

Chester City Council Meeting
May 26, 2020, 6:30 pm
Minutes

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

ABSENT: Councilwoman Linda Tinker and William King.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Stringfellow called the meeting to order at 6:38 pm.

PRAYER: Councilman Williams led in prayer.

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

CITIZENS FORUM: No one present to speak.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

Administrator Jackson informed Council that a request was received for a drive-up prayer service in the backlot. Discussion took place concerning making sure the social distancing is followed as required.

Reimbursements have been received from the MASC for PPE purchase.

Cares Act – EDA Funds for Drainage Projects. Mrs. Jackson informed Council that she has submitted funds for these projects.

City Hall Roofing – Mrs. Jackson informed Council the roofing project has been completed.

City Hall Lighting System for City Hall with a cost of \$16,00.00 Kovas motioned Douglas seconded the motion.

Pavilion Update -Mrs. Jackson provided Council with and update on this project.

Census – Mr. Earl Moore has indicated the numbers for the City is currently down and he would like to advertise to the citizens of the City of Chester by placing notices on the green rollout garbage bins. This will allow the opportunity to get the numbers up for the City of Chester. Discussion took place concerning paying for this advertising from the Public Works Budget. After discussion, Council agreed to use Council's budget for this funding and allow the administrator to pay \$648 .00 for Census advertisement. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve. Councilman Williams amended the motion to allow up to \$700.00. Councilwoman Kovas agreed to the amendment. The motion carried unanimously.

Opportunity Zone was launched today and has been sent to perspective vendors.

Housing Authority is in the process of doing their housing reviews. Mrs. Jackson has informed Council that a request has been made to the Housing Authority to provide Council with a monthly report.

Finance – no discussion

Fire – no discussion

Human Resources – no report

Police Department – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas had a question concerning the Criminal Investigation Report and questions concerning the attempted murder case noted on the monthly report. Chief Williams stated that was apparently an error on the report. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas publicly thanked the Police Department concerning the community outreach the department has been providing.

Public Works – no comments.

Parks and Recreation – Discussion took place concerning the challenges that Mr. White faces with summer programs and the pool. The Recreation Committee Meeting will be June 2, 2020. Councilwoman Reid will fill the vacancy of former Councilwoman Bagley until the election takes place.

Mayor Pro Tempore talked with Council concerning grants for the Recreation Department for upgrades at Wylie Park. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas would like for the Committee to work with Mr. White on obtaining funding. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to allow Mr. White to pursue the Duke Energy Nature Cycle Grant. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. There is no match on this grant. The motion carried.

Mayor Stringfellow requested an update on the fencing. Mr. White stated that quotes have been provided to Mrs. Jackson. Mrs. Jackson discussed the \$75,000.00 project. Due to the COVID-19, this has been postponed. Discussion took place indicating the pool cannot open without the fence being installed. The fencing should have already been placed. Mrs. Jackson indicated that she previously passed this project over to the Recreation Director and she is ready to move forward. Council previously voted to place the swings and to install the fencing at Wylie Pool. Mr. White informed Council that he has provided a rough draft to Mrs. Jackson and she has not gotten back with him. Mrs. Jackson stated that she will take the ball and run with it and get the projects done. Mayor Stringfellow stated this project needs to be handled. Mrs. Jackson stated that she is ready to go and will have a report ready for the Recreation Committee. Much discussion took place concerning the fencing at Wylie Pool. Please get the fence up and place one or two swings at the park. This will show the public that this Council is moving forward. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas, stated for the record, Mr. White came to her and the Recreation Committee. Mrs. Jackson stated for the record, she does have estimates and can move forward.

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

Public Safety Committee – Councilwoman Kovas commended Chief Jackson and Chief Williams on working through this Pandemic. Chief Jackson has lost 7 Firemen in 7 months. Commended the Police for the community involvement during the Pandemic. The Police department is currently down five staff members. Discussed the frozen Patrol Position and if there is any opportunity to add this position back. Chief Williams informed Council that officers are not working at Wal-Mart any longer. Discussion took place concerning the cost of the radio upgrades. No action was taken.

Public Works – no comments

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

COMMISSION REPORTS: No Commission reports submitted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Rental Registry Ordinance Draft – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to approve 2020-05 as presented. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. After discussion, this will be enforced by the Public Works Director. Mayor Stringfellow and Councilwoman Reid addressed concerns with Public Works enforcing this ordinance. Discussion took place concerning adding Commercial Properties in the ordinance. Much discussion took place. The motion carried with Mayor Stringfellow and Councilman Killian opposing.

Council Compensation Policy – Councilman Williams addressed with Council the attendance of Council Members with members of Council. Councilman Williams indicated that Council currently meets once a month and members need to attend. If Council does not come to meetings, we need to be held accountable, we are being paid to do this job and we need to attend. A policy needs to be implemented concerning attending meetings. Attorney Edwards stated that she will investigate this and bring back to Council.

Commission Appointments - Mayor Stringfellow made a motion to reappoint Diane Simpson, Tabatha Strother's and Wyonia Hinton to the Planning Commission to serve a 4-year term, expiring June 2023. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried. Council deferred all other appointments to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Summer Feeding Service Program - Anita Springs was unable to be present. Mrs. Jackson read a report provided by Mrs. Springs. Mayor Stringfellow addressed using DJJ candidates with Summer Feeding Program. Discussion took place concerning a separate policy for DJJ from what we currently have in place. Mrs. Jackson and Attorney Edwards will review this and bring back to Council. Mayor Stringfellow also informed Council that Mrs. Springs addressed her concerns with requiring SFSP paying utilities when others do not. Currently, there is not money available for the SFSP for utilities. Mrs.

Jackson informed Council that Mrs. Springs indicated as of this year, she will be able to place utilities in the SFSP budget. Mrs. Jackson stated that she is not aware of anyone in the building every day. SFSP is permitted to assume some of the cost for utilities and Mrs. Springs was aware of this. Requested that the Properties Committee and Mrs. Jackson meet with Mrs. Springs to discuss her concerns. The Properties Committee will meet to discuss and review the current contract. SFSP stated that a recommendation came from Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas that they receive a credit card for their purchases. Mrs. Jackson informed Council that we do have a credit card policy in place. Much discussion took place. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated that she did not tell Mrs. Springs that she needed her own credit card. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas informed Council that our Community Partners have stepped up to help with PPE supplies. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas provided Council with information concerning free COVID-19 testing. Public Employees will be tested between 9 and 10 am. May 27, 29, June 3 and 5, 2020. A special thanks to all who have volunteered to make this a successful event.

First Reading of Ordinance 2020-04 – Temporally Suspend Compost and Mulching Fee for City Residents. Mayor Stringfellow read as presented. Councilwoman Reid motion to approve as presented. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas requested to change “Free of charge” to “No charge”. The motion carried with Douglas stated the ordinance indicate at no additional charge.

Executive Session

Mayor Stringfellow stated that Council would convene in Executive Session for discussion of a Contractual Matter – Finance Consulting – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas, Personnel matter – Employee Survey – Attorney Winters, Personnel Matter – Evaluation – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas, Legal Advice regarding Administrative Department. Councilwoman Reid made a motion to convene in Executive Session at 9:41 pm. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Reid made a motion to reconvene from Executive Session. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried. While in Executive Session, Council discussed a Contractual Matter – Finance Consulting – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas, Personnel matter – Employee Survey – Attorney Winters, Personnel Matter – Evaluation – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas, Legal Advice regarding Administrative Department. No action was taken.

With no further business Councilwoman Reid made a motion to adjourn at 10:32 pm. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof