

## House of Burgesses Committees' Timeline

<b>10 March 1655- December 1656</b>	<b>Committee for Review of the Acts</b> (CPT Francis Willis, chairman) <b>Committee for Private Causes</b> (Major Holt, chairman)
<b>March 9, 1658</b>	<b>Committee for Private Causes</b> (Edward Carter, chairman) <b>Committee for Review and Regulation of the Acts</b> “ <i>and to make Report of the inconveniences or requisite alterations</i> ” (John Stringer, chairman)
<b>March 13 1659/60</b>	“ <i>Ordered that the <b>Committee for Auditing</b> the accompts (accounts) of the collectors of two shilling per hhd. Be impowered to examine witnesses, administer oaths and all other legal means to vfe. Whereby the truth of said accompts may be the more certainly manifested.</i> ”
<b>Sept 1663</b>	<b>Committee to Examine the election of burgesses</b> (Major Edward Griffith, chairman) <b>Committee to Consider the Public Affairs</b> <b>Committee to examine the business of the king of Potomack</b>
<b>October 1666</b>	<b>Committee to regulate the price of ordinary keepers</b>  <b>“The route to passage is no longer clearly marked. Most of the papers that once documented the process – calendars, daily orders, draft bills, committee recommendations, conference reports, amendments, roll calls, vote tallies – burned long ago. In the case of the assembly’s journals, they are skewed more towards the years after 1680 than to earlier decades. These evidentiary losses limit one’s grasp of certain key features in the legislative process to the broad outlines and hide others completely.”<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>June 1680</b>	<b>Committee to Examine the Writs</b> (of Elections) (John Page, chairman) <b>Committee for the Consideration of Propositions</b> (Major Isaac Allerton, chairman) Also referred to as the <b>Committee for the Examination of Grievances</b> <b>Committee for the Examination of Public Debts and Claims</b> (John Burnham, chairman) <b>Committee to Examine Run-away Certificates</b> (Major John Armsteed, chairman)  <i>(June 11, 1680) It is proposed by the House that an address be made to his Excellencie of Virginia to know his Excellencies pleasure about a <b>Committee for Private Causes</b>, the House supposing it will be no hinderance of time.</i>
<b>April 1682</b>	<b>Committee to Examine the Writs</b> (of Elections) <b>Committee for the Examination of Grievances and Consideration of Propositions</b> (Major Charles Scarburgh, chairman) <b>Committee for Private Causes</b> (William Bird, chairman)
<b>April 1684</b>	<b>Committee for the Examination of the Returns of Writs and Elections</b> (Wm. Fitzhugh, chairman) <b>Committee appointed to “inspect the Journall of the Last Assembly and all other Journals and papers, Books &amp; c belonging to the House of Burgesss And to Report to the House what they shall find therein yt may be of use or import to the House. And also such matters and things whether Bills Orders or References &amp;c of any kind soever from the last Assembly.”</b> <b>Committee for Propositions and Grievances</b> (Thomas Ballard, chairman) <b>Committee for Private Causes</b> (Wm Kendall, chairman) <b>Committee for the Examination of Public Claims &amp; Debts</b> (Major Samuel Swan, chairman) <b>Committee for the Examination of Certificates for takeing and Apprehending Runawaies</b>

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<sup>1</sup> A Little Parliament, Warren Billings, p. 271n

(Thomas Pate, chairman)

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy**

Created May 23, 1684

“... appropriations measurers started in the House Committee on the Public Levy. Committee members calculated ordinary revenues, estimated expenses, and arrived at a levy that balanced income against outgo. As the latter was always greater than the former, the committee then recommended an amount to be collected from all colonists who were liable to a head tax. That committee calculated that figure by dividing the total of the levy by the total number of tithables<sup>2</sup>, that is, taxable persons.

In making its determinations, the committee depended on information that came from several sources. Sheriffs supplied lists of taxable person, and the colony’s fiscal officers figured the provincial government’s take from customs collections and other standing impositions. Anyone who performed any service for the colony could petition the committee for compensation. Those claims varied in number from assembly to assembly, so much of the committee’s job lay in sorting through them and deciding which ones to honor.

The practice of encouraging such petitions antedated the existence of the House and the committee by more than a decade. Although the number of those pleas increased over time, the burgesses were slow to regulate them much before late in the 1670s. By then the annual sessions were no longer the practice, which sometimes left claimants dangling for long periods. The House adopted a standing rule of order in 1677 requiring county courts to certify all claims to the committee. The rule was eventually perfected into a statute.”<sup>3</sup>

**October 1686**

**Committee for Examination of the Return of Writs of Election**

**Committee for Examination of Grievances and Propositions** (Thomas Ballard, chairman)

**Committee for the Examination of Public Claims** (Daniel Jenison, chairman)

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (Daniel Jenison, chairman)

Created November 16, 1686

**April 1688**

**Committee for the Examination of Elections and Returns** (Thomas Milner, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Thomas Milner, chairman)

**Committee on Public Claims** (James Bray, chairman)

**April 1691**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Lawrence Smith, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Christopher Robinson, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Lawrence Smith, chairman)

**April 1692**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Benjamin Harrison, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Lawrence Smith, chairman)

**Committee for the Examination of Propositions and Grievances**

Mr Christopher Robinson appointed chairman (April 7<sup>th</sup>), replaced by Major Charles Scarborough (April 15), when Mr Robinson requested and was granted leave from the House “*having received an account that his family lies in a very sick Condition. Major Charles Scarborough added to the Committee of Grievances & Propositions and Ordered to take the Chair during his absence.*”

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (William Randolph, chairman)

Created April 27, 1692

**March 1693**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Miles Cary, chairman)

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<sup>2</sup> “Generally, a tithable was a free male aged sixteen years or older, male servants of any age, and any African or Indian servants or slaves of either gender.” A Little Parliament, Warren Billings, p 271n

<sup>3</sup> A Little Parliament, Warren Billings, pp 182-183

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Major Samuel Swan, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Captain Miles Cary, chairman)

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (Miles Cary, chairman)  
Created April 1, 1693

**October 1693**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (John Custis, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Fitzhugh, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Captain William Randolph, chairman)

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (William Randolph, chairman)  
Created November 17, 1693

**November 1666**

(November 1, 1666) **“A Committee appointed to treat with the Governor about the last Act concerning the Indians and the proposition preferred by Captain Ferrar.”** (Mr. Ballard, chairman)  
(November 2, 1666) **“Committee to attend the Governor about a treaty with Maryland and the incident instructions.”** (Captain Joseph Bridger, chairman)  
(November 5, 1666) **“A Committee appointed to propose the rates of this country commodities for payment of public debts ministers and parrish duties officer’s fees fines quitrents and other rents that be generally contracted and become due in the vacant year from planting.”**  
(November 6, 1666) **“Proposed whether upon the Governor’s reasons communicated to the House it be conceived that there is a necessity of an agent to manage the countires affairs in England if an honorable person would be found fit to be instructed. A Committee appointed to treat with the Governor and request his Honor to consider some Honorable persons that might be fit and would please to accept the managing the affairs of the country in England .”** (Capt. Joseph Bridger, chairman)  
**“A Committee appointed to attend the Honorable Governor for drawing the instruments for William Drummond, Governor of Carolina and the instructions for the Commissioners of Maryland and to treat also with his Honor concerning his satisfaction for the silk presented to this country by his Sacred Majesty.”** (Capt. Joseph Bridger, chairman)

**April 1695**

Virginia at the time consisted of 23 counties and one city (James City, later called Jamestown). The membership of the House was, accordingly, 47; of whom on the day the Assembly convened 39 were present. Philip Ludwell was elected Speaker, Peter Beverley Clerk; and William Drummond Messenger (later sergeant-at-arms). “In those days the House found it possible to transact business by means of three standing committees, namely, the Committee on Elections and Privileges, the Committee of Public Claims, and the Committee of Propositions and Grievances, with the Committee of the Whole House and occasional special committees. The meetings took place in the building in Jamestown known as the state house, and the committees met in such places as were most convenient. The Committee of Propositions and Grievances met by order of the House at the house of Mr. William Sherwood, and the Committee of Public Claims at the house of Mr. John Broadnax.”

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (John Custis, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Robert Carter, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (William Randolph, chairman)

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (William Randolph, chairman)  
Created May 16, 1695

*“Resolved and accordingly ordered that it be a rule of this house that 15 members with the Speaker shall be a sufficient number to adjourn.”*

*“Ordered that leave be given to the Committee of Propositions & Greivances and the Committee of Public Claims to make choice of a place to sit in and that the Chairman of each committee give notice in the house where his respective committee intends to sit on next Monday.  
Order that the said Committees have power to adjourn themselves de die diem and send for persons, records, journals, or other papers as there shall be occasion.  
Resolved and accordingly ordered that all Propositions, Grievances, and Public Claims be brought into the house, Thursday night next at latest or not received into this Assembly.  
Ordered that the clerk of the house cause a copy of the resolve of the house appointing the latest time receiving Propositions, Grievances, and Public Claims into this Assembly to be transcribed and set up at the State house door.”*

**April 1696**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (William Randolph, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Robert Carter, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (William Randolph, chairman)  
**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (John Custis, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Issac Allerton, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (William Randolph, chairman)

**Sept 1696  
Reconvened  
April 1697  
Reconvened  
Oct 1697**

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (William Randolph, chairman)  
 Created October 29, 1696

**Sept 1698**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Benjamin Harrison, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Phillip Ludwell, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

*“Resolved and accordingly ordered. That all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the house on Monday the tenth instant at latest, or no received into this session of assembly.” (Saturday, October 1, 1698)*

*“The house called over and the absence of those that did not appear was excused. Coll. Phillip Ludwell Chairman of the Committee of Grievances and Propositions according to order acquainting the house, that the said committee had made choice of a room in Mrs. Sherwoods house to sit in, the house approved of their choice.*

*Order, that the Clerk of the House publish the place, where the Committee of Greivances and Propositions are to sit by setting up a certificate thereof at the state house door.*

*Mr. Miles Cary Chairman of the Committee for Public Claims according to order acquainting the house, that the said committee had made choice of a room in Mrs. Edwards house to sit in, the house approved of their choice.*

*Order, that the Clerk of the House publish the place, where the Committee for Public Claims are to sit by setting up a certificate thereof at the state house door.”*  
 (Monday, October 3, 1698)

**April 1699**

*“The Assembly of 1699 had only one session, lasting from April 27 through June 8. The old state house had been burned down on October 21, 1698, and it was therefore necessary that the meetings this session should be held in one of the private residences at Jamestown. The loss of the state house, no doubt much derailed at the time, was really a blessing in disguise, since it led to the speedy removal of the seat of government to Williamsburg, a much more advantageous location in every way than Jamestown. Only forty members were present on the opening day, and when the election of a Speaker was entered into, a deadlock resulted, the vote being twenty (20) for Mr. Robert Carter, who had been Speaker of the Assembly of 1696-97 and had been defeated by Mr. William Randolph in 1698, and twenty (20) for his competitor, who was, though the House Journal does not say so, probably Phillip Ludwell, who had been Speaker of the House in the Assembly of 1695-96, but who was defeated by Mr. Carter in the next Assembly, and who this session was made chairman of the Committee of Propositions and Greivances, far the most*

important committee of the House, where, as is shown by the work of that committee, he performed excellent service. Mr. Ludwell had also been chairman of that committee in the short Assembly of 1698.

Mr. William Randolph could not have been a candidate for the speakership the present session, since he had been appointed by the governor clerk of the house. To this position a good salary was attached, whereas the pay of a member of the House was small and the Speaker received no extra compensation at that time for his services. Mr. Randolph, who had been elected a member for Henrico, was obliged to resign, and the governor had to order a new election in that county.”

In addition to the usual oaths administered to the members of the House of Burgesses by a committee of the Council, the members were at the opening of this Assembly, as at the opening of several succeeding Assemblies, called on to ‘sign the association,’ which means that they signed the pledge of the association formed in 1696 for the protection of the life of King William and the upholding of the Protestant succession to the throne of England.”

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (John Custis, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Phillip Ludwell, chairman)

*“said Committee had made choice of a room in Mrs Sherwood’s house to sit in.”*

**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

*“said Committee had made choice of a room in Mrs Edward’s house to sit in.”*

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (Miles Cary, chairman)

Created June 2, 1699

*“That all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the house on Thursday the eleventh instant at latest, or no received into this session of assembly without particular leave of the House.”* (Thursday, May 4, 1699)

### **Committee of Revisal**

“Governor Nicholson and the General Assembly of April 1699 broke the impasse by striking a bargain over means and ends. They embodied their deal in ‘an act appointing a committee for the revisal of the whole body of the laws of this his majesties colony and dominion’ of Virginia. The statute spelled out in fine detail the who, the what, and the how of the revising process. Its foremost stipulation created a nine-man commission. Three came from the Council (Edward Hill, Matthew Page and Benjamin Harrison) and six from the House (Miles Cary, John Taylor, Robert Beverley the historian, Anthony Armistead, Henry Duke and William Buckner). Peter Beverley performed clerical duties, and Benjamin Harrison and Batholomew Fowler were designated committee assistants. The act clothed the commission with ‘full power and authority to revise, alter, add to, diminish, repeal, amend or revive all or any ... Laws and reduce the same into bills in such manner and forme as they shall think fitt and necessary, which said bills ... shall by the said committee be reported to the next meeting of the assembly and so from time to time till all the said laws be fully and absolutely revised.’ Its remaining provisions set forth the committees’ work schedule and various other procedural matters.

The committee’s membership mixed experience and interest. Councillor Hill brought to the table a wealth of institutional memory and legislative savvy, having been Speaker of the House and a leader among the irreconcilables. Harrison, in addition to his political stature in Charles City County, was the Reverend Councillor James Blair’s father-in-law. Matthew Page was of a conciliar family and brother o the lately dead Francis Page, whom Effingham had forced the burgesses to accept as clerk back in 1688. He also sat on the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary, which linked him to Blair’s interests as well. Miles Cary followed his father and grandfather as burgess for Warwick County, starting with the General Assembly of 1684. Anthony Armistead belonged to another durable family of colonial politicalaisn, and Robert Beverley was a son of Effingham’s old nemesis. Henry Duke was a relative newcomer who had represented James City County off and on since 1691; so was William Buckner, who was just in his second term as a member for York County.

As for the committee staff, they were seasoned to their responsibilities, too. Benjamin Harrison served as clerk of the Council until he resigned, apparently so he could more readily assist his father. Bartholomew Fowler was a deputy clerk of the Council before he became the colony's attorney general. Peter Beverley, eldest son of Robert Beverley, held his father's old post as clerk of the House of Burgesses.

The committee sat down for the first time on 5 July 1699, though it did no more that afternoon than listen to a reading of its enabling legislation. During the next several days, it went about the business of organizing for work. It swore Peter Beverley. He then indited an address to Nicholson, requesting the same 'Liberty and freedom of Speech and debate as is accustomed to be allowed to the Members of the Generall Assembly in their proceedings.' While the committee awaited Nicholson's reply, it perused 'Certain Instructions of the Lords Justices of England.' Councillor Harrison then promised to furnish law books, 'Two gallons of best Recording Ink, Two Thousand of best dutch Quills, A pound of pounce,' and other writing supplies, which tidied up the last of the organizational details. A year of regular meetings and steadily progressive labors seemed to augur success, but then work suddenly stopped. Thereafter, the work moved haltingly until it was finally finished in 1705.

Many reasons account for the delays. Changes in committee membership, moving the capital to and founding the city of Williamsburg, and the protracted feuds that produced Nicholson's recall all figure into any blend of explanations. Death called Hill, Page, and Armistead, all of whom were gone by 1704. Duke moved up to the Council of State. Peter Beverley quit the committee to become Speaker of the House in the General Assembly of 1700-1702. His half-brother Robert (the historian) sailed away to England bent on lobbying against Nicholson. He had grown to despise the governor, whom he excoriated for removing the capital from Jamestown, 'where there were good accommodations,' to Williamsburg, 'where there was none.' Nicholson's contretremps with Blair and squabbles with other councilors distracted the governor and finally cost him his jobs."<sup>4</sup>

## December 1700

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Leigh, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (Miles Cary, chairman)  
Created Dec 26, 1700

*"That the Clerk of the House publish the place where the Committee of Greivances and Propositions and the Committee of Public Claims are to sit by the door of the Colledge."*

*"That all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the house on Saturday the 14th of this instant at latest, or no received into this session of assembly without particular leave of the House."* (Wednesday, Dec 11th, 1700)

## August 1701

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Leigh, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

### Special Committees

(Tuesday, August 19, 1701) *"Ordered that according to a message from his Excellency and Council a Committee be appointed to join with the Committee of the Council to consider of the most proper ways and means for strengthening the frontiers by sea and land and for discovering the approaches of an enemy."*

*"Ordered that according to a message from his Excellency and Council a Committee be appointed to join with the Committee of the Council to inspect and consider the whole proceedings of the Commissioners appointed to examine the claims and titles to lands in Pamunkey Neck and on the*

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<sup>4</sup> A Little Parliament, Warren M. Billings, pp 196-7

*South side of Blackwater Swamp.”*

(Monday, September 8, 1701) “*Ordered that a Committee be appointed to inspect and examine Mr Treasurers accounts of the imposition upon liquors and of the imposition upon servants and slaves –*”

(1701) “*Then the report of the Committee of Greivances and Propositions made upon a Greivance from the inhabitants of St Johns Parrish in King and Queen County praying that a division may be made of the said county or that a court house be built in the said Parrish – was read – And it thereupon appearing doubtful whether in the said Parrish there be a sufficient number of freeholders to perform the offices of a distinct county -- Ordered that a Committee be appointed to inquire what number of freeholders inhabit the said Parrish.*”

(1701) “*And the question being putt that a Committee be appointed to inquire into the proceedings of the Committee appointed to inspect and oversee the building the Capitol resolved in the affirmative. And a committee was accordingly appointed. .. Ordered that it be an instruction to the said committee to inspect the Act directing the building the Capitol and examine the proceedings of the Committee appointed by the said Act to oversee the building of it That they state the whole matter as it appears to them and also a particular account of the moneys disbursed or ordered by the Committee for that service and report the same to the House with all convenient expedition.*”

*“That the Clerk of the House publish the place where the Committee of Greivances and Propositions and the Committee of Public Claims are to sit by setting up a certificate thereof at the door of the House.”*

*“That all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the house on Monday the 18th of this instant at latest, or no received into this session of assembly without particular leave of the House.”* (Wednesday, Aug 9th, 1701)

## **May 1702**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Leigh, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

*“Ordered that the Committees have power to adjourn themselves de die in diem and to send for persons, records, journals and other papers they shall from time to time have occasion of That all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the house on Monday the 25th of this instant at latest, or not received into this session of assembly without particular leave of the House.*

*Ordered that the Clerk of the House publish the latest time set by the house for receiving propositions, grievances, and public claims during this session by setting up a fair copy of the resolve of the house made in that behalf at the doors of he house.*

*Ordered that the **Committee of Propositions and Greivances** inspect the Journal of the last sessions of Assembly and report to the house what they find necessary to be taken into consideration this sessions.*

*Oredered that the **Committee for Public Claims** inspect the report of the Committee the last session of Assembly and report to the house what they find necessary to be further considered this session.*

*Resolved and accordingly ordered that all petitions, propositions and grievances directed for the last session of Assembly and not then considered be admitted to the consideration of this session.”*

*“Resolved an accordingly ordered that it be a standing rule of this House that fifteen members with the Speaker shall be a sufficient number to adjourn.”* (Saturday, May 16th, 1702)

## **June 1702**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)

## **August 1702**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Leigh, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

**Committee for Inspecting and Examining Mr Treassuer's said Accounts of the Imposition upon Liquors and of the Imposition upon servants and slaves**

Created Aug 19, 1702

**Joint Committee, appointed with a Committee of the Council, to consider the appropriating the roomes in the Capitol for the use of the several officers**

Created Aug 20, 1702

**Committee for Proportioning the Public Levy** (Miles Cary, chairman)

Created Aug 27, 1702

*“Ordered that the Committees have power to adjourn themselves de die in diem and to send for persons, records, journals and other papers they shall from time to time have occasion of Resolved and accordingly ordered That all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the house on Thursday the 20th of this instant at latest, or not received into this session of assembly without particular leave of the House.*

*Ordered that the Clerk of the House publish the latest time set by the house for receiving propositions, grievances, and public claims during this session by setting up a fair copy of the resolve of the house made in that behalf at the door of he house.*

*Ordered that the Clerk of the House publish the place where the Committee of Propositions and Greivances and the Committee of Public Claims are to sit by setting up a certificate thereof at the door of the college.*

*Ordered that the **Committee of Propositions and Greivances** inspect the Journal of the last sessions of Assembly and report to the house what they find necessary to be taken into consideration this sessions.*

*Oredered that the **Committee for Public Claims** inspect the report of the Committee the last session of Assembly and report to the house what they find necessary to be further considered this session.*

*Resolved and accordingly ordered that all petitions, propositions and grievances directed for the last session of Assembly and not then considered be admitted to the consideration of this session.”* (Monday, Aug 17th, 1702)

**March 1703**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Leigh, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

**Special Committees**

**A Committee to join with the Council for inspecting the building the Capitol “to inspect the building of the Capitol and consider the measures for the finishings and furnishing the same.”** (Thursday, March 25, 1703)

**A Committee to join with the Council “to consider the best methods for carrying on the business of the Assembly and General Court with the greatest ease and convenience.”** (Tuesday, April 6, 1703)

**A Committee for receiving and examining Mr Treasurers accounts**

*“Ordered that the Committees have power to adjourn themselves de die in diem and to send for persons, records, journals and other papers they shall from time to time have occasion of That all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the house by Monday next at latest, or not received into this session of assembly without particular leave of the House.*

*Ordered that the Clerk of the House publish the latest time set by the house for receiving propositions, grievances, and public claims during this session by setting up a fair copy of the resolve of the house made in that behalf at the College door.*

*Ordered that the Clerk of the House publish the place where the Committee of Propositions and Greivances and the Committee of Public Claims are to sit vizt in the upper rooms of the College where they formerly sat, by setting up a certificate thereof at the door of the college.*



*Ordered that the **Committee for Public Claims** inspect the reports of the Committee the last session of Assembly and report to the house what they find necessary to be further considered this session.*

*Ordered that the **Committee of Propositions and Grievances** inspect the Journal of the last sessions of Assembly and report to the house what they find necessary to be taken into consideration this session.*

*Resolved and accordingly ordered that all petitions, propositions and grievances directed for the last session of Assembly and not then considered be admitted to the consideration of this session.” (Monday, March 22, 1702)*

#### **April 1704**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Randolph, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

**A Committee for receiving, inspecting and examining Mr Treasurers accounts (Thursday, April 27, 1704)**

Filing deadline set for Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup> (established on Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>)

#### **April 1705**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Randolph, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

**A Committee for receiving, inspecting and examining Mr Treasurers accounts (Tuesday, May 8, 1705)**

**A Committee “to inspect what directions have been given about the Capitol and likewise to consider what is further necessary to be done to it” (Tuesday, May 8, 1705)**

Filing deadline set for Thursday, April 26<sup>th</sup> (established on Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup>)

#### **OCT 1705-1706**

“The House had at this session 51 members, Jamestown being now represented, and it was put in the revised law passed at this session entitled “An act for regulating the elections of burgesses, settling their privileges, and for ascertaining their allowances” that the freeholders of Jamestown (called James City in the act) should always have the liberty of electing a burgess. The Speaker of the House for this Assembly was Mr. Benjamin Harrison, Jr. of Charles City County elected over Mr. Peter Beverley, of Gloucester, Speaker for the former Assembly. Mr. Beverley became the chairman of the most important committee of the House, the Committee of Propositions and Grievances.”

