



## CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

City Council Chambers

Monday, June 10, 2024 at 7:00 PM

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### MINUTES

#### Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Brenda Boyd, Brent Guffey, Donnie Griffin, Nellie Floyd, Michael Brooks and Allen Hook were all present. City Manager, Josh Ross was present, City Attorney, David Smith was absent.

#### Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. John Harper, Senior Pastor at Ragan Wesleyan led the audience in prayer. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Adjustment and Approval of the Agenda

By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the June agenda was approved with the following revision:

- Remove the budget amendments (Items #12 and 13) under the Manager's Report. These items will be ready for the June 2024 Work Session.

#### Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

Mayor Smith opened the floor for public comment. The following came forth:

- Aaron Grosdider of 517 Costner School Rd: Mr. Grosdider addressed the Board regarding the Police Department, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and City sidewalks. Mr. Grosdider stated that he would like to see numbers placed on City vehicles. He would like to see Police address the gambling operation near Interstate 85. Grosdider inquired about why the City placed liens on the homes receiving rehabilitation from the CDBG project and an explanation on the disbursement of funds. City Council recognizes school youth every month. However, Mr. Grosdider stated that the City does not have adequate sidewalks around the schools. Additionally, the City Council meetings should begin at 6:30 PM to allow City businesses to begin promptly at 7:00 PM, after the students from local schools are recognized.

#### Public Comment Acknowledgment

Mayor Smith recognized City Manager, Josh Ross to provide clarification on some items discussed during public comment.

- The CDBG grant was administered by the NC Department of Commerce. This program was recently audited and has to follow federal guidelines. We will receive correspondence in the weeks to come regarding a clean audit. There are fees outside of general housing fees that must be paid, such as administration charges, which are required by the grant's guidelines.

#### Consent Agenda

The following items on the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Brent Guffey:

1. **Approval of Minutes:** City Council will consider adopting Regular Meeting minutes of the May 13, 2024 meeting.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** City Council will consider adopting Work Session Meeting minutes of the May 28, 2024 meeting.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** City Council will consider adopting Special Session Meeting minutes of the May 31, 2024 meeting.

### **Establish a Public Hearing - Rezoning Request (City Center)**

By motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, July 8th, 2024 at 7:00 PM to hear public comment regarding a rezoning request for property located at tax parcels #121595, 121596, 121597 (0.8 acres) from City Center (CC) to City Center Conditional District (CCCD) to accommodate the development of a multifamily townhome community consisting of 19 units.

### **Public Hearing- Proposed FY 2024- 2025 Budget**

As required by NCGS 159-12, the City is required to hold a public hearing prior to adopting the fiscal budget. The City previously held a public hearing at the May 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

By motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote, the public hearing was opened at 7:10 PM.

Mayor Smith led the discussion by thanking City Manager, Josh Ross and various City Staff for going above and beyond regarding the City's proposed 2024-2025 Budget. Mayor Smith additionally asked all present to use proper decorum and limit any disturbances during the public hearing. This is a formal meeting in City Council Chambers. Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone to speak in favor of the 2024-2025 proposed budget. The following individual came forth:

-Pamela Gladney of 502 E. Ohio Avenue: Mrs. Gladney stated that the 10-cent tax increase is hard coming after the County's reassessment last year. However, she has been attending City Council meetings and understands the City's financial issues. It is needed to maintain our infrastructure and employees. The City Council may be worried about losing their seat in the upcoming election. However, the City's financial status must be addressed before there is no seat to protect.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone to speak in opposition of the 2024-2025 proposed budget. The following individual came forth:

- Aaron Grosdider of 517 Costner School Rd: Mr. Grosdider that the budget has many issues that need to be addressed. The top 10% of City Staff members make too much. If we cut their salaries by 20%, we could have additional money to pay debts. We are in debt over \$26 million dollars and our citizens are worried about if they can afford their taxes. Additionally, the City purchased the City Hall Annex and that was unnecessary. The City should create a dog park and generate money from that. Citizens would like to see money spent on clean water and adequate sidewalks. Mr. Grosdider stated that Stinger Park should be sold.

By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the public hearing to consider the adoption of the 2024-2025 proposed budget was closed at 7:18 PM.

### **Ordinance- Proposed FY 2024- 2025 Budget:**

City Manager, Josh Ross presented a modified proposed budget. The City Manager recommends keeping the City's proposed tax rate at \$0.60 per \$100.00 of valuation. However, per City Council direction, the

budget will need to be balanced with a 10-cent increase per \$100 valuation. Mr. Ross provided insight on the City's financial status and why the 15-cent increase was initially requested. Previous management and decisions have caused deficits in the budget. This previous audit detailed this through the Financial Performance Indicators of Concern (FPIC) as identified by the Local Government Commission (LGC). Additionally, City Staff received notification from the Local Government Commission (LGC) that the City is on the Unit Assistance List (UAL) last week. LGC staff will be meeting with City Staff in the weeks to come regarding said FPICs. This modified proposed budget aims to address the FPICs listed and build back the City's cashflow.

As a City Manager who has lived in Bessemer City since he was four, he does not take this tax increase lightly. However, as a City Manager he has a responsibility to recommend a realistic budget. Although the budget has cuts, there is plenty of opportunity for growth. Mr. Ross also thanked the Board and City Staff for the collaboration over the past months to produce a sound budget.

By motion of Nellie Floyd and a 4:2 vote, with Michael Brooks and Brent Guffey in opposition, the 2024-2025 modified proposed budget was adopted. A copy of the budget ordinance is on file at City Hall.

### **Public Hearing – Rezoning Request (Tryon Courthouse Road)**

City Council held a public hearing to hear public comment regarding a rezoning request from property owners for property located at tax parcel #151483 1216 N. Tryon Courthouse Road (.8 acres).

By motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the rezoning request was opened at 7:24 PM.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the rezoning request. The following came forth:

-John Rodden of 5455 Angus Drive: Mr. Rodden addressed Council regarding his family property at N. Tryon Courthouse Road. I used to live on the property and would like to build a family residence on the parcel next to our farm. However, my cousin that lives at 1220 N. Tryon Courthouse Road is failing in health.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the rezoning request. There was none.

By motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the rezoning request was closed at 7:27 PM.

### **Ordinance Amending Zoning Map**

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the zoning map amendment to include tax parcel #151483 as Neighborhood Residential (NR) for the construction of one single family residence was approved. The requested rezoning is reasonable and consistent with the Bessemer City Planning & Economic Development Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The proposed map amendment would not be detrimental to the City and ETJ.

### **Advisory Board Appointments Discussion**

City Clerk, Hydeia Hayes addressed Mayor and City Council regarding all applications received by citizens to serve on an advisory board. City Council made the following appointments:

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, David Bruce Absher was reappointed to serve on the Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments. He will serve as a Board Member until June 30, 2026 and as Board Chair until June 30, 2025.

By motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote, the following appointments were made:

- Katie Love was appointed to serve on the ABC Board Chair until June 30, 2025.
- John Matsik and Alfred Carpenter were reappointed to serve until June 30, 2027.
- Robert Crouch will be removed from the Board due to nonattendance. Terry Holt will complete the duration of his term June 30, 2025.

Light discussion was held regarding Robert Johnson's status on the Board as well. Per Council Member, Brooks Mr. Johnson has missed two meetings and serves as Secretary for the Board.

By motion of Nellie Floyd and unanimous vote, Pearl Brown was appointed to serve on the Downtown Development Board. She will serve until 2027.

By motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote, Huston Sheppard, Kelsey Nixon, and Daniel Guin were appointed to serve on the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. They will serve until 2027.

By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, Andrew Baxter was appointed to serve as the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Chair until June 30, 2025.

By general consensus, Mayor and Council will continue to solicit applications from citizens to fill two vacancies on the Parks & Recreation and Downtown Development Advisory Boards.

### **Resolution- Renaming a Portion of W. Carolina Avenue**

Mayor Smith informed the Board that a petition was received to rename a portion of W. Carolina Avenue by St. James Missionary Baptist Church to "A. Wayne Love Drive". Pastor Wayne Love has been the pastor for over 31 years. A. Wayne Love Drive would begin at the intersection of Ramseur Road and continue west through the property of St. James Missionary Baptist Church (Parcel #121117).

By motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote, the resolution renaming a portion of W. Carolina Avenue was approved. A copy of the resolution is on file at City Hall.

### **City Manager's Report**

City Manager, Josh Ross, addressed Council regarding the following:

- General: We are hosting a youth baseball tournament Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> to Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, we will host a championship the weekend of July 4<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to having visitors in the City and Stinger Park.
- Waste Pro Contract: City Staff is requesting the approval of the Waste Pro contract for garbage service from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2031. This new contract will have a charge for bulk trash, the first 3 items are \$35. The cart price will go to \$16 in the budget. City Staff will spend the upcoming months advising the citizenry of the changes and new charges.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the Waste Pro contract was approved.

### **Council General Discussion**

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council Member, Nellie Floyd thanked Jamie Ramsey and his staff for cleaning up the streets so quickly after the storm. Council member, Donnie Griffin inquired about sidewalks by area schools in Bessemer City.

**Adjournment**

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 PM.

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Becky S. Smith, Mayor

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Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk