospitals within or without the city limits and to enforce
 157 the removal of persons afflicted with contagious or infectious diseases to hospitals provided for them; to
 158 provide for the organization of a department or bureau of health, to supplement the salary paid by the
 159 Commonwealth to the Director of Public Health, to have the powers of a board of health, for said city, with
 160 the authority necessary for the prompt and efficient performance of its duties, with power to invest any or all
 161 the officials or employees of such department of health with such powers as the police officers of the city
 162 have; to establish a quarantine ground within or without the city limits, and such quarantine regulations
 163 against infectious and contagious diseases as the said council may see fit, subject to the laws of the State and
 164 of the United States; to provide and keep records of vital statistics and compel the return of all births, deaths
 165 and other information necessary thereto.

166 (24) To acquire, by purchase, gift, devise, condemnation or otherwise, lands, either within or without the
 167 city, to be used, kept and improved as a place for the interment of the dead, and to make and enforce all
 168 necessary rules and regulations for the protection and use thereof, and generally regulate the burial and
 169 disposition of the dead.

170 (25) To exercise full police powers, and establish and maintain a department or division of police.

171 (26) To do all things whatsoever necessary or expedient for promoting or maintaining the general welfare,
 172 comfort, education, morals, peace, government, health, trade, commerce or industries of the city or its
 173 inhabitants.

174 (27) To make and enforce all ordinances, rules and regulations necessary or expedient for the purpose of
 175 carrying into effect the powers conferred by this charter or by any general law, and to provide and impose
 176 suitable penalties for the violation of such ordinances, rules and regulations, or any of them in a manner
 177 consistent with § 2(e), as amended, of this charter. The city may maintain a suit to restrain by injunction the
 178 violation of any ordinance, notwithstanding such ordinance may provide punishment for its violation.

179 The council may, by ordinance, (28) To establish, by ordinance, certain voluntary design guidelines for
 180 new construction or rehabilitation of residential real property in certain designated districts. The guidelines
 181 shall be voluntary and may only be applied at the request of the property owner. A fee may be charged for
 182 review, which shall not exceed the actual cost of such review process or \$200, whichever is less.

183 (29) *To require that, on any property where there is a substantial negative impact on public health, safety,*
184 *and welfare, all land, buildings and structures and uses thereof that do not conform to the regulations and*
185 *restrictions prescribed for the zoning district in which each is situated shall conform to the regulations and*
186 *restrictions prescribed for the zone or zones in which each property is situated within a reasonable period of*
187 *time to be specified by ordinance, including a zoning ordinance, but never less than two years.*

188 The enumeration of particular powers in this charter shall not be deemed or held to be exclusive, but in
189 addition to the powers enumerated herein, implied thereby, or appropriate to the exercise thereof, the said city
190 shall have and may exercise all other powers which are now or may hereafter be possessed or enjoyed by
191 cities under the Constitution and general laws of this State.