

Chester City Council Meeting

August 26, 2019

Minutes

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

Absent: Councilman King and Councilwoman Tinker.

Call to Order: Mayor Stringfellow called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 - Mrs. Jackson stated the 10 Year Comprehensive Plan has been completed and will be presented to the Planning Commission and Council tomorrow August 27, 2019.

CDBG Grant – Permission was received to apply. Mrs. Jackson requested that the Kitchen Committee meet. The deadline is the end of September. Discussion took place concerning an outdoor kitchen. Mr. Lindsay brought a million dollar proposal and indicated the Kitchen Committee requested an outdoor kitchen. Mrs. Rhea indicated we have a good chance of getting the grant. The plans are ready to view. Much discussion took place.

Labor Day Holiday – City offices will be closed on Monday, September 2, 2019, Garbage Collection has been posted.

MASC Hometown Economic Grant \$25,000.00 requires a 10% match – Revitalization of downtown is an area that we could use this money. Proposed some benches, planters, plants, ceramic chest table. The engineer feels that we could make a visible difference in the downtown area with \$25,000.00. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated this was a part of the Swat Analysis Economic Development Plan and she as well would like to see this take place. Much discussion took place. The deadline is September 27, 2019.

Finance – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas thanked Mrs. Jackson for the Grant List, but also requested information pertaining to Payment in Lieu of Taxes and the McAliey. Requested by the 1st meeting of October. The Summer Feeding Program account 120 is showing other income. Can you explain what that is? Mayor Pro Tempore had several questions concerning how we are handling the Summer Feeding Program. This was mixed up prior to my coming to the City. They have only received one reimbursement and expecting two more to come which should have been here last week. The reimbursement money will go to Summer Feeding separate account and then they will write a check to the general fund. Discussion took place concerning the financial report for Public Works and recycling.

Fire – Mayor Stringfellow introduced Fire Chief James Jackson, III and welcomed him to the City of Chester.

Human Resources – Mrs. Roof updated Council on the ID Cards for Council and employees. Pictures are still needed. Please stop by HR to get your photo taken.

Police – no comments

Public Works – Mr. McBeth provided Council with an update on the Rediscover the Curb Campaign. Monday, Wednesday and Friday have been designated to work on this project, 6 o 12 noon, due to the heat. Public Works will make a 100% effort to make this a success. Mrs. Jackson stated at the next meeting we will provide a kick off Campaign. Councilman Williams stated we have been dealing with this over a year. If you are in a position of leadership, you must get it done one way or the other. Mrs. Jackson stated the Rediscover the Curb Campaign was an initiative of hers. Mayor Stringfellow had concerns with getting the curbing cleaned by the time the Glidden Car Tour comes. We should take the same initiative in all neighborhoods. They pay the same taxes as the ones on the main streets, and these residents pay taxes as well. If we don't initiate it, the residents will not buy in. The efficiency is important. Mr. McBeth indicated that if one person was designated on the machine, it would take 3 months to accomplish. The cost of the equipment is \$240,000.00, three options to purchase. The demo has been scheduled for September 9, at 4 pm.

Recreation – Adopt a Park – A flyer was provided to Council explaining the program. We would like to get organizations, individuals, etc., to adopt a park. Anyone interested will be brought for approval to Council. After discussion, Mayor requested that Attorney Edwards review and bring back a recommendation to Council. Discussion took place concerning an Art program for the Community. This will be something different to offer the community.

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

Committee Reports

Finance – no comments

Properties – no comments

Public Safety – Councilwoman Douglas had questions concerning the Narcan purchased. Discussion took place concerning a Citizens Police Academy. Discussion took place concerning the police program like the Fire program at the Career Center.

Public Works – no comments

Recreation Committee – Councilman Killian presented a proposal to Council to rename the Recreation Facility to Margret Foote Recreation Facility and the Jeff Brown Softball Complex. The Ribbon Cutting for Margret Foote will take place on Saturday October 12, 2019, 11 am at the Recreation Facility and

Ribbon Cutting for Jeff Brown Softball Complex on September 28, 2019, at 10 am at the Recreation Facility. Funding will come from One Cent Sales Tax for both projects. Councilman Killian made a motion to approve. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing.

Executive Session – Mayor Stringfellow stated that Council will go into Executive Session for the discussion of a Contractual Matter – Finance Department, Legal Update – Recent Litigation – Property Sale – Attorney, Legal Update – Recent Litigation – Property Sale – Attorney Edwards, Contractual Matter – Property Gifting, Personnel Matter – Public Works Department, Contractual Matter – Fire Chief and Contractual Matter – Business License. Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to go into Executive Session. Councilman Killian seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposed the motion. Council convened in Executive Session at 8:05 pm.

Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to reconvene from Executive Session at 9:50 pm. Councilwoman Reid made a motion to enter into an agreement with Sheheen, Hancock and Godwin, LLP, at \$125.00 hour, using the unexpended salary of the Finance Director. Councilman Killian second the motion. The motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas added for the record that she does not agree with the motion due to the structure of the finance department.

Councilman Killian made a motion to enter into a contract with Data Max. Councilwoman Bagley seconded the motion. The motion carried with Councilwoman Kovas opposed the motion.

Councilman Williams discussed with Council concerning downsizing the Council to 4 members and 1 Mayor. We have four Wards in the City and this was based on the other municipalities surrounding our city. Councilman Williams stated that only one member per Ward is needed. Councilman Williams reached out to Jeff Shaker who indicated it would be easy to do. This would be done when the next general election comes around, the top vote getter wins. It would have to go on the ballot as a referendum. Downsizing would save the City money. Much discussion took place. Councilman Williams made a motion to downsize the City Council to 5 members. Councilwoman Kovas second the motion. Mayor Stringfellow addressed her concerns with the makeup of the diversity and ethnicity. Much discussion took place. The motion failed with Reid, Killian, Stringfellow and Kovas opposing. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas, Bagley and Williams in favor of the motion.

With no further business, Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to adjourn at 10:00 pm. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof

