

REGULAR MEETING

March 14th, 2016

The Bessemer City Council met in regular session on Monday, March 14th, 2016 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chamber of City Hall.

Members Present

Mayor Becky Smith, Council Members: Dan Boling, Kay McCathen, Joe Will, Howard Jones, Alfred Carpenter, and Donnie Griffin. Attorney, David Smith and City Manager, James Inman, were also present.

Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Assistant Pastor of First Wesleyan Church, Mark Tolan, led in prayer. Mayor Smith followed by leading in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the March Agenda

By motion of Kay McCathen and unanimous vote, the March Agenda was approved.

Special Presentations

Oath of Office: Police Officer- Mayor Smith administered the Oath of Office to Devan Shuford, Police Officer with the City of Bessemer City.

Spelling Bee Winner and Runner-Up Recognition: Bessemer City Central- Mayor Smith presented a Certificate of Recognition to McKenzie Bowker, winner of the Bessemer City Central School Spelling Bee and Austin Calhoun, runner-up of the Bessemer City Central School Spelling Bee.

Spelling Bee Winner and Runner-Up Recognition: Bessemer City Middle- Mayor Smith presented a Certificate of Recognition to Aneshia Gano, winner of the Bessemer City Middle School Spelling Bee and Nia Williams, runner-up of the Bessemer City Middle School Spelling Bee.

Special Recognition: Bessemer City High School Staff Member- Mayor Smith presented Ms. Marsha Beattie with a Certificate of Recognition for being School Social Worker of the Year in Gaston County.

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

Mr. James Montgomery, Principal of Bessemer City High School, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to Cheyanne Ferrell, Morgan Jenkins, Chyna Pollard, and Hunter Knight.

Dr. Rebecca Wilson, Principal of Bessemer City Middle School, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to Deasia Brewton, Savannah Friday, Gisselle Varona, Annabel Pardo, Lindsey Swanson, Heather Griffis, Hannah Parton, Marcus Sturgis, Blanco Davila, Andrew Madison, and Leslie Flores.

Mrs. Beth Germain, Principal of Bessemer City Central Elementary, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to Zedrick Barrion, Caitlin Duncan, and Ebanee Brown.

Mrs. Kristi Gornto, Principal of Bessemer City Primary School, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to Kylee Coss, Harley Owens, and Jadon Burdette.

Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

Mayor Smith opened the floor for public comment.

Jim Long, ABC Board Chairman- Mr. Long presented to City Council a report on the Bessemer City ABC Store. Mr. Long expressed that the store has been increasing sales over the past three years. The ABC Board is considering the possibility of relocation the store to a better location. Mr. Long presented Mayor Smith and City Council with a check from the ABC store in the amount of \$2,500 and the annual audit.

Scott Noblett of 109 South Inman Avenue- Mr. Noblett approached Mayor Smith and City Council expressing his concerns about noise from the park and concerns about stray dogs in the City. Mr. Noblett also stated his concerns about construction projects around the City making it hazardous for citizens to walk. A suggestion was made to add a sidewalk along highway 161 to eliminate this hazard.

Consent Agenda

The following items for the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Alfred Carpenter:

- a. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes of February 8th, 2016; Planning Retreat Minutes of February 25th and 26th, 2016; and Special Meeting Minutes of March 8th, 2016.
- b. Request for Overnight Travel- City Clerk/HR/Economic Development Officer, Joshua Ross, to attend the Annual North Carolina Main Street Conference in Goldsboro, NC March 16-18. Events and Senior Coordinator, Adora Alford, to attend the Anne Johnston Institute in Winston-Salem, NC April 25-28.

Ordinance to Vacate and Close Property: 404 East Indiana Avenue

Dave Taylor, Deputy Code Enforcement Officer, explained to City Council the situation at the property. Mr. Taylor distributed information about the property's condition and shared photos. A hearing has already been held for this property. Mr. Taylor advised that he believes the property should be vacated and closed until the property can be fixed up to code. The property's condition poses a safety threat to the resident. Discussion was held.

By motion of Joe Will and unanimous vote, City Council approved the order to vacate and close the property at 404 East Indiana Avenue.

Request for Public Hearing- Rezoning Request

City Planner, Jeffrey Kirchner, presented to City Council two rezoning requests received from the property owner of 1) 321 East Maryland Avenue to change the zoning from C-1 (light commercial)

to I-1 (light industrial) and 2) 601 Gastonia Highway to change the zoning from C-1 (light commercial) to C-2 (highway commercial).

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, City Council approved to have a public hearing for both properties at the April 11, 2016 Regular City Council Meeting. The public hearings will be advertised as required by North Carolina General Statute.

City Manager's Report

Budget Amendments- City Manager, James Inman, presented to City Council a list of budget amendments. The City typically does budget amendments twice per fiscal year. These amendments reflect modifications to the general fund and loan proceeds. These amendments are a shift in general fund expenditures and not an increase in overall general fund expenses.

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, the budget amendments were adopted. A copy of these budget amendments are on file at City Hall.

Fire Department Capital Project Ordinance- City Manager, James Inman, explained this is the ordinance for the fire department expansion project.

By motion of Kay McCathen and unanimous vote, the ordinance was adopted. A copy of this ordinance is on file at City Hall.

Presentation of 2014-2015 Budget Audit- City Manager, James Inman, presented to City Council the 2014-2015 Budget Audit. Mr. Inman explained everything came back good except for concerns with a drop in the City's fund balance two years ago. Mr. Inman explained that the City is working to restore fund balance to what it was and that the decrease in the fund was due to the Mickley Bridge Project.

Council Member Jones asked what the State requires for fund balance. Mr. Inman explained that the North Carolina General Statute requires fund balance to be above 8%; however, the Local Government Commission (LGC) compares the City to other communities of the same size to determine what the fund balance percentage should be. The City's fund balance is currently at 28%. Mr. Inman explained that larger communities have a smaller fund balance and smaller communities have a higher fund balance.

Approval of Contract of 2015-2016 Budget Audit Contract- Mr. Inman requested that City Council Award the 2015-2016 Audit Contract to Collis and Associates.

By motion of Howard Jones and unanimous vote, City Council approved the contract with Collis and Associates for the 2015-2016 Budget Audit in the amount of \$23,000.

Ordinance- Water Line Replacement Project- Mr. Inman explained that the City was approved to receive funding in the form of a low interest loan from the State for replacing old water lines. The project will take some time before starting.

By motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the Capital Project Ordinance was approved. A copy of the ordinance is on file at City Hall.

Existing Projects- Mr. Inman gave an update of existing projects to Mayor Smith and City Council. The update include the West Pennsylvania Avenue Streetscape Project, the Community Center Renovation Project, the Centennial Park Expansion Project, the Fire Department Expansion Project, and the Sewer Line Replacement Project. General discussion was held.

Work Session- Mr. Inman requested that the March 29th, 2016 City Council Work Session be moved to 2:00PM since it will be a budget planning session. By consensus, City Council approved to move the time of the work session. Proper notification will take place to advise the public of this change.

City Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. City Council Member, Joe Will, reminded everyone to vote in the primary.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 8:00PM.

Joshua M. Ross, City Clerk

Becky S. Smith, Mayor