

REGULAR MEETING

October 9th, 2017

The Bessemer City Council met in regular session on Monday, October 9th, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chamber of City Hall.

Members Present

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

Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Mark Tolan, Associate Pastor for First Wesleyan Church led in prayer. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the October Agenda

By motion of Kay McCathen and unanimous vote, the October agenda was approved with no revisions.

Special Presentations

Staff Presentations – Finance & Police Department Bessemer City Manager, James Inman recognized Diane Jenkins, Finance Director for becoming the City's first Certified Public Finance Officer. Mr. Inman invited all present to congratulate Diane on her accomplishment.

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Police Chief, Tom Ellis, and Police Captain Brent Harp all publicly recognized retired Lieutenant Timothy Elmore for his dedication and commitment to the Bessemer City Police Department. Mayor, Becky S. Smith welcomed all present to thank Mr. Elmore for his service. Mr. Elmore provided remarks of gratitude to City Council and City staff.

Bessemer City Fire Department - Mayor Smith and Council recognized the Bessemer City Fire Department for receiving \$212,000 in FEMA's AFG and SAFER grant monies. The Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant was created to aid fire departments with increasing or maintaining the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments' abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by the NFPA (NFPA 1710 and/or NFPA 1720). The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

Additional Grant Presentation - Mayor Smith and Council recognized the Bessemer City Police Department for receiving \$102,000 in grant funds from the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program. The NC Highway Safety Patrol grant covers cost associated with a traffic officer's salary, equipment, car, etc. The City of Bessemer City is one of eight organizations to receive funding in North Carolina.

Student Appreciation- Students from Bessemer City High School, Bessemer City Middle 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. Judy Moore, Principal of Bessemer City High School, and Mayor Smith, recognized the following students of the month: Zariya Gamble for the 9th grade; Derrick Helms for the 10th grade; Ting Zhang for the 11th grade; and Mahogany Hueitt for the 12th grade.

Mrs. Fran Decanal, Principal of Bessemer City Middle School, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to all Middle School representatives: Marshall Tucker for the 6th grade, Kristin Rosejas for the 7th grade, and Megan Sline for the 8th grade.

Mrs. Caroline Black, Principal of Bessemer City Central Elementary, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to all Central Elementary School representatives: Gracie Battle for the 3rd grade and Caiden Gray for the 4th grade.

Mrs. Kristi Gornto, Principal of Bessemer City Primary School, and Mayor Smith, presented certificates to all Central & Primary School representatives: Oswaldo Mendez-Sandoval for Kindergarten, Valery Aguilar Campuzano for the 1st grade, and Jadiel Mares for the 2nd grade.

Consent Agenda

The following items for the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Donnie Griffin:

- Approval of Minutes- Regular Meeting Minutes of August 14th, 2017, Work Session Meeting Minutes of August 29th, 2017, and September 26th, 2017.
- Street Closures- Tree Lighting & Christmas in the City & Parade – City administration is requesting that Council approve street closures for the 2017 Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, Christmas in the City, and Parade.

Greater Gaston Development Corporation

Joel Long, President of the Greater Gaston Development Corporation addressed Council about the group's mission and objectives. Mr. Long informed Council that the organization has made great strides to ensure that Gaston County cities, like Bessemer City, are being advertised and connected with the greater Charlotte area. Mr. Long also informed Council of the Gaston Outside (GO)

campaign, as October is GO month. Throughout the month various activities and venues will be showcased on billboards and social media.

Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

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

- Clifford Paul Ellis of 312 E. Iowa Avenue expressed his dissatisfaction with the Police Department. Mr. Ellis stated when he inquired the spelling of the arresting officers name he was told that it was not public record. Mr. Ellis proceeded to ask Council why he was not given said information, as he felt it was public record.
- Roxanne Mason of 207 E. Maryland Avenue expressed her gratitude to Council and the Police Department as a citizen. Ms. Mason thanked the City staff and Police Department for their hard work and dedication to the City. Ms. Mason noted that City staff could work for other cities with higher salaries, but they choose to work for the City of Bessemer City.
- Teresa Williams of 204 W. Washington Avenue addressed Council about the needs of the Bessemer City Area Boys & Girls Club. Ms. Williams stated that the club's Kindergarten-2nd graders were in need of school materials and the center was under new administration. Ms. Williams informed Council that Kathy Robinson was recently named the new Director, and all inquiries or persons wishing to donate to the center could contact her at (704) 629-5663 or krobinson@bgcgreatergaston.org.
- Debby Ellis of 312 E. Iowa Avenue expressed her concern about a local charging station for citizens with electric vehicles. Ms. Ellis stated that the City should consider obtaining funding to build at least one station for citizens.
- David Lutz of N. 12th Street expressed his support of the wonderful police officers as they contributed to the City being named the 7th safest City in North Carolina. Mr. Lutz stated that the Police Department is doing a great job, compared to the predecessors, Gaston County Police.

Proclamation- Dyslexia Awareness

Mayor, Becky S. Smith read the Dyslexia Awareness Proclamation a loud and declared the month of October 2017 as Dyslexia Awareness Month.

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

Proclamation- Domestic Violence Awareness

Mayor, Becky S. Smith read the Domestic Violence Awareness Proclamation a loud and declared the month of October 2017 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

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

Public Hearing- Infill Development Grant (IDG) Program

By motion of Kay McCathen and unanimous vote the Infill Development public hearing opened at 7:40 PM. Economic Development Officer, Joshua Ross stated that proper notice was given about the hearing and the purpose of the program.

Economic Development Officer, Joshua Ross addressed Council about the IDG Program. Mr. Ross stated that if approved, the program would help fund projects in infill lots within in the City limits. Mr. Ross mentioned that one of the goals of the program is to diversify the housing stock and values.

Attorney David Smith addressed Council regarding the Infill Development Grant (IDG) Program. Mr. Smith stated that according to the State Constitution, a City must not use public funds to improve private property. However, recent case law has provided examples of exceptions that allow municipalities to utilize public funds for the greater good of the public. For example, if there is significant public benefit, such as an increases the tax base, produce jobs, then a project may be done.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor or opposition of the program. There was none. Being no further business, by motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote the Infill Development Grant (IDG) Program public hearing was closed at 7:44 PM.

Adoption of Infill Development Grant (IDG) Program

By motion of Joe Will and unanimous vote, the Infill Development Grant (IDG) Program was approved. A copy of the resolution and program guidelines are available at City Hall.

City Manager's Report

City Manager, James Inman addressed Council regarding the following items:

Sidewalk on Highway 161 from 13th Street to Boston Avenue- Approval Grant for Sidewalk expansion (CMAQ)- City Manager, James Inman requested that Council accept a grant to expand the sidewalk along Highway 161 from 13th Street to Boston Avenue. Said grant requires Council to provide a \$134,000 grant match from the Powell Bill to receive \$527,000 of grant monies.

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, the grant regarding the CMAQ sidewalk expansion was approved.

Approval to accept property donation- 215 West Texas Avenue- City Manager, James Inman informed Council that the property at 215 West Texas Avenue had been donated to the City by the bank. Mr. Inman stated that the bank owned the house and did not wish to maintain nor keep the property.

By motion of Joe Will and unanimous vote, the donated property of 215 West Texas Avenue was accepted.

Accept Traffic Grant- City Manager, James Inman informed Council that a motion was needed to formally accept the grant funds and establish a personnel position. Mr. Inman further stated the monies needed to match the grant had already been accounted for in the budget.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the traffic grant was accepted.

City Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Dan Boling thanked City Manager, James Inman and Chief for their hard work and dedication to the City. Mr. Boling also asked Mr. Inman to check on the shrubbery located by Pizza Galli and Ingles. Council member Joe Will, commended the City Manager and Council for progressive improvements in the City. Council member, Alfred Carpenter commended City Manager, Inman and City staff for a job well done. Council member, Howard Jones commended City Staff for receiving many grants. Council member, Donnie Griffin thanked City Manager and staff for planting the trees in the Vantine Cemetery and the annual clean up in Bessemer City Memorial Cemetery. Mr. Griffin thanked Parks & Recreation Director, JoD Franklin for offering Christian bands during the Community Concert Series.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, Deputy City Clerk