



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

City Council Chambers

Tuesday, January 31, 2023 at 3:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Mayor Becky S. Smith called the meeting to order.

Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Joe Will, Kay McCathen, Brent Guffey, Brenda Boyd, Dan Boling, and Donnie Griffin were all present. City Manager, Josh Ross and department heads was present as well. A quorum was present.

Department Head Reports

Bessemer City department heads gave reports on their department's status:

JoD Franklin, Parks and Recreation Director- Mr. Franklin addressed Council regarding the Sounds of Summer concert series and Recreation Sports. City Staff has booked all the concert dates and will be releasing them via social outlets soon. The City will host the 2024 Dixie Youth Girls Softball tournament. The City will be holding the 2023 Dixie Youth Boys Baseball tournament this June. Basketball is going well and we have record number of teams. Light discussion was held regarding the potential of purchasing a 30/32 passenger air break bus from the First Wesleyan Church. City Staff will speak with the Church staff to answer questions about the mileage and price. This will be discussed at the FY 2023-2024 Retreat.

Jamie Ramsey, Assistant City Manager- Mr. Ramsey addressed Council regarding the water plant project, industries in Southridge Business water consumption, and the potential of a new meter reading system. The Water Plant project is going well and the contractors have moved inside the building. Some industries in Southridge Business have significantly reduced their water consumption. City Staff will be meeting with them in the weeks to come. A new meter reading system is available for purchase. This new system would allow City Staff to control citizens' water service. Essentially, staff could turn water service on and off with the flip of a switch for each customer account. Additionally, light discussion was held regarding potential improvements to the dirt road on Sunset Avenue. This item will be discussed at the FY 2023-2024 Retreat.

Nathan Hester, City Planner – Mr. Hester addressed Council regarding Foundry Commercial, Osage Mill, Amazon, and the Creek Cottages. Foundry Commercial is going well and they were recently annexed in to the City. The Creek Cottages on Costner School Road is underway. Also the Osage Mill groundbreaking was a success. This project is off to a great start.

Tom Ellis, Police Chief- Chief Ellis addressed Council about ongoing investigations, department call volume, ongoing investigations, and changes in the Fire department. Since December the department call volume has increased significantly. The Police Department also has two openings. The Fire department now will have honorary and junior firefighters. Current members who have severed the department for

many years will be allowed to have an honorary membership. The junior firefighting program will reach out to the high school to recruit members. The police department is also looking to start a cadet program. Members to the cadet and junior program will need to be at least 16 years of age. Code Enforcement is doing well. Officer Beane and Mauldin have been working diligently to keep up with the case load and develop a new system to prioritize cases.

Diane Jenkins, Finance Director- Ms. Diane addressed Council regarding the financing audit, the HVAC unit, the new payment Kiosk, changes in the Bond rate, and her Certification. The financial audit is almost complete. We have been delayed due to the ABC Store audit not being completed. The HVAC unit in the Annex has been repaired. City Staff at the Annex have been working, although the HVAC heating unit was broken. The new payment kiosk in the drive thru is working. Citizens can now make payments thru the kiosk 24/7. New statutory requirements have been put in place for Finance Directors. They must now be bonded for \$1,000,000.00. Also, Ms. Jenkins certification as a Certified Finance Director was renewed.

108 West Virginia Avenue (BRIG)

Nathan Hester, Development Services Officer addressed Council regarding a Building Rehabilitation Incentive Grant (BRIG) application received from property owners at 108 West Virginia Avenue. Said building owners would like to make substantial repairs to the building to serve as a teleworking space. The applicant has stated per the application that there will be a community space like a conference room, along with private office space. This collaborative environment space will be similar to the one in Belmont called “Tech Works”. If approved applicants will be reimbursed up to \$10,000 after they have completed the needed work and certificate of occupancy. City Staff will bring this before Council at their regular February 2023 City Council meeting.

Establish Public Hearing – 304 E. Cleveland Avenue

Nathan Hester, Development Services Officer addressed Council regarding the establishment of a public hearing on Monday, February 13th at 7:00 PM to hear public comment regarding a voluntary annexation petition received from Home Team Property Management for property located at the following parcel #152621. Said property was built in the right of way of City property. Thus a boundary agreement and annexation is needed to remedy the error with the register of deeds.

By motion of Joe Will and unanimous vote, a public hearing regarding a voluntary annexation petition received from Home Team Property Management will be held on Monday, February 13th at 7:00 PM.

City Manager’s Report

Josh Ross, City Manager- Mr. Ross addressed Council regarding the annual FY 2023-2024 Retreat, Stinger Park, and a code enforcement issue. The annual retreat will be led by Centralina Council of Government (CCOG) staff. Council will review their mission, values, and goals to ensure that department goals are in line with Council’s vision for the year. Stinger Park continues to progress. The engineers and contractors have had to extend the date of completion. Crews are working diligently and should be done by April 2023. In a previous Council meeting the Masonic Lodge located at High Street and South Skyland was discussed. City Staff is working to locate rightful property owners before demolishing the structure. Updates will be given as Staff receive them.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Dan Boling inquired about the 11th Street closure. City Staff informed him that the street was closed as the Osage Mill redevelopment team are now in the construction phase. Once the Mill is redeveloped the 11th Street underpass area will be constructed in to a pedestrian pathway. Council member, Brenda Boyd inquired about the City’s policy on utility accounts. Mrs. Boyd received a call from a local church, City Staff will be in contact with the church

regarding their account. Council member, Brent Guffey inquired about live streaming City Council meetings, rental houses on Texas Avenue, and the City's relationship with towing at Eric's Body Shop.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 PM by motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk