

Chester City Council Special Called Meeting

April 4, 2019, 6:00 pm

Minutes

Present: Angela Douglas, Betty Bagley, Annie M. Reid, Susan Kovas, Carlos Williams; City Administrator Stephanie Jackson; HR Director Carla Roof.

Absent: Mayor Caldwell, Councilman William Killian, Linda Tinker and William Killian; Attorney Edwards.

Call to Order: Mayor Pro Tempore Reid called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Prayer: Councilwoman Kovas led in prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance: Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Pro Tempore Reid read the rules and order of meeting to the audience.

Citizens Forum

Ken Lebbon-119 Sunset Drive – Mr. Lebbon spoke in opposition of DataMax. Why has this not been through the procurement process since there are others who provide the same service?

Mike Shaffer – Barron Funeral - 173 Wylie Street – Mr. Shaffer stated Council is listening but not hearing. The voice of the people has been snuffed out by the will of Council. Stated that Council either represent us or take your sign down.

Sara Caldwell 133 Pinckney Street, owner of BB&C – We have a lot of business in the city that has been lost. Please reconsider DataMax. Everything that is glitters is not always gold.

Alex Dorsey – True Value 125 Church Street – Are we going after wholesaler and retailers? Are we going after everyone? Who are the vendors? I would like a copy of the contract.

DataMax reposed Wholesalers companies are exempt unless they have a plant in the city. Businesses that charges you a tax, they will be required to pay. Businesses are being charged by the what is set forth in the ordinance.

Sandra Martin – How can we have an opportunity to ask our questions when we have not had an opportunity to hear what DataMax has to say? Why do we have a public forum and we only have two minutes to speak? I would like a complete understanding of what they will do and how it will help our city, is it going to bring new businesses in the city? How will it help our business in our city and will this benefit to bring other business in our city to help it grow.? Response the benefit the city will have with the revenue that will generate from this tax. Do you have an example of who would be drawn into this city? We are trying to make businesses compliant. We have a citizen's forum for order, Mayor Pro Tempore Reid stated.

Donnie Clack – Clacks Convenience – 37 years of business license in this city and a family business for 40 years. I have 4 fees that I have to pay currently. What has happened to the City of Chester? They have not collected this before and why is the city doing it now?

Response - This will not affect the businesses that are here in the city.

Rocky Pollard – Pollard Funeral Home – We need to look at money management more properly. We are paying enough in city taxes and business license fees.

Jeff Loftis - 111 West Lacey Street, how can we ask questions if we don't know what we are talking about. Is this another way to line Councils pockets or is this a way to help Chester?

Bobby Monroe – DataMax – Mr. Monroe provided a background for the audience. We find out who is doing business in Chester and we go after companies that come into Chester and not paying a business license. All our phone calls are recorded. Businesses are already paying this license fee in other towns. This will not affect you as a retailer, these businesses come into this city illegal out of compliance. DataMax has 65 companies they represent in SC, West Virginia, Kentucky and we have never had litigation.

Mary Paetro – Cyclone - If I have equipment that is broken and needs fixing, will that person have to buy a business license? If they are required, then the cost will be passed on to me.

Response – We know what the law is. You are supposed to have a business license? Anyone that comes into your restaurant for repairs, etc. They are supposed to get a license. If they are doing business inside of Chester, they are supposed to get a license. Someone coming in to your business to do a service they are required to have a license in the city anyway. Mary Paetro give us an example of who it will affect. Response - The city is small; how do you find them. We have smaller city than Chester.

Is the fee being calculated in Chester? Yes, Chester only.

What happens if they refuse to buy a license? That is a city ordinance that will be enforced?

Donnie Clack – What person in business does not pass it on to the city. Mr. Clack stated it is passed to the business owner.

Johnnie Martin – Stated that Council needs to do their job! You are giving half of the profit to DataMax.

DataMax stated that they have 25 employees. We work with Cities with 5 or more compliance departments and we work with them because we can find businesses they the city cannot.

Karen Shaffer – 133 Wylie Street- will DataMax have to pay business tax? Yes we have to buy a business license.

Alex Dorsey – will companies have to pay business license for delivering a new lawnmower to the city. Yes if they have a nexus in the city they will have to pay. If they deliver like FedEx, no they do not.

Alex Dorsey – We were told at the last meeting the city would be able to collect 90K potential collections, which was stated by Mrs. Jackson.

Barron Funeral Home – Karen Shaffer – We have caskets delivered to us, it comes to Barron's on a company truck? Yes, they would have to have a business license.

Mike Shaffer –had a question about the list that Council received?

Molly McClain Jeter Street – Concerned this was not opened for the business. I would have preferred an opportunity to ask questions, check reviews, etc.

Rocky Pollard – Pollard Funeral Home – You read off a road map to us and you stated there are twelve businesses a month to provide to our city. Who are these companies that you are going to go after. No one has given us names of companies. Response – Until our research is done, we cannot provide names to anyone. This list is the City's, we cannot provide it to you. Mrs. Jackson stated we are not allowed to give out that information.

Mike Shaffer – 133 Wylie Street – Is there a person on this Council that does not want to do business with DataMax, will you vote on it tonight?

Ken Lebbon – If this is a contract, should it not go through procurement? I believe that it should.

Resident of 119 Foote Street – Public notice that the city is broke and why is there not employees doing this. Response - the city does not have the resources to find the business that we do.

Are there anymore questions? With no further questions, Council will discuss this soon. Thank you for participating in the Citizens Forum.

With no further business Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Bagley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof