



## CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

City Council Chambers

Monday, March 13, 2023 at 7:00 PM

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### MINUTES

#### Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Brenda Boyd, Brent Guffey, Dan Boling, Kay McCathen, Donnie Griffin and Joe Will were all present. City Manager, Josh Ross and City Attorney, Dan O'Shea were present as well.

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

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Olin Byrum, Pastor of First Baptist Church led the audience in prayer. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Adjustment and Approval of the Agenda

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, the March agenda was approved with the following revision:

- Audit Presentation: Tony Brewer, CPA will present to City Council regarding the City's 2022 financial audit (Move to the March 2023 Work Session)

#### Special Presentations

Student Appreciation- Students from Bessemer City High School, Bessemer City Central Elementary School, and Bessemer City Primary School were recognized by their principals and City Council as part of the Student Appreciation Program:

Dr. Sheila Wyont, Principal of Bessemer City High School, and Mayor Smith, recognized the following students of the month: Tristan Gordon, 9<sup>th</sup> grade representative; Brenda Guo, 10<sup>th</sup> grade representative; Megain Millsaps, 11<sup>th</sup> grade representative and Joshua Grant, 12<sup>th</sup> grade representative.

Dr. April Conley, Principal of Bessemer City Central School, and Mayor Smith, recognized the following students of the month: Zain Johnson; 3<sup>rd</sup> grade representative; 4<sup>th</sup> Jalyria Speight; and 5<sup>th</sup> Zara Johnson.

Mr. Bill Kessler, Principal of Bessemer City Primary and Mayor Smith, recognized the following students of the month: Berlynn Pantoja, Kindergarten representative; Briaana Padilla Mencia, 1<sup>st</sup> grade representative; and Nicholas Gibson, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade representative.

Bessemer City's 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary- Mayor, Becky S. Smith informed all present that on March 6, 2023 was the City of Bessemer City's 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Then Mayor Smith read the Bessemer City 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Proclamation a loud and declared March 6, 2023 the City's 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and invited all present to light refreshments.

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the proclamation was adopted. A copy is available at City Hall.

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

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

- Alan Fowler of 433 Besstown Road- Mr. Fowler addressed Council regarding his concerns of a code enforcement issue. A property owner nearby has a conex trailer in his yard. Mr. Fowler was told by City Staff that per the City's code he could not have one.
- Aaron Grosdidier of 517 Costner School Road – Mr. Grosdidier addressed Council regarding City vehicles, the CDBG program, and the Highway 161 sidewalk grant. Mr. Grosdidier requests that all City vehicles be numbered. This would allow for more safety in the City. Mr. Grosdidier indicated that he plans to request a copy of official correspondence between City Staff and NCDOT regarding the Highway 161 sidewalk project. Additionally, he stated that the City has received \$900,000 for the CDBG project and has not begun work.
- City Manager, Josh Ross- Mayor Smith recognized City Manager, Josh Ross to provide clarity on some items discussed during public comment. City Staff in conjunction with the CDBG administrator held the loan closing for the first 5 homes last week. In 2019 the City was awarded a \$750,000 grant to rehabilitate 10 homes. Construction is set to begin within the month. Additionally, per the City's code, conex trailers are not permitted in the City. Code Enforcement staff is currently working to address existing conex trailers that were placed after the adoption of the Land Development Code (LDC) in the City as these are not permitted.

## **Consent Agenda**

The following items on the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Brenda Boyd:

1. **Approval of Minutes:** City Council will consider adopting the Regular Meeting minutes of the February 13th, 2023 meeting.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** City Council will consider adopting the Special Session Meeting minutes of the February 23rd, 2023 meeting.
3. **Street Closure-35th Annual Down Home Festival Ordinance** - City administration is requesting the temporary closure of the 100 Block of West Virginia, East Virginia, West Pennsylvania Avenue, and the 100 Block of North and South 12th Street for the 35th Annual Down Home Day Festival on Thursday, May 11th, Friday, May 12th and Saturday, May 13th, 2023.
4. **Street Closure-Sounds of Summer 2023** - City administration is requesting the temporary closure of the 100 Block of West and East Virginia Avenue and the 100 Block of North and South 12th Street for the 2023 Sounds of Summer Series on the 4th Saturday of each month from April to September from the hours of 2:00PM-10:00PM.

## **One Gaston 2040 -**

Leslie Lee, Executive Director at Gaston Together and Gina Shell, Gaston County presented the One Gaston 2040 initiative to Council. One Gaston 2040's vision is to engage county residents, businesses, and organizations in dialogue about their desires for the future of Gaston County and to use that dialogue, along with an examination of data and trends, to create a vision for what Gaston County can achieve between today and 2040. The One Gaston 2040 staff have identified 5 focus areas: One Gaston Shines, One Gaston Grows, One Gaston Works, One Gaston Connects, and One Gaston Cares. Staff will be reaching out to municipalities to partner with 2040 staff to coordinate, plan, and carry out strategic action to implement the Vision.

**Public Hearing –Economic Development Grant (Foundry):**

City Council held a public hearing regarding an economic development incentive program for Foundry Commercial regarding property located in the Southridge Business Park. The investment is a total of \$15,000,000.00 for a 280,460 square foot facility.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the economic development incentive was opened at 7:41 PM.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the economic development incentive. There was none.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the economic development incentive. There was none.

By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the economic development incentive was closed at 7:42 PM.

**Resolution Approving Incentives Pursuant to NCGS §158-7.1 And To Authorize Bessemer City To Enter Into An Economic Development Agreement (EDA) With Foundry Commercial (Level II Investment):**

Development Services Officer, Nathan Hester informed Council that Foundry is requesting a level 2 investment agreement as the amount of the project has increased. In September 2022 City Council approved a level 1 agreement. The proposed Economic Development Agreement is very similar to other projects in the City like Dhollandia, Tosaf, and Trinity Capital.

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the resolution for the level 2 investment grant for was approved for Foundry Commercial.

**Amendment to Audit Contract:**

City Staff is requesting the approval of an amendment to the audit contract of City financials. The City's 2022 audit has been delayed due to the ABC Board's financial audit being late. The City's audit was due in October 2022 to the Local Government Commission (LGC). However, the audit cannot be submitted until all component units have submitted all of their documents to the City. The auditor will be present at the March 2023 Work Session to present the findings of the 2022 audit.

By motion Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, City Council approved the amendment to the audit contract for the 2022 budget.

**Loan Closing Approval:**

City Staff is requesting the approval of a loan closing regarding the Water Treatment Plant upgrades. The project has been delayed, and will not be completed until the end of the year. However, City Staff would like to close the loan early to avoid an interest payment. Closing this loan will divert funds to USDA. The City will begin paying the loan to USDA.

By motion of Joe Will and unanimous vote, the loan closing for the Water Treatment Plant was approved.

**City Manager's Report**

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

- Budget Amendment #1: By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the budget amendment regarding the HVAC unit was approved.

**Council General Discussion**

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Donnie Griffin commended City Staff on the landscaping and trimming of crepe myrtles in the City.

**Adjournment**

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 PM.

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Becky S. Smith, Mayor

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Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk