



Chester City Council Meeting  
September 9, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

### *MINUTES*

**PRESENT:** Mayor Wanda Stringfellow; Council Members Betty Bagley, Annie Reid, Susan Kovas, Carlos Williams and Mayor Pro Tempore Angela Douglas; City Administrator Stephanie Jackson and Payroll Specialist Sylvia Young.

**ABSENT:** Council Members Linda Tinker, William King and William Killian; and Municipal Clerk Carla Roof.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Stringfellow called meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PRAYER:** Councilwoman Reid led in prayer.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Stringfellow led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CITIZENS FORUM:** No one came before Council.

### **PETITIONER:**

*Mr. Larry Hill – Anti-Violence March and Rally- September 14, 2019, 9:00 a.m.* - Mr. Hill informed Council that it was an honor to come before them to discuss a very disturbing issue about gun violence in a city. He informed Council that citizens must act to put a stop to gun violence in their community. He informed Council that citizens first step against gun violence is to march, have peaceful protest and rally. He gave Council several reasons why citizens should march and rally. The Committees number one goal and reason for march is for bridging the information gap between the community and law enforcement. They want to champion into the hearts and minds of the citizens of Chester which would cause them to understand that we can never have a safe city unless they share information with law enforcement.

Mr. Hill informed that he wanted Council to know with whom the Committee stands with; the Committee does not stand with the gangs and their devilish deeds. Secondly, the Committee does stand with Sheriff Dorsey and Police Chief Eric Williams because they are the ones that raised their right hand to protect and serve the citizens in our community. Mr. Hill asked Council to aid their cause for peace in the community against gun violence. Mr. Hill informed Council that the Committee has scheduled a march, "Freedom from Gun Violence" on Saturday, September 14, 2019 at 9 a.m. to protest gun violence in the community.

In closing, Mr. Hill thanked City Administrator Stephine Jackson and Police Chief Eric Williams for their support. Also, Mr. Hill provided Council with a very detailed itinerary for the march including speakers for event and informed Council that they were in desperate need for water bottles to keep people hydrated during the event. Mayor Stringfellow thanked Mr. Hill for doing something to address a very serious matter of gun

violence in our community and across the nation. Council appreciated their efforts to bring community awareness to say, “No more gun violence!”

***Mr. Rotonio Kennedy and Mr. Edward Stradford – Leaders in Action Community Cleanup*** – Mr. Kennedy informed Council that they had united some young men from the Brooklyn and East Chester community, that are said to be trouble makers, to help clean up their community. He stated that no one fell out with each other and everybody was motivated. Unfortunately, one of the guys that was motivated to clean up with them was killed a couple of days ago on Brawley Street. Mr. Kennedy informed Council that he supported the march, “Freedom from Gun Violence”. He stated that children in our community need attention which was causing them to get into trouble. He encouraged Council and the community to talk to the youths and listen to their goals and visions for their future. He expressed to Council his concerns for the youths and violence in our community. In conclusion, Mr. Kennedy encouraged the community to help the youths in our community to make positive changes in their lives. He informed Council that united we stand and divided we fall, and that action and love from the community will make changes.

Mr. Edward Stradford introduced himself to Council and informed them that he was speaking on behalf of the Leaders in Action Community Cleanup organization and the following were their goals for the community:

- For the city; clean up one neighborhood at a time.
- For the youths; educate and serve the elderly.
- For the city and the community; motivate and build unity among us all.
- Create a safe environment for our kids and ourselves.

Mr. Stradford informed Council that with their help he would like to bring everyone together and move forward to show unity and positivity regardless of recent negative events in the city. They wish to complete their mission and give the community what they deserve, which is a clean and healthy environment. He encouraged the community to take action for a better community. In conclusion, Mr. Stradford stated to Council that a picture is worth a thousand words, but action speaks louder and if everyone would say it with him, “Say it loud and make Chester proud!” also, Mr. Stradford provided Council with additional information about their supporters.

Mrs. Jackson informed Council that she had requested that Mr. Kennedy come today because she wanted Council to know what had occurred last weekend in the city. She informed Council that she had received a phone call that a group of young men were cleaning up the East Chester area. She was very impressed and appreciative with their cleanup efforts and wanted to share information with Council and the community. She instructed them to let her know when they plan their next community cleanup and that the city would help provide them with items. Mayor Stringfellow asked them to provide Council with their next step for their organization; also, wanted to know what they needed from the city. Mr. Stradford asked for Council’s support with providing them with the donation of items such as gloves, trash bags and vest for volunteers. Mr. Stradford informed Council that their next community cleanup event will start at the Eternal Rock Church on Saturday, September 21, 2019 between 9 and 10 a.m. After much discussion, Mayor Stringfellow thanked the organization for what they have begun and agreed to support them by providing items for community cleanup.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

Mrs. Jackson informed Council that she wanted them and the community to know about the two following important calendar dates:

- September 14, 2019 at 4 p.m. at Joe Collins Stadium – 2019 CCYFL Jamboree and football season starts.
- October 25, 2019 at 6 p.m. – 2019 Trunk-A-Treat sponsored by the Police Department in the Farmers Market building parking lot. She informed Council that they were welcome to join the Police Department and bring their car to hand out candy to the public for Halloween. Police Department event has been scheduled a week before Halloween to not interfere with other events and to partnership with others in the community. Council had a brief discussion about the Trunk-A-Treat event date.

Mrs. Jackson gave Council an update concerning city channel 3. She informed Council that city channel 3 was not operable due to equipment malfunction; however, Sharp and TruVista has teamed up to make repairs. She wanted to make sure that Council and the community were aware of why they have not seen any updates on city channel 3.

**COMMISSION REPORTS:** No Commission reports available in package.

**AD-HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

***Kitchen Committee (Ad Hoc)*** - Mayor Pro Tempore Angela Douglas gave Council a detailed update concerning the Kitchen Committee. She informed Council that the Kitchen Committee had a meeting on Wednesday, September 4, 2019. She provided Council with a detailed update on the progress of the architectural design and construction cost estimated for modified plans. After a brief discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to move forward with modified architectural plan designs as presented in Council packages. Councilman Williams seconded motion. Mrs. Jackson reviewed with Council the detailed breakdown cost for Pavilion Project with masonry columns estimated cost included. After much discussion, the motion carried with Councilwoman Bagley opposing. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas informed Council that she did not have the revised estimated cost amount of \$237,750; however, she did have the application resulting in Mrs. Grazier Rhea estimated request being \$219,000 which she will correct to update Minutes. She informed Council that the Kitchen Committee (Ad Hoc) has made a recommendation to dissolve the Kitchen Committee as it has served its designated “ad hoc” purpose. Mayor Stringfellow stated to Council with no objections and/or concerns she will abolish the Kitchen Committee (Ad Hoc) because project is finished.

***Economic Development Committee (Ad Hoc)*** – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas informed Council that the Committee does not have a report; however, she does have a major concern with members attendance. Mayor Stringfellow made a recommendation to Council that with no objections the Economic Development Committee no longer be considered Ad Hoc but become one of their regular standing Committees. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion that the Economic Development Committee become a standing Committee and update city ordinance. Councilwoman Bagley seconded motion. Councilman Williams volunteered to serve on Committee until members attendances change. Motion carried unanimously.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

***Review of Rental Housing Regulations – Attorney Edwards*** - Item was tabled because Attorney Edwards was not present at meeting.

***City of Chester Fairgrounds – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas*** – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas informed Council that she put item on agenda because she was seeking a clear understanding about track project and receive updates from school district concerning the track. After a brief discussion, Mayor Stringfellow stated that she will call tonight to seek information about were the school district stands in reference to the track project.

***Jeff Brown Softball Complex Ribbon Cutting – September 28, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.*** – Mrs. Jackson gave Council an update concerning the Jeff Brown Softball Complex Ribbon Cutting event. The event has been scheduled on September 28, 2019 at 10 a.m. She informed Council that she had received a phone call from Mr. Brown’s grandson informing her that Mr. Brown will not be able to attend event; however, she will provide Council with updates concerning event changes.

***Margaret Foot Parks & Recreation Ribbon Cutting – October 12, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.*** – Mrs. Jackson gave Council an update concerning the Margaret Foot Parks and Recreation Ribbon Cutting event. She informed Council that the event has been scheduled on October 12, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. She stated that the family was very appreciative and has confirmed date.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

***Architectural Plans – Pavilion – Administrator Jackson*** – Mrs. Jackson gave Council an update concerning the pavilion architectural plans and provided an estimated cost breakdown. The estimated cost included the following: Construction, architectural, environmental assessment and administration breakdown totaling the cost of \$237,750. She informed Council that the cost for the city is \$37,750 which includes the \$7,000 for Alfred Lindsay’s preliminary plans that have been paid. Mrs. Jackson asked Council if they had any questions and/or concerns in reference to cost. With no questions, Mrs. Jackson made a recommendation to Council that they consider taking city match from the Hospitality Tax. After discussion, Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to identify the funding for the city’s portion of the match in the amount of \$37,750 from the Hospitality Tax. Councilwoman Kovas seconded motion. Motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing.

***Community Development Block Grant Funding Match Resolution – Administrator Jackson*** – Mayor Stringfellow read to Council the Community Development Block Grant Funding Match Resolution. All Council Members were in favor of resolution as read.

***Resolution 2019-05 – Amend Personnel Policy and Procedures, Safety Policy and Employee Handbook - Administrator Jackson*** – Mrs. Jackson and Council discussed policy amendments to include that the Department Heads are required to notify City Administrator of all accidents involving city vehicles. Mayor Stringfellow asked Mrs. Jackson how many accidents a city employee is allowed to have before they are removed from that duty of driving a city vehicle. Mrs. Jackson stated that she was unsure; however, she will come back to Council with an answer. After much discussion, Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to accept the requested changes to the Personnel Policy and Procedures, Safety Policy and Employee Handbook – Resolution 2019-05 with necessary corrections. Councilman Williams seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

***Resolution – Safety Prevention – HR Director Carla Roof & Administrator Jackson*** – Mayor Stringfellow informed Council that Mrs. Roof is the proud grandmother of a beautiful baby girl named Ronnie Rose, and she was unable to attend meeting tonight. Mayor Stringfellow read to Council the Resolution - Safety Prevention with necessary date correction of 9<sup>th</sup> day of September 2019. Safety Prevention Resolution carried with all Council Members in favor.

***MOU City of Chester and Catawba Regional Council of Governments – GIS Services – Administrator Jackson*** – Mrs. Jackson asked Council to enter into an agreement with Catawba Regional Council of Governments for them to provide technical assistance and training for GIS (Geographic Information System) services to the City of Chester staff. Mrs. Jackson provided Council with an explanation for her request which included a city residents property had been approved to be rezoned; however, updates were not completed. She investigated reason for failure to update rezoned classification and discovered that COG has done this for the city in the past. She informed Council that the agreement cost will not exceed \$5,000 per fiscal year. Mayor

Stringfellow read to Council the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the City of Chester and Catawba Regional Council of Governments. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to accept the MOU between the City of Chester and Catawba Regional Council of Governments. Councilwoman Reid seconded motion. Motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing.

***Setoff Debt Hearing Officer Nomination – Administrator Jackson*** - Mrs. Jackson informed Council that Councilwoman Reid was the Setoff Debt Hearing Officer last year and each year a new officer must be nominated for position. Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to nominate Councilwoman Reid as Setoff Debt Hearing Officer. Councilwoman Kovas seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

***Commission Appointment – Chester Planning Commission*** – After much discussion, Council agreed to bring back a name to appoint for vacant position on Chester Planning Commission to replace Kim Tricia G. Sanders and the Chester Zoning Board Commission to replace LeTanya Williams.

***Evergreen Cemetery Commission Resignation*** – After a discussion, Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to accept Susan Strickland Nazian resignation with regret from the Evergreen Cemetery Commission. Councilwoman Kovas seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Stringfellow thanked Mrs. Nazian for her service on the Evergreen Cemetery Commission. Councilwoman Bagley informed Council that she had a profile that Rocky Pollard has expressed interest in serving as a member on the Evergreen Cemetery Commission to replace Mrs. Nazian. She informed Council that Mr. Pollard has agreed to resign from the ZBA (Chester Zoning Board of Appeals Commission) to serve on the Evergreen Cemetery Commission. After a brief discussion, Council agreed to seek attorney information to avoid a conflict of interest before appointing Mr. Pollard, owner of Pollard Funeral Home. Also, Council agreed to bring back Mr. Pollard’s appointment at next Council meeting after seeking attorney information.

***Chester Housing Authority*** - Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas informed Council that she had a Commission Profile with the recommendation from Chester Housing Authority for Gloria A. Cornwell to replace Samantha Simmons-Gaither that resigned position. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to appoint Gloria A. Cornwell to Chester Housing Authority Commission. Councilwoman Kovas seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

***MASC Meeting 2019 & Forms of Municipal Government – Councilman Williams*** – Councilman Williams asked Council to postpone item 8 - MASC Meeting 2019 and item 9 - Forms of Municipal Government until next Council meeting.

With no further discussion, Mayor Stringfellow made a motion that Council adjourn. Councilwoman Bagley seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously. Council meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Sylvia Young