



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

City Council Chambers

Tuesday, October 29, 2024 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: Nellie Floyd Michael Brooks, Allen Hook, Brenda Boyd and Brent Guffey were present. City Manager, Josh Ross, and department heads were present as well. Council member, Donnie Griffin was absent. A quorum was present.

Community Action Project Discussion

Mr. Joseph Dixon of Gaston Community Action addressed Mayor and City Council regarding the installation of a head start program in Bessemer City. In previous years the city hosted the head start program in the community center. Gaston Community Action staff would like to see this partnership revamped, by the city allowing the program to exist in a city building that could be leased for a \$1 a year. All the program would need is a kitchen, bathroom, and 3 or 4 classrooms. Mayor Smith thanked Mr. Dixon and his staff for coming out and informed them that the board would need some time to discuss and see if there was a viable building feasible for this request. Currently, the Boys & Girls club has been displaced as the City's building next to Rock Gym has mold.

Department Head Reports

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

Jamie Ramsey, Director of Operations- Mr. Ramsey and Water Plant Supervisor, Ashton Lingerfelt addressed Council regarding the Water Plants water situation. Currently, the city is using the City of Gastonia water. The iron and manganese levels are elevated in the city's natural water resource. City staff is working on different remedies to stabilize the levels, so that we may utilize our own water. City staff is working on an application for funding to complete a PFAs (forever chemicals). Additionally, Mr. Ramsey informed the Board that the Lead & Copper line replacement project is ongoing. The engineering firm is working on disseminating information to the Bessemer City citizenry about project details. Recovery efforts are underway in response to Hurricane Helene. Clearing and removing disaster debris is a major part of the recovery effort. Contractors for Bessemer City will begin debris collection and removal on Monday, November 4, 2024. We will make two (2) passes to collect the vegetative debris from the hurricane. We will start our pickup on Costner School Road. Also, we are picking up leaves with the leaf vacuum truck.

JoD Franklin, Parks and Recreation Director- Mr. Franklin addressed the Council regarding recent Parks & Recreation events. Fall baseball has wrapped up, and youth soccer is still underway. The city has collected over \$150,000 in concessions since January. The Trunk or Treat event went well, we had a manageable crowd. This year the Christmas in the City festival will be held on Sunday, November 24th at 4 PM, with

the Parade beginning at 4:30 PM, and the Tree Lighting at 6 PM in downtown Bessemer City. Public Works and Parks & Recreation staff are working diligently to get Christmas décor up around town.

Public Safety Director, Tom Ellis- Mr. Ellis addressed the Council regarding the public safety department's response to hurricane Helene. Chief Ellis was proud of the city workers dedication and collaboration to restore the city. Code Enforcement is doing well. Code Enforcers, Don and David are working hard to complete house inspections on new construction. The fleet division is doing their best to keep up with current recalls on city vehicles. This is posing to be a challenge, as parts are backed up. However, the fleet services director, Wade Brown is formulating a plan to maintain and service all equipment. Currently we still have a fire engine at the auto repair shop. Council member, Guffey inquired about the lemon law process, as the truck has been out of commission for over 8 months. Chief Ellis informed him that there was a judicial ruling regarding emergency vehicles and the lemon law in 2021. However, our fire engine does not meet that threshold. Additionally, city staff informed Council that the part needed for repair was ordered and should be delivered by Wednesday. Thus, we expect to have the engine back in our fleet soon.

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, if the fire engine has not been repaired, the attorney will send the repair shop an official letter of suit.

Diane Jenkins, Finance Director – Ms. Jenkins informed the Board that the audit had been completed and turned over to the State. The utility bills were delayed due to hurricane Helene. Thus, the city sent out several call outs informing the public that late fees would be waived this month. The city is in a better financial position this time around than we were last year. Ad valorem taxes are coming in quicker than they historically have.

Hydeia Hayes, City Clerk & Human Resources Director- City Clerk & Human Resources Director, Hydeia Hayes reminded the Board of their completion of UAL training by December 31, 2024 per the Local Government Commission (LGC). Ms. Hayes is available to assist the council with accessing the modules and printing PowerPoints. Ms. Hayes informed City Council that a resignation from the ABC Board chair was received. Thus, the ABC Board currently has two vacancies. Per Council member, Michael Brooks, Ms. Hayes is checking with the ABC commission to see if there is a requirement for Board members to live in city limits. Mr. Brooks was approached by an individual wanting to apply that currently lives outside of city limits. Additionally, the November 2024 regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12th due to the Veteran's Day holiday on Monday, November 11th.

City Manager's Report

City Manager, Josh Ross addressed City Council regarding several items:

- City Staff is working with Gaston County officials to draft an update to the Land Development Code's (LDC) Chapter 5 section 1. An update is needed to include Gaston County administration as the City's floodplain administrators. The existing ordinance does not allow the County to aid the city with floodplain matters. Thus, once a new ordinance is updated, an interlocal agreement can be executed. Per October's regular meeting, city council will hold a public hearing to abolish and establish a new 5.1 section of the Land Development Code (LDC).
- The planning board will meet next week to hear two conditional zoning requests. These items will come before the Board in December if approved by the planning board.
- Sam Cline is working to market the old Rex theatre and the central drug properties. We wanted to list these to see if we can solicit inquiries for purchase.
- There is a community meeting being held by Gaston County regarding the Tryon Waterline project on Thursday, November 14th.

- Also, Development Solutions group (DSG) has reached out to staff regarding a rezoning request for property located at tax parcel #151678 (6.26 acres). The developer plans to request a modification to the project's relief and conditions. According to DSG staff, the natural gas requirement would be costly for the project.
- City staff was approached by a local credit union regarding the purchase of the Annex property. However, City staff would like to see the offer higher than \$650,000. The city has made significant improvements to the property after the initial purchase, making it turnkey for the next owner.
- A capital improvement plan for the City pool is in the works from city staff. In January the city would like to make some repairs before the Summer 2025 season.
- City Manager, Josh Ross commended city staff for their dedication and productivity.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Mayor Smith led the conversation by inquiring about a solution for the on street parking in Ashley Park. The mail carrier has expressed her concern about the crowded street, as it impedes certified mail delivery. City staff informed Mayor Smith that an update to the Land Development Code (LDC) regarding parking on streets.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk