



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

City Council Chambers

Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 2:00 PM

MINUTES

Call to Order

Mayor Becky S. Smith called the meeting to order.

Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Michael Brooks, Brenda Boyd, Brent Guffey, Donnie Griffin, Nellie Floyd, and Allen Hook were all present. City Manager, Josh Ross, and department heads were 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 staffing changes. Andrea Nixon has ended employment with the City to go work for Lowell. During this time, the event and recreation supervisor duties have been split amongst current Parks & Recreation Staff. Council Member, Griffin inquired about staffing needs in his department. Mr. Franklin informed Council that the City has employed part time staff to help work facilities.

Jamie Ramsey, Director of Operations- Mr. Ramsey previously informed Council about the EPA's lead and copper rule. The EPA revised the Lead and Copper Rule to enhance implementation in the areas of monitoring, treatment, customer awareness, and lead service line replacement. The update also enhanced public education requirements and ensured drinking water consumers receive is: meaningful, timely and useful information. The City will have to comply with state regulations and report a survey of lead and copper findings in City lines. City Staff will be bringing a resolution before the Board at the April 2024 Regular Meeting regarding an application for NC Department of Environmental Quality funding to complete said survey. This resolution is requested by Staff to complete the work to comply with the regulation and survey study.

Interviews for Appointed Boards

City Council received board applications from several candidates for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. In an effort to streamline the appointment process, City Council invited applicants to an open interview. Danny Guin was one of the applicants. Mr. Guin was invited in and spoke with City Council about his prior service to the community and the Bessemer City Optimist Club. During COVID, the Bessemer City Optimist Club disbanded and began working with the City's Parks & Recreation Program to offer baseball and other youth sports. Recently, the Bessemer City Optimist Club has made an attempt to restart the club and youth sports programming. Last year the club hosted fall ball for local youth. Thus, Mr. Guin would like to join the Board to serve as a liaison between the City and the Bessemer City Optimist Club. Light discussion was held.

Stormwater Fee Discussion

City Manager, Josh Ross addressed City Council regarding a potential change to the stormwater implementation plan. Mr. Ross proposed two implementation plans to the Board:

Option 1 is to do a three-phase incremental increase. The residential fee would increase from \$3.07 a month to \$6.00. For non-residential, there would be a 50% rate increase on July 1, 2024, and 75% rate increase on July 1, 2025, and 100% rate increase on July 1, 2026.

Option 2 is to increase the residential fee to \$6.00 a month and a full 100% increase of the proposed storm water fee on July 1, 2024 as approved by City Council last year. A study was conducted in 2021 based off impervious surface. This study also generated rate proposals. These fees will support needed improvements in the City's Storm Water Budget.

By general consensus, this will be placed on the April 2024 regular meeting next week for City Council to vote on.

FY 2024-2025 Budget Session #1

City Manager, Josh Ross addressed City Council regarding the proposed budget. Department heads have submitted their draft budgets to the manager. These are under review. City Manager Ross provided the potential goals and priorities per fund for City Council. Light discussion was held between City Staff and Council regarding proposed changes to the Waste Pro, solid waste contract. By general consensus, Manager Ross is permitted to hold conversations with Waste Pro to negotiate a new contract rate. Once this rate is identified, he will bring this before City Council.

Resolution - Rural Economic Downtown Development Grant & Local Government Funding Match

City Staff addressed Council with a resolution regarding funding for improvements to the two properties owned by the City in the downtown area. A 5% match will be needed from the City if grant funds are awarded. City Staff would like to utilize any funds received to retrofit both properties 110 and 112 West Virginia Avenue to make them more marketable.

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, this resolution was adopted.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Michael Brooks informed the Board about the ABC Board and Down Home Festival parking on Pennsylvania Avenue. Council member, Brent Guffey inquired about the potential sale of City property. Council member, Allen Hook inquired about the Planning Board meeting held the night before. City Staff informed him that the meeting was cancelled as the developers were unable to attend.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM by motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk