

Chester City Council Special Called Meeting
Budget Workshop
May 18, 2020, 6:00 pm
Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor Wanda Y. Stringfellow; Council Members Annie M. Reid, Susan Kovas, William Killian, Carlos Williams, Angela Douglas, City Administrator Stephanie Jackson, HR Director/Municipal Clerk Carla Roof and Marc Wood.

ABSENT: Councilman King and Councilwoman Tinker.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Stringfellow called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

PRAYER: Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas led in prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor and Council recited to Pledge of Allegiance.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Budget Review – Council

Administrator Jackson reviewed Council's budget as presented. Discussion took place concerning only one member from each Ward attending the Annual MASC Meeting. After discussion, the annual meeting attendance will remain as it currently is in the budget. Councilwoman Reid stated that she would like to see it changed to one person per Ward next year. Discussion took place concerning the Economic Incentive. Mrs. Jackson stated that she and Mr. Wood would like to list this item as, Economic Incentive/Grant Match. After much discussion, Council agreed to place \$15,000.00 for Economic Development and \$10,000.00 for Grant Match. Councilman Williams addressed his concerns with the shootings in the City and overtime in the Police Department. Also discussed the police officer's position that is currently open. Discussion took place concerning having police cars marked and more visible in the City. Mayor Stringfellow stated that we should look at the structure of the Police Department and see if there are areas that administrative officers can be moved to the street. Discussion took place concerning the review of other departments as well. Councilman Williams stated that it is the responsibility of the Council to make these decisions. Councilman Killian stated that Police Officers are always parked talking to each other and why are they not in the community? Mayor Stringfellow requested that Mrs. Jackson, Chief Williams and Mrs. Roof meet to discuss if there are officers that can be used for patrolling. Councilwoman Douglas asked who all do you have working patrol? Chief Williams stated that he as well as his other staff has currently been out patrolling. The police department has one vacancy and 4 officers currently taking courses for Class 1 certification. The four officers taking the classes are not allowed to be on the streets. Discussion took place concerning staggering the officers who are going to the academy. Chief Williams stated that he does have personnel within the building that is currently patrolling. Councilwoman Reid made a motion to approve Councils Budget as presented. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Emergency Ordinance 2020-03 to Renew Ordinance 2020-01 and Authorize the City Administrator to Develop and Enact a Plan to Provide Electronic Commission and Committee Meetings as an Option during the COIVD-19 Pandemic – Mayor Stringfellow read the Ordinance as presented. Discussion took place concerning moving back to normal meetings and/or ways that we can provide other options for meetings. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve the first reading of Ordinance 2020-03 as presented. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated that she would like the record to reflect that re-opening of Government has started to take place and that also means Municipal Government.

Employee Medical Insurance Renewal Rates – Mrs. Jackson presented the insurance renewal rates with requesting the City absorb the 4.76% increase on medical insurance and to place a freeze on the dependent and spouse coverage at 50% and that all new hires will pay 75% of dependent and spouse coverage. Councilwoman Kovas approved as proposed. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Evergreen Cemetery Bid Award – Mrs. Jackson informed Council she received only one bid from R&R Lawn Care in the amount of \$4,500.00 per month. Mayor Pro Douglas made a motion to approve the bid from R&R Lawn Care in the amount of \$4,500.00 for 6 1/2 months. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Advertisement of Mulch – Mrs. Jackson informed Council that Mr. McBeth will transport the mulch from the mulch site to Public Works Site and allow residents of the City of Chester to access at no charge. Placing the mulch at the Public Works Site will allow control. Mrs. Jackson also informed Council that the Public Works Department will be launching the Beautification Program and will bring back details at the next meeting. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated that we must present on emergency ordinance to change the fee schedule for mulch.

Ward II – Postponement Election Date – The Election has been postponed to July 14, 2020.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Contractual Matter – Springsteen Mill Site – Councilwoman Reid made a motion to convene in Executive Session at 7:45 pm, for discussion of a Contractual Matter – Springsteen Mill Site. Councilman Killian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to reconvene from Executive Session at 9:10 pm. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. While in Executive Session, Council discussed a Contractual Matter – Springsteen Mill Site. No action was taken. The motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing the motion, due to not having an opportunity to read. The motion carried.

Councilwoman Reid made a motion to allow the City Administrator to provide a letter of intent concerning the Springsteen Mill Site. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas informed Council that COVID-19 testing will take place May 27, 29, 2020 and June 3, 5, 2020, at no charge in the backlot of City of Chester.

With no further business, Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to adjourn at 9:25 pm. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof