

Chester City Council Meeting
October 28, 2019
Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor Wanda Y. Stringfellow, Council Members Betty Bagley, Annie M Reid, Angela Douglas, Susan Kovas, Carlos Williams, William Killian; City Attorney Edwards; City Administrator Stephanie Jackson and HR Director Carla Roof.

ABSENT: Councilman William King and Councilwoman Tinker.

Call to Order: Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

PRAYER: Councilwoman Reid led in prayer.

CITIZENS FORUM: Forum: Elder Logan Cascadoan – Elder Cascadoan introduced himself to Council as a Missionary, Latter Day Saints and would like to work with Council in any way needed. We are here to help and can be reached at 704-308-8004.

PETITIONERS: The Ansaar House, Inc. Ansaar means helper, I work for God, not for man. It is my job to work for humanity. A mission and methodology were provided for Council's review and a request for financial help was made for his ministry.

Brenda McBrayer – Christmas in Chester will take place on December 6 and 7, 2019. The total cost of this project is \$46,598.43. We will not be able to wrap the trees this year due to funding. Mrs. McBrayer completed a hospitality tax application and requested funding for this project. Mrs. McBrayer indicated that she will need the \$6,000.00 that is currently budgeted for by November 6, 2019. The Hospitality Grant application was given to Mrs. Jackson.

Mayor Stringfellow stated, with no objection, she would like to move item number 1 under New Business up as the next item of business. No objection was made. Item 1 under New Business will be moved up on the agenda.

2017-18 Audit Review –Camp, Moring and Brendle, LLC. Mrs. Brendle reviewed the audit as presented with Council. Mrs. Brendle informed Council that four of the previous findings were removed and four remained. The overall budget has improved.

Departmental Reports

Administrative Report – Mrs. Jackson addressed to Council that the City has a cash flow concern problem and it has been communicated before. We currently have lean months June through December, which we don't have a lot of incoming cash. Mrs. Jackson provided Council with a printout of accounts and outstanding checks. A printout of monthly expenditures and monthly expected revenue. Mrs. Jackson reviewed with Council City credit cards and the current use of the credit cards. Mrs. Jackson communicated to each department head that all credit cards charges must be

preapproved. Several of the charges have not been prior approved. A total of \$3835.70 was not approved by one of the departments. These excessive charges placed a cash flow burden on the city. Mrs. Jackson stated there was one card that was not turned in to her, but she currently has all the credit cards. Councilwoman Douglas wanted to know what the turnaround on the purchase orders was. Mrs. Jackson indicated that if it is hand delivered her, she handles immediately and if it comes through, I front office, it is normally two to three days. Councilman Williams stated as Council members they are responsible to oversee these financial issues of the City. Councilwoman Douglas stated that we need to start to adjust prepare us for the months that cash flow is slow. We should take this serious and we are going to have to do something to move us forward. The new financial firm will be able to help identify some of the issues with financial problems. Discussed a moratorium on spending for the next 6 months with holding off on things that are not essential. After much discussion, Mayor Stringfellow proposed a moratorium on anything that is not essential, only things that must pay. Councilman Williams stated that he has presented this 5 months ago and it was stated that the MASC training was a drop in the bucket. Much discussion took place concerning having the Financial Firm present to Council the financial status before we approve a moratorium. Mrs. Jackson stated, work with me and we can conquer this problem. Discussion took place concerning when the policy is violated. If the policy is violated, are they written up? Department Heads should be accountable for their actions.

Street Lights on Dawson Drive – 18 poles from Lands Tire to Stadium Drive and the cost of \$395.28 per month for 18 lights to be placed. Discussion took place concerning placing the lighting for this area. Much discussion took place concerning the safety and where the money can come from for the lighting. Mayor Stringfellow stated this is essential for the quality of life of the residents of the City. Mayor Stringfellow made a motion to move forward with the street lighting unless there are additional costs, and if there are additional costs, bring back to Council. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The lights will go from Lands Tire to Stadium Drive. The motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing.

CDBG Grant – Mrs. Jackson informed Council that she received feedback on the grant from USDA. The original use of the money was used to build the pavilion with the CDBG and the UADA funds. The USDA funds have to be spent by April 2020. Much discussion took place. Mrs. Jackson requested that the Kitchen Committee and Council go ahead and pay the Architect. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to get a complete set of plans and to close out the project. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Governor's Flood Zone – Mrs. Jackson updated Council that the previous application has been received by the Governor's office and we are one of 43 applications.

Finance: Councilwoman Douglas stated that she previously questioned several items on the landfill costs in Public Works. We are currently two months behind on the landfill bill. Public Works is reporting one amount and the bill is a different amount. Where on our budget report does it show how much we pay CMD for solid waste billing? After much discussion, Mrs. Jackson stated that she would discuss with the Financial group and will report back to Council. Also, discussion took place concerning tracing our

revenue. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated that she has asked for several information items and she has not received them.

Account Transfers – there are several accounts that are not being used and we should dissolve the accounts. We have one account that has \$29,201.75, requesting to withdraw 20k and put in general funds. We will not close this account completely, just transfer 20K to general fund. A recommendation was made to close the Water Works account in the amount of \$27,226.12. A recommendation was made to close Tax Sale escrow account in the amount of \$7224.00 and put in general fund.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to move 20K from the LGIP general fund account to the general fund (First Citizens) and to close the Tax Sale Escrow account and place in the general fund.

Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried with Douglas and Williams opposing.

Fire – no comments

Human Resources – no comments

Police Department – no comments

Public Works – no comments

Recreation – no comments

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve as presented. Councilwoman Bagley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Properties Committee – The Committee will meet the 3rd Wednesday in November at 6:30 pm and December 18, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

Public Safety – Discussion took place concerning detectors to detect gunshots to be placed throughout the City. A recommendation to allow the Chief to apply for grant funding for this project.

Chief Williams presented to Council a program that would allow the police department to use a Police Interceptor for traffic. The vehicle must be on the road 100 miles a month and we will be responsible for maintenance. This will be a 90-day trial. Attorney Edwards addressed several issues concerning the contact with Council. Attorney Edwards wanted to know if our insurance covers the vehicle and do, they allow the hold harmless agreement? The lease payments will be based on the City's revenue. After much discussion, Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve the Interceptor Master Lease for a 90-day trial providing the vehicle is covered under the City. Councilwoman Bagley second the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Recommendation coming from the Public Safety Committee to convert the police radios. The \$6000.00 cost which will come from police fines and fees. After much discussion, Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to convert police radios. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to provide citizens the opportunity to pay tickets electronically. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. After discussion, Mrs. Jackson indicated that we need to allow our CPA to review and make sure this is ok. Councilwoman Kovas amended her motion that E Court Solutions will meet the government accountant's approval. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Works – An estimation of \$3700.00 from SMI to fix the damage to the Wesley Memorial Parking lot. No action was taken.

Recreation – no comments

Economic Development Committee - October is National Women's Business Month. Councilwoman Bagley provided a report to Council concerning HILLarity. A total of 44 vendors participated.

Ad Hoc committee Report – no Ad-Hoc reports.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve the reports as presented. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Forms of Government – Councilman Williams – We are currently under the Council form of Government. Mr. Williams read the statue as written. He read each form of government. Do you know your role as a Council Member and a Mayor. We sometimes forget what our roles are. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated we should elect the Mayor Pro Tempore at the next meeting which would be the swearing in. Executive Session when information gets out to the public, the person that leaks the issue and could be sued and held liable for leaking information from Executive Session.

Strategic Planning – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas – We originally started out on a good start, but we have been slacking. When we are under financial stress, HR problems can destroy us. Listen to our employees and know that we care. It is time for us to do an employee survey. After discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to require our HR Team to work with our Labor Attorney to develop a survey for our employees and to report the overall package to Council at the scheduled February 2020 meeting. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Christmas Float – Mrs. Jackson provided Council with the costs for a float. Due to the financial status, discussion took place concerning not having a float. Council agreed not to sponsor a float.

Second Reading Ordinance 2019-07 Sale City Equipment – Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approved as submitted. Councilwoman Bagley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Take Home Vehicle Policy -- Mayor Stringfellow wanted to know who has take home vehicles. Mrs. Roof informed Council that she is working on providing a listing for Council's review.

New Business

First Reading Ordinance 2019-08 – Manufactured Homes – Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve as presented. Councilwoman Bagley seconded the motion. Discussion took place concerning ranch style homes and the low pitch that they have. After discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

First Reading Ordinance 2019-09 – Adopting a Comprehensive Plan 2019-2029 - Mayor Stringfellow read the Ordinance as presented. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve as submitted. Councilwoman Douglas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

November Council Meeting Dates – Councilwoman Reid made a motion to cancel the November 25, 2019, meeting due to the holidays. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Shatter the Silence Invitation – Safe Passage

Salaries Victims Advocate and Public Relations – This item of business was deferred to the next scheduled meeting.

Executive Session - Personnel – Administrative Department – Councilwoman Reid made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:02 pm. for discussion of a Personnel Matter – Administrative Department. Councilwoman Bagley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to reconvene from Executive Session at 11:30 pm. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried. While in Executive Session, Council discussed a Personnel Matter in the Administrative Department. No action was taken.

With no further business, Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof