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Nathaniel Harrison, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Peter Beverley, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (Miles Cary, chairman)

**A Committee for receiving, inspecting and examining Mr Treasurers accounts (Saturday, October 25, 1705)**

**A Committee to inquire into the practice and behavior of the Attorney General (Wednesday, October 31, 1705)**

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (Wednesday, June 19, 1706)**

*“Resolved and accordingly Ordered that all propositions, grievances and public claims be brought into the House within 14 days at furthest or nor be received in this session of Assembly without particular leave of the House.” (Wednesday, October 24, 1705)*

### **Committee of Revival**

“The law of 1699 appointing the Committee of Revival expressly stated that the bills reported by the committee were not to be of any force till they had had their formal readings in the Assembly, and that the Assembly was at full liberty ‘to add to, alter, make void, amend, or reject all or any of the bills’ so reported. The Committee of Revival had prepared thirty-nine (39) bills for submission to the General Assembly. One of these, ‘An act concerning the church, clergy, and other parochial affairs’ failed because the two houses could not agree on amendments; another, ‘An act for establishing county courts, for regulating and settling the proceedings therein, and directing the manner of granting probates of wills, and administration of intestates’ estates,’ was vetoed by Governor Nott, since it contained what he considered an encroachment on prerogative in a clause making the advice and consent of the Council necessary to the appointment of justices of the peace; and a third, ‘An act for the better securing the liberty of the subject,’ also failed to obtain the governor’s assent, though on what ground is not absolutely clear. ... The thirty-nine bills of the committee thus became thirty-nine laws, but the failure of the three most important bills to pass impaired very seriously the value of the work of the session.

The Committee of Revival had been appointed in the April 1699 session, and its field of work did not include all the laws passed since that time. These laws, however, were not now overlooked. By order of the House they were examined first by the Committee of Public Claims and then by the Committee of Propositions and Grievances and subjected to the same kind of treatment that the older laws had received at the hands of the Committee of Revival. Several absolutely new laws were passed.”

**OCT 1710**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (William Robinson, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (William Randolph, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (John Holloway, chairman)

**A Committee for receiving, inspecting and examining the late Mr Treasurers accounts**  
(Friday, November 3, 1710)

**A Committee to inspect the progress is already made upon the Governor’s house** (Thursday, November 16, 1710)

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy** (Friday, December 8, 1710)

Filing deadline set for November 2nd (established on Thursday, October 26th)

**NOV 1711**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (William Robinson, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (John Holloway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (John Bucknor (Buckner), chairman)

**A Committee to wait on the Governor to receive such propositions as he shall think fit to communicate to this House relating to the alterations in the Militia** (Friday Nov 16, 1711)

Filing deadline set for Thursday November 15th (established on Thursday, November 8th)

**OCT 1712**

“On the day of the opening there were present 49 members, only two less than the full membership of the House. At that time there were in Virginia only 25 counties, in the House by two members each, and one town or city (James City, shrunk to a “rotten borough”) represented by one member. Neither Williamsburg or William & Mary College was yet represented. Mr. Peter Beverley, Speaker of the former House, was chosen again to the speakership. The clerk of the House, Mr. Robert Buckner, was appointed by the governor. Another officer at this time appointed by the governor was the messenger, whose duties seem to have corresponded closely with the later sergeant-at-arms. In addition to these officers, the House had at this time four doorkeepers, a clerk to the committee for propositions and grievances (the busiest standing committee of the House), one clerk for the committee of elections and privileges and committee for public claims (the other two standing committees) and a chaplain – all elected by the House.”

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (William Robinson, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (John Holloway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (John Buckner, chairman)

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (Friday, Nov 21, 1712)**

Filing deadline set for Thursday October 30<sup>th</sup> (established on Thursday, October 23rd)

**NOV 1713**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (William Robinson, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (John Holloway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (John Buckner, chairman)

Filing deadline set for Friday November 13<sup>th</sup> (established on Friday, Nov 6th)

**NOV 1714**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (William Robinson, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (John Holloway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (John Buckner, chairman)

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (Thursday, Dec 23, 1714)**

Filing deadline set for “this day seven night at furtherest” (established on Wednesday, Nov 17th)

**AUG 1715**

“Mr Peter Beverley, speaker of the House for the two former assemblies, failed of re-election to this position, his place being taken by Mr. Daniel McCarty, a new man. Mr. Beverley, indeed, was excluded from the House altogether, for, having failed of election from Gloucester the county he formerly represented, he was returned by the inchoate corporation of William and Mary College, and the House decided that the college not having sufficient number of matters and still being under the control of trustees, was not entitled to representation. Mr. Gavin Corbin and Mr John Clayton, both new men, were made chairmen of the committees of privileges and elections and propositions and grievances, respectively, and Mr George Marable was placed at the head of the committee of public claims after the decision was reached that Mr Beverley was not rightfully a member of the House, Mr Beverley having up to that time acted as chairman.”

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gavin Corbin, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (John Clayton, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (George Marable, chairman)

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (Tuesday, Sept 6, 1715)**

Filing deadline set for “this day seven night at furtherest” (established on Thursday, Aug 4th)

**APR 1718**

(Governor) “Spotswood had dissolved his former Assembly in a high rage on account of the insistence of the House on devoting its time to the consideration in its own way of the questions it thought most important, to the exclusion of the one recommended by the governor. He hoped by an appeal to the country to find himself provided with a House of Burgesses more inclined to look at questions through his lenses.”  
“The number of members of the House during this Assembly was fifty-two (52), instead of fifty-one (51), the number for the preceding Assembly after Mr. Peter Beverley had been compelled to withdraw, the gentleman elected to represent William and Mary College being now allowed to take his seat. The reasons for the rejection of a member for William and Mary were as strong as they had been at the meeting of the preceding Assembly, for the college had not yet been turned over by the trustees to the president and masters, but the gentleman who was formerly returned was Mr. Peter Beverley, a friend of the governor’s; now, no doubt, Commissary Blair, who as

president carried the vote of the college in his pocket, had given this vote to a determined opponent. Mr Daniel McCarty was re-elected speaker, and toward the close of the session the House resolved that the sum of 100 pounds out of the money in the hands of the treasurer be given him. This was probably to reconcile him to his failure of election to the office of treasurer, an office usually held by the Speaker of the House. Owing to the feeling existing at the preceding meeting of the Assembly and at this one, as at the following meeting, no bill naming a new treasurer could be passed, and therefore Mr Peter Beverley, not now a member of the House, continued to hold this responsible and lucrative office. Mr John Clayton, probably the best educated and most talented member of the former House, had failed of re-election from Jamestown, being succeeded by Mr. Archibald Blair, brother of Commissary Blair. Mr. Clayton's position at the head of the committee of propositions and grievances was taken by Mr Gawin Corbin. The governor charged that the principal papers proceeding from the House at this session were written by members of the Council, as that many of the measures adopted by the House had their origin in the brains of enemies of the upper chamber. The clerk of the House at the beginning of the sessions was Mr Thomas Eldridge, who was very soon, however, succeeded by Mr John Randolph, subsequently the distinguished Sir John Randolph. Mr Richard Buckner, the former clerk, had fallen under the grave displeasure of the House because he had inserted in the Journal of the former session as a part of the proceedings the closing address of the governor. When called before the House to give reasons for doing this, he explained that it had been done by the special order of the governor. He was discharged from custody on the payment of fees. Since the clerk of the House was an appointee of the governor, Mr Buckner could no doubt at the beginning of this session have been named for the position. Knowing the feeling, however, he preferred not to continue in office."

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (George Eskridge, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Gawin Corbin, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Henry Harrison, chairman)

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (May 30, 1718)**

Filing deadline set for Tuesday, April 29th (established on Thursday, April 24th)

**NOV 1718**

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (George Eskridge, chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (Gawin Corbin, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Henry Harrison, chairman)

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (Nov 28, 1718)**

Filing deadline set for "Friday next at farthest" (established on Wednesday, Nov 12th)

**NOV 1720**

"Mr. Daniel McCarty, Speaker of the House at the preceding session, had not been returned by the Sheriff of Westmoreland as elected to this Assembly<sup>5</sup> and when on the first day of the session it became necessary for the House to choose a Speaker, of the two candidates, Mr. John Holloway and Mr John Clayton, both able men, the former was successful. Mr. Holloway by means of successive re-elections was continued in this important position for fourteen years. He was far from being a friend of Governor Spotswood's, having in 1718 been, as he claimed, removed by Spotswood from the position of judge of the court of vice admiralty, and was then seeking re-appointment at the hands of the Lords of the Admiralty. Mr John Clayton, an abler man and, according to Spotswood, a more honest one, had been appointed to succeed Mr Holloway on the bench. It is significant at any rate that Mr Holloway was chosen, a result suggesting a doubt that

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<sup>5</sup> "After a very close contest, however, Mr. McCarty was, late in the session (December 8), declared by the House to have been elected. A very interesting question decided in this case was whether the House had the right on a complaint of an undue election to inquire into the freehold of the electors. Another was whether in an election contest it was competent for justices of the peace of the county to take the depositions. Both questions were decided in the affirmative."

the pacification brought about between the two factions in the Colony was anything more than superficial. ... The session was distinguished as one at which a great deal of hard work was done, public business, owing to the bickerings of the immediately preceding Assembly, having greatly accumulated. The peace which had been declared between the two factions (the country's friends and the governor's friends) although it may not in reality have been characterized by sincerity, assured the transaction of this business without unseemly interruptions. Mr. John Clayton, the defeated candidate for the speakership, was made chairman of the most important committee of the House, that of propositions and grievances, and to his lot fell the duty of writing the address of the House in reply to the governor's opening speech, a duty which he performed in the most graceful and satisfactory manner."

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gawin Corbin chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (John Clayton, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Henry Harrison, chairman)

**A Committee to proportion the several tobacco claims (Dec 20, 1720)**

Filing deadline set for "*Tuesday next*" (established on Friday, Nov 4th)

**MAY 1722**

(Wednesday, May 9, 1722) "*Ordered that all committees of the last session be revived and that they have power to adjourn from day to day and to send for such persons, papers and records as they shall from time to time think necessary.*"

**Committee on Elections and Privileges** (Gawin Corbin chairman)  
**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** (John Clayton, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Henry Harrison, chairman)

**A Committee to examine a petition of Lawrence Smith Jr to enable him to sell certain intailed lands for payment of his just debts upon settling other lands of greater value to the same uses (May 30, 1722)**

Filing deadline set for "*Friday next*" (established on Wednesday, May 9th)

**MAY 1723**

**Committee on Privileges and Elections** (William Randolph, chairman)  
*"That a Committee of Privileges and Elections be appointed of these persons following ... and they are to meet as often as they find it necessary and to take into their consideration all such matters as shall or may come in question touching returns, elections and privileges and to report their proceedings with their opinions therein to the House from time to time and the said Committee is to have power to send for witnesses, person, papers, and records for their information."*

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** ( Daniel McCarty, chairman)

*"That a Committee for Propositions and Grievances be appointed of the persons ... and they are to meet and take into their consideration all propositions and grievances which shall be offered to the Assembly and to report their proceedings with their opinions therein to the House from time to time. And the said committee is to have power to sit from day to day and to send for person, papers, and records –*

*Ordered that the said committee do prepare and draw up the address to his Majesty and also the address to the Governor."*

*"Ordered that the Committee for Propositions and Grievances inspect what laws are expired and near expiring and report their opinion to the House which of them are fit to be revived or continued."*

**Committee for Public Claims** (Henry Harrison, chairman)

*"That a Committee for Public Claims be appointed of the following persons ... and the said committee are to meet and to take into their consideration all matters concerning the public claims of the country and to report their proceedings with their opinions therein to the House. And the said committee is to have power to sit from day to day and to send for persons, papers, and records and they are to inspect the Report of the Committee for Public Claims of the last*

*session of Assembly and make report to the House of any matter they shall find therein necessary to be further considered this Session.”*

**A Committee to examine a petition of the freeholders and inhabitants of that part of Wilmington parrish which lies on the south side of Chickohominy River in Charles City County praying the said parrish may be dissolved (May 28, 1723)**

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (June 15, 1723)**

**A Committee to examine the enrolled bills (June 19, 1723)**

Filing deadline set for Friday May 17th (established on Friday, May 10th)

*“Resolved that the orders of the last session of Assembly continue standing orders of this session.”*

## **MAY 1726**

*“That all committees of the last session be revised and that they have power to adjourn from day to day and to send for such persons papers and records as they shall from time to time think necessary.”*

**Committee on Privileges and Elections** (William Randolph, chairman)

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** ( William Randolph, chairman)

That the Committee for Propositions and Grievances do draw up an address to be made to the Governor to return him thanks for his most affectionate speech and the great esteem and good opinion he is pleased to express therein for the people of this colony.

*“That the Committee for Propositions and Grievances do inspect the Journals of the last Assembly and prepare and draw up a state of the matters then depending and undetermined and the progress that was made therein and report the same to the house.*

*Ordered that the said Committee (Committee for Propositions and Grievances) inspect such laws as are lately expired or near expiring and report their opinion to the house which of them are fit to be revived or continued.”*

**Committee for Public Claims** (Henry Harrison, chairman)

**A Committee for proportioning the public levy (June 3, 1726)**

Filing deadline set for “Wednesday next at the furthest” (established on Thursday, May 12th)

*“That the orders of the last session of Assembly continue standing orders of the house this session.”*

## **ASSEMBLY of 1727-1734**

**Feb 1, 1727 – March 30, 1728**

“The first session of this (1727-1734) Assembly met in Williamsburg on February 1, 1727 (old style) and was prorogued on March 30, 1728. The membership of the House consisted of fifty-eight (58), two members each from twenty-eight (28) counties and one each from Jamestown (or James City as it was at that time more usually called) and Williamsburg; and there were present on the day of opening forty-six (46), to whom the various oaths appointed were administered by four members of the Council deputed for this duty by the governor.

The standing committees with which the business of the session was begun were the committee of privileges and elections, committee of public claims, and the committee of propositions and grievances. Later on, however, a committee for courts of justice was appointed to inquire into the reasons for delays in the courts of justice and to bring in a bill designed to remedy them. The committee was found so useful that in future sessions it was continued as one of the usual standing committees of the House. The principal bill reported by this committee was the one which on its passage was entitled “An act for preventing delays in courts of justice; for expediting and better settling the proceedings in General Court; and for the more speedy and easy recovery of small debts; and for repealing an act for obligating attorneys, prosecuting suits in behalf of persons out of the country, to give security hereafter therein,’ and was an exceptionally able measure, a fact recognized by the House, as was also the fact that it was the work in the main of John Clayton, the attorney-general, chairman of the committee, in the passage by the House of a resolution – later agreed to by the Council – that the chairman be

given twenty pounds for his unusual services. In order that trial might be made of the law, it was provided that it should be in force for only four years. So well did it stand the test, however, that at the May 1732 session of this Assembly it was enacted, 'That the beforementioned act [that is, the act whose title is given above], and every clause, matter and thing therein contained shall stand and remain in full force, and be perpetual.'

The committee of propositions and grievances, having assigned to it the duty of examining the Journals of the preceding sessions of the House in order to find out what matters had been left undetermined and what temporary laws had expired since the last meeting, in addition to the more usual duties to be expected from a committee bearing its name, was the busiest committee of the session, though the committee of privileges and elections, with a much smaller membership, was, owing to the number and importance of the contested election cases brought to its attention, not far behind.

An interesting election case was that of Mr John Holloway Speaker of the House and treasurer of the Colony. Mr Holloway had been elected a member for York County and also for Williamsburg, a result very unusual but one which the law itself did not render impossible, for the reason that, as in England, it was not necessary that the member of the House be a resident of the county or town he represented. In such a case the member had, of course, to choose which constituency he preferred to sit for, and then it was necessary to order a new election by the other. Mr. Edward Tabb, seeing in the situation a chance, probably, for his own election to the House from York if Mr Holloway could be induced to choose to sit for Williamsburg, gave out that he intended to question the election and return of Mr Holloway from York, but could not be induced by the committee of privileges and elections, though invited to do so, to prefer his charges, saying that he would wait till Mr Holloway had made his choice."

(February 2, 1727)

**Committee on Privileges and Elections** (George Eskridge, chairman)

*"That a Committee of Privileges and Elections be appointed of these persons following ... and they are to meet as often as they find it necessary and to take into their consideration all such matters as shall or may come in question touching returns, elections and privileges and to report their proceedings with their opinions therein to the House from time to time. And all persons that will question any returns, are to do it by Thursday next, or otherwise their complaints shall not be received or heard, unless some sufficient cause can be shown to the House, why they could not prefer such complaint within the time before limited. And the Committee are to have power to send for person, papers, and records for their information."*

**Committee for Public Claims** (William Bridger, chairman)

*"That a Committee for Public Claims be appointed of the following persons ... and the said committee are to meet when they shall find it necessary, and adjourn from day to day; and to take into their consideration all the public claims, which shall be presented to the House during this session, and to report their proceedings, with their opinions thereupon to the House, when they have gone through all the said Claims. And all persons that have any claims, which are legally certified, are to deliver the same to the Clerk of this House by Thursday next, or otherwise they shall not be received without the leave of the House. And he is to deliver the Claims to the of course. And the Committee are s to have power to send for persons, papers, and records for their information."*

**Committee on Propositions and Grievances** ( Henry Harrison, chairman)

*"That a Committee for Propositions and Greivances be appointed of the persons ... and they are to meet when and they shall find it necessary, and to adjourn from day to day; And to take into their consideration all such propositions and grievances as shall come legally certified to this Session, and to report their proceedings with their opinions thereupon to the House from time to time. And all such propositions and grievances are to be delivered to the Clerk of this House by Thursday next, and none to be received after that time without the particular leave of the House: And he is to deliver the said propositions and grievances to the committee of course. And the said Committee are to inspect the Journals of the last session of the last Assembly ; and to prepare and draw up a State of the matters then depending and undetermined, and the progress that was made therein, and to report the same to the House. And they are also to examine what laws have expired since the last session of the last Assembly, and to inspect such temporary laws as will*

*which of expire at the end of this Session of Assembly and Report the same to the House with their opinions wh ich of them are fit to be revived or continued. And the Committee are to have power to send for person, papers, and records for their information –*  
*Ordered that the said committee do draw up an address to the Governor, and also an Address to the King, upon the resolutions of the House.*  
*The Orders of the last House of Burgesses were, upon a motion read and resolved that the same be standing orders of this House.”*

(February 10, 1727) **Committee on Courts of Justice** ( the Attorney General, John Clayton, chairman)

*“Ordered that a Committee for Courts of Justice be appointed of the following persons .. And they are to sit in the Clerk’s Office, and to inquire into the methods of proceedings in the Courts of Justice and the occasions of the delays therein, and to prepare a Bill for amending th: And the defects of the laws now in force relating to the several courts of the colony, and for the expediting of business: And the Committee are to appoint a Clerk to attend them, and to have power to send for persons, papers and records for their information.”*

(March 2, 1727) **Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (George Eskridge, chairman)

*“And the committee are to prepare and bring in a bill for raising a public levy.*

**Committee to Examine the Treasurer’s Accounts**

*Ordered, That the Treasurers accounts be referred to a Committee, and that they do examine the same, with the Vouchers, and report their opinions thereupon to the House. And a committee was appointed accordingly.”*

**May 21 – July 9, 1730**

*“The second session of this Assembly continued from May 21 through July 9, 1730. The membership of the House showed an increase of five over what it had been the preceding session, Caroline and Goochland counties, erected by the Assembly at their former meeting , sending representative, and a member sitting for William & Mary College, which now, the affairs of the institution having been placed by the trustees in the hands of the president and masters, had by charter the right to representation.”*

(May 21, 1730) *“Ordered that all the standing committees of the last session be revived and they are to meet and adjourn from day to day and to have power to send for persons, papers, and records.”*

Special case – right of members to serve as sheriffs

*“A very important question demanding the attention of the House at this session was that of the right of a member to hold office as a Sheriff. It came up for consideration owing to the fact that since the close of the preceding session several members of the House had accepted appointments and where then holding office. A special committee appointed to search the Journals for precedents, reported two cases showing that in the past service in the two positions had not been permitted, and an act was passed without difficulty prohibiting any sheriff from sitting as a member of the House , and exempting members from appointment as sheriffs. The act also provided that the acceptance by a Burgess of a position of profit under government rendered the election void. The burgess might, however, be reelected by his constituents. In all this, of course, English precedent was closely followed.”*

Examined by a special committee chaired by Nicholas Meriwether

Special committee *“be appointed to prepare and bring in the said bill for amending the staple of tobacco”* chaired by the Attorney General, John Clayton. The said bill being *“a Bill ... to make it Felony without benefit of Clergy to burn or break open and rob any store house, warehouse or tobacco house and for making all accessories to such offenses liable to the same pains and penalties as the principle might be, although such principal be not convicted or attained.”*

**Committee to Examine the Treasurer’s Accounts** (Robert Bolling, chairman)

*Ordered, That the Treasurers accounts be referred to the consideration of a Committee, and that*



*they do examine the said accounts and report the balance it shall appear to them to the House.”*

**May 18 – July 1,  
1732**

“Since Prince William County had been established at the second session of the Assembly, and Brunswick (formed by law passed in 1720) was now for the first time represented the membership of the House was 67.”

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (George Eskridge, chairman)

*“Ordered That the Committee of Privileges and Elections be revived, to consist of the following persons: ... And they are to meet when they think fit; and to take into their consideration all such matters as shall or may come into Question, touching Returns, Elections, and Privileges; and to report their Proceedings, with their Opinions therein, to the House, from Time to Time; And the said Committee is to have Power to send for Witnesses, Person, and Records, for their Information.”*

**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (John Clayton, chairman)

*“Ordered, That the Committee of Propositions and Grievances be Revived, to consist of the following persons: ... And they are to meet when they think fit, and to adjourn from Day to Day; and to take into their consideration all Propositions and Grievances, which shall come legally certified to this Assembly; and to report their Proceedings, with their Opinions thereupon to the House, from Time to Time. And all such Propositions and Grievances are to be delivered to the Clerk of the House,, and by him to said Committee, of Course: And the said Committee are to have Power to send for Person, Papers, and Records, for their Information.”*

**Committee for Public Claims** (Robert Bolling, chairman)

*“Ordered, That the Committee for Public Claims be Revived, to consist of the following Persons: ... And they are to meet when they find it necessary, and adjourn from Day to Day; and to take into their Consideration all Public Claims which shall be presented to the House during this Session; and to report their Proceedings, with their Opinions therein, to the House, when they have gone thro’ the said Claims: And all Persons that have any Claims, are to deliver them to the Clerk, and he is to deliver the same to the said Committee, of Course: And they are to have Power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records, for their Information.”*

**Committee of Courts of Justices** (Thomas Lee, chairman)

*“Ordered That the Committee for Courts of Justice be Revived, to consist of the following Persons: ...And they are to meet and adjourn from Day to Day; and to take into their consideration all Matters relating to Courts of Justice, and their Proceedings; and to inspect the Journals of the last Session, and to prepare and draw up a State of the Matter then depending and undetermined, and the Progress that was made therein; and to report the same to the House: And they are also to examine what Laws have expired since the last Session, and to inspect such Temporary Laws as will expire with the End of this Session; and report the same to the House, with their Opinions which of them are fit to be Revived or Continued: And the Committee are to have Power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records, for their Information.”*

*“The Act made at the last Session, entitled, An Act to disable any Sheriff, or other Person, to sit as a Member of the House of Burgesses, who shall accept any Office of Profit in this Colony, after his Election; and exempting the Members of the House of Burgesses, from being made Sheriffs; was read. And the House was acquainted, that several of the absent Members had served as Sheriffs for several Counties, since the last Session of Assembly: but were now discharged from their Offices; and waited to know the Pleasure of the House, whether they might take their Places: And after a Debate, the Question was put That any Member of this House, having since the last Session served as a Sheriff, but before the Beginning of this Session discharged from his Office, be by the said Act, disabled to sit and vote in this House? Resolved in the Affirmation.”*

Having decided this question the House sent a message to the Governor expressing the desire that writs be issued ordering new election for:

- The County of Elizabeth City (to replace Mr Robert Armistead, who, since the last Session, hath served as Sheriff for the County of York);
- The County of Essex (to replace Mr Salvator Muscoe, who served as Sheriff for the said county);

- The County of New Kent (to replace Mr Richard Richardson who served as Sheriff for the said county);
- The County of Warwick (to replace Mr William Roscow, who served as Sheriff for the said county);
- The County of Middlesex (to replace Robert Kemp, who since the last Session, hath accepted the Offices of Clerk of the General Court, and Secretary's Office, and Clerk of the County of James City);
- The County of Accomac (to replace Mr William Andrews, who, since the last Session hath accepted the office of an Inspector);
- The County of Northampton (to replace Mr Peter Bodoin who, since the last Session hath accepted the office of an Inspector);
- The County of Hanover (to replace Mr John Syme, deceased)
- The County of James City (to replace Mr Joseph Egglestone, deceased);
- And two burgesses for the County of Isle of Wight (to replace Mr William Bridger, deceased, and Mr Joseph Godwin, who, since the last Session, hath accepted the Office of an Inspector).

**Aug 22 – Oct 4,  
1734**

“The fourth and last session of this Assembly began August 22 and ended October 4, 1734. It was the longest session of a General Assembly held up to that time since the Assembly was instituted, and the work done was of very great importance. The first entry in the Journal is to the effect that Sir John Randolph had resigned his position of clerk of the House of Burgesses and that Benjamin Needler, by virtue of a commission from the lieutenant governor, had succeeded him. Though Randolph had not succeeded in his mission to England, the opposition to an excise law on the part of the English people being at that time too great to be overcome, he had conducted himself in such a way as to win the approval of the English ministers, by whom he was recommended to the king for knighthood. Returning to Virginia, he saw before the opening of this session a good opportunity for further advancement in the public service, for Mr. John Holloway, the Speaker of the House, was about to retire, and there were various vacancies in the membership of the House, occasioned either by death or the acceptance of offices of profit under government, to any one of which he – such as his prestige – might probably be elected. Hence his resignation from the position of clerk of the House. On the day on which the session began, among the new writs which it was ordered that the governor be asked to issue for filling vacancies, was one for William & Mary College, a corporation close at hand and composed of only six or eight voting members. The governor issued his writ at once, the election took place at once, and Sir John Randolph the next day qualified as a member of the House, and on the day following Mr Holloway having handed in his resignation, was elected to the speakership, and later on in the session to the treasurership. The speech made by Sir John Randolph in accepting the office of Speaker is an admirable one of its kind, showing him to have been a man of unusual ability, fully worthy of the esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries and of the success which crowned his efforts.

The reason given by Mr Holloway for his resignation was the condition of his health, but it was soon found – and must have been suspected before the opening of the session – that his accounts as treasurer were not in a satisfactory condition. Full examination proved there was a shortage of one thousand eight hundred and fifty pounds, which his bondsmen were required to make good. Mr Holloway having assigned them for their indemnity various mortgages, judgments and other securities, and confessed a judgment to them in the General Court for the sum of five thousand pounds, and in addition, assigned to trustees all his estate for the satisfaction of his debts to his bondsmen and all other debts, a provision was, on the petition of these bondsmen, inserted in the “Act for appointing a treasurer, and for other purposes therein mentioned” that the new treasurer be allowed to receive these securities and recover on them at once so much as should be needed to make up the amount of the shortage, the bondsmen not being proceeded against. The money needed immediately to discharge sums owed by the government and payable from the duties on liquors and slaves the treasurer was to borrow. Mr Holloway, having given up his whole fortune, was not prosecuted criminally. It is doubtful, indeed, if there was a law under which he might have been proceeded against. But, in fact, the feeling seems to have been that he was unfortunate

rather than criminal and since he had for many years served the people faithfully and well, he should now in his old age, in the time of reverses brought about by unwise loans, and in the time of his physical and mental deterioration, be an object of commiseration rather than condemnation and contempt. This feeling was well expressed in a communication of the Council to the House asking that there be inserted in the 'Act for appointing a new treasurer, and for other purposes therein mentioned' then under consideration, a clause granting Mr Holloway fifty pounds per year for his services the two preceding years in settling the accounts of the inspectors of tobacco, a service for which he had not been paid, although in the act then under consideration it was provided that the new treasurer for similar services in the future should receive fifty pounds a year. A motion to this effect had already been defeated in the House, but now the recommendation of the Council was readily agreed to."

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (George Eskridge, chairman)

*"Ordered, That the Committee of Privileges and Elections be Revived, to consist of the following Persons: ... And they are to meet when they think fit, and to take into their Consideration all such Matters as shall or may come into Question, touching Returns, Elections, and Privileges; and to report their Proceedings, with their Opinions therein, to the House, from Time to Time: And the said Committee is to have Power to send for Witnesses, persons, and Records, for their Information."*

**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (John Clayton, chairman)

*"And they are to meet when they think fit, and to adjourn from Day to Day; and to take into their Consideration all Propositions and Grievances that shall come legally certified to this Assembly; and to report their Proceedings, with their Opinions thereupon, to the House, from Time to Time: And all such Propositions and Grievances are to be delivered to the Clerk of the House, and by him to the said Committee, of Course: And the said Committee are to have Power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records, for their Information."*

**Committee of Public Claims** (Robert Bolling, chairman)

*"And they are to meet when they find it necessary, and to adjourn from Day to Day; and to take into their Consideration all Public Claims which shall be prefer'd to the House during this Session; and to report their Proceedings, with their Opinions therein, to the House, then they have gone through the said Claims: And all Persons that have any Claims, are to deliver them to the Clerk, and he is to deliver the same to the said Committee, of Course: And they are to have Power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records, for their Information."*

**Committee on Courts of Justice** (John Robinson, chairman)

*"And they are to meet, and adjourn from Day to Day; and to take into their Consideration all Matters relating to Courts of Justice, and their Proceedings; and to inspect the Journals of the last Session; and to prepare and draw up a State of the Matters then depending and undetermined, and the Progress that was made therein; and to report the same to the House: And they are also to examine what Laws have expired since the last Session, and to report the same to the House, with their Opinions which of them are fit to be revived or continued: And the Committee are to have Power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records for the Information."*

(August 27, 1734) *"Ordered that it be a further instruction to the Committee for Courts of Justice, That they do inquire into such temporary laws as may be near expiring after the end of this session of Assembly; and report their opinion to the House which of them are fit to be continued."* Previously this was a charge of the Committee on Propositions and Grievances.

7 members deceased since last session George Nicholas (College of William & Mary), Archibald Blair (James-town), Charles Burgess (Lancaster), Nicholas Smith (King George), William Strother (King George), Richard Buckner (Caroline), John Fitzhugh (Stafford)

2 members appointed to His Majesty's Council – John Tayloe, Esq (Richmond) and Thomas Lee, Esq (Westmoreland)

William Crawford (Norfolk) not seats since last Session he hath accepted and executed the Office of Sheriff of said County; and

Thomas Marshall who since last Session hath accepted the Office of an Inspector.

**ASSEMBLY of 1736-1740**

**Aug 5 – Sept 22,  
1736**

“The membership of the House consisted at this session of 71, the counties of Orange and Amelia having come into existence since the close of the last session of the preceding Assembly, of whom sixty were present on the first day. Sir John Randolph was elected speaker, though with some opposition. His speech of acceptance and the speeches made by him throughout the session were of the same high order of excellence as his speeches made at the preceding session, quite surpassing those of the governor, the only other speeches reported in full, and showing a thorough understanding of the theory of representative government and its practice in Virginia.”

“At this opening session the committee on privileges and elections was an important one, having under consideration first and last nearly a dozen contested election cases, several of which brought to light a peculiar species of bribery, namely, the transfer to a citizen just before the election of a sufficient amount of land to entitle him to vote on the understanding that he would vote in a given manner. This abuse led to the passage of the ‘Act to declare who shall have a right to vote in the election of burgesses to serve in the General Assembly, for counties; and for preventing fraudulent conveyances in order to multiply votes at such elections’ whereby only the owner of one hundred acres of unimproved land or twenty-five acres of land having a house on it and cultivated, the same having been owned for at least one year before the election (when not coming by decent, marriage, marriage settlement or bequest), or the sole owner of a house and lot in a town or city, could vote in an election for the House; and when required, had in these various cases show that the House took cognizance to the very fullest extent of the qualifications and election of its members, not only deciding whether a member was legally elected or whether a member’s character was such as to unfit him for service, but also going to the extent of punishing those who interfered in an election or failed in the performance of duty in reference to one. For instance, the Sheriff of Hanover reported to the House that it had been impossible to hold an election in his county because of the riotous conduct of the crowd gathered at the polls. The three men named by him as being mainly responsible for disorder were sent for in custody of the sergeant at arms to answer for their misdemeanor. The sergeant at arms found one of these men confined in the Hanover jail, but the other two were brought before the bar of the House. Humbly acknowledging their errors and promising future good behavior, they were released from custody on the payment of them of fees, which were not required of the other, since several of the members of the House testified to the man’s usual sobriety and good conduct. Another example was that of Thomas Ro, an inspector of tobacco at a warehouse in Caroline county, who was charged with having threatened certain voters that he would not pass their tobacco unless they voted for the candidate for the House whom he favored. Mr Roy was sent for to answer his ‘misdemeanor and breach of the privileges’ of the House. He petitioned the House praying to be heard with witnesses, and his prayer was granted, the case being referred to the committee of privileges and elections for consideration, which, after hearing Roy and others, recommended in their report to the House that Roy be discharged out of custody, paying fees, and the House so ordered. An example of the punishment of an officer for irregularity in an election is to be seen in the case of Mr Francis Heyward, who, when Sheriff of the county of York, had been guilty of leasing out small parcels of land a short while before the election, for the purposes of qualifying persons to vote. It was resolved that he in so doing had ‘acted corruptly, against law, and the duty of his office,’ and it was ordered that he be brought to the bar of the House, reprimanded by the chair, and that he then be discharged, paying fees. Mr Heyward’s case was the one particularly which led to the passage of the law regulating the election of burgesses.”

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (John Blair, chairman)

**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (John Robinson, chairman)

**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Gawin Corbin, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Edwin Conway, chairman)

**Committee appointed to prepare and draw up a State of the Duty upon Slaves, and the several Payments that have been made, with the amount thereof,** (Charles Carter, chairman)

**NOTES**

**Nov 1 – Dec 21,  
1738**

“The second session lasted from November 1 to December 21, 1738. The first business transacted by the House was the admission as a member of the newly elected burgess from the borough of Norfolk, among the privileges granted this corporation by its charter, and expressly confirmed to it by act of the General Assembly passed at the preceding session, being the power to elect one burgess to the General Assembly. Since this was the only additional burgess provided for by the General Assembly at their preceding session, the membership of the House at this session was 72.

The member from Norfolk, as well as such other members as while the session was in progress were elected to fill vacancies in the House, was compelled to take the customary ‘oath of a burgess’ in addition to the oaths required by law.<sup>6</sup> This was the last session of the House, however, at which the oath of a burgess was administered. This was a special oath which was used for the first time probably in 1652, at an Assembly meeting soon after the Colony had made its submission to Parliament, and which had (its form however, having been somewhat changed in 1666) been in use ever since.”

“At this session of the Assembly an attempt was made to have a law passed for the removal of the seat of government from Williamsburg to some place more convenient, but since the advocates of removal could agree on no place, some favoring Bermuda Hundred and others West Point, the scheme fell through.”

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)

**Committee for Public Claims** (John Blair, chairman)

**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Henry Fitzhugh, chairman)

**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Gawin Corbin, chairman)

**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (William Beverley, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Edwin Conway, chairman)

**Committee appointed to prepare and draw up a State of the Duty upon Slaves, and the several Payments that have been made, with the amount thereof, be revived** (Charles Carter, chairman)

#### **NOTES**

**May 22 – June 16,  
1740**

“The usual proportional amount of time was taken up at this session in the consideration of cases involving the privileges of members of the House and the election and return of members, in one at least of the former the House insisting on privilege to a degree much more extended than would probably be asserted by a similar body at the present time, and in the latter showing a most commendable regard not only for their own privileges but also for the rights of the whole people. As proof of this, the case of John Parker and that of Mr Beverley Whiting may be cited. John Parker assaulted a servant belonging to Mr Harrison, a member of the House, and spoke disrespectfully of Mr Harrison himself. It was resolved by the House that he was guilty of a breach of the privileges of the House, and he was compelled to acknowledge his offense and on his knees ask the pardon of the House and of Mr Harrison. Mr Whiting was returned as a member of the House from Gloucester, but on contest it was brought out, among other things, that he had been guilty of one or two infractions of the election laws (including the promise to pay the fines of several voters remaining away from the polls), and that his friend, Captain Robert Bernard, had also been guilty, though whether or not at Mr Whiting’s instance did not appear. Mr. Whiting was declared not duly elected, and Captain Bernard was compelled to ‘make an acknowledgement of his offense and breach of privilege, and ask the pardon of the House for the same.’ An interesting case in which the rights of the people were involved rather than the privileges of the members of the House was the case of the justices of Prince William county, who refused, contrary to law, to receive and certify two propositions offered to them. The committee of privileges and elections, which had been ordered by the House to investigate the case, reported a resolution to the effect that the justices had ‘acted illegally, arbitrarily, and

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<sup>6</sup> “These were ‘the oaths appointed to be taken by act of Parliament instead of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy,’ the oath of abjuration, and the test.”

contrary to the rights of the people.' Mr Valentine Peyton, one of the justices and at the same time a member of the House, was required to acknowledge his offense and to ask the pardon of the House. The others were sent for in custody of the sergeant at arms, but when they reached Williamsburg were, on their petition setting forth their sorrow at having fallen under the displeasure of the House and calling attention to the fact that they had been put to the expense and trouble of traveling two or three hundred miles and also had suffered great disgrace, discharged."

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Wm Beverley, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Henry Fitzhugh, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Edward Barradall, chairman and Attorney-General)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee appointed to prepare and draw up a State of the Duty upon Slaves, and the several Payments that have been made, with the amount thereof, be revived** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (William Beverley, chairman)

#### **NOTES**

#### **ASSEMBLY of 1742-1747**

**May 1742**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (William Beverley, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Henry Fitzhugh, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Edward Barradall, Attorney General and chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (Charles Carter, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (William Fairfax, chairman)

#### **NOTES**

**September 1744**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (William Beverley, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Benjamin Harrison, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (William Nelson, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine the Treasurer's Accounts** (Charles Carter, chairman)

**February 20 – April 12, 1745**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (William Beverley, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Beverley Whiting, chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (George Braxton, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Beverley Whiting, chairman)

**July 11, 1746**

*"Resolved that all Propositions and Grievances and Public Claims which are certified to this Assembly be referred to the consideration of the next session of Assembly."*

**March 30 – April 18, 1747**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)

**DEFERRED – See NOTES**

**ASSEMBLY of 1748-1749**

**DEFERRED – See NOTES**

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (William Beverley, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Beverley Whiting, chairman)

**ASSEMBLY of 1752-1755**

**February 27 –  
April 20, 1752**

**First session since 1749**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Edwin Conway, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Joshua Fry, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Beverley Whiting, chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (Lunsford Lomax, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy**  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Beverley Whiting, chairman)

**Committee on Revisal – See NOTES**

**Nov. 1, 1753**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Carter Burwell, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Joshua Fry, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Beverley Whiting, chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (Lunsford Lomax, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Joshua Fry, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Richard Bland, chairman)

**Feb. 14 -23, 1754**

**DEFERRED – See NOTES**

**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Richard Bland, chairman)

**Aug 22 – Sept 5,  
1754**

**DEFERRED – See NOTES**

**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Richard Bland, chairman)

**Oct 17 – Nov 2, 1754**

**DEFERRED – See NOTES**

**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Edmund Pendleton, chairman)

**May 1 – July 9, 1755**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Carter Burwell, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (John Ruffin, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Peyton Randolph, attorney general and chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (Lunsford Lomax, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (John Ruffin, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Edmund Pendleton, chairman)

**ASSEMBLY of 1756-1758**

**March 25 – May 5,  
1756**

**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Peyton Randolph, attorney general and chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (Lunsford Lomax, chairman)

**Committee to Examine the Treasurer's Accounts** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Henry Robinson, chairman)

**Sept 20, 1756**

**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Richard Bland, chairman)

**April 14, 1757**

**Committee of Privileges and Elections** (Peyton Randolph, chairman)  
**Committee for Public Claims** (Richard Bland, chairman)  
**Committee of Propositions and Grievances** (Charles Carter, chairman)  
**Committee for Courts of Justice** (Landon Carter, chairman)  
**Committee of Trade** (Benjamin Harrison Jr, chairman)

**Committee to Proportion the Public Levy** (Richard Bland, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (Peyton Randolph, chairman)  
**Committee to Examine the Treasurer's Accounts** (Charles Carter, chairman)

**March 30 –  
April 12, 1758**

**Committee to Examine Enrolled Bills** (John Page, chairman)

Philip Finch – Sergeant-at-Arms and Macebearer (1726-1740)