



**CHESTER CITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2020**

VIRTUAL WEBINAR LINK:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81479658841>

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING – 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Wanda Stringfellow; Council Members Mayor Pro Tempore Angela Douglas, William Killian, Carlos Williams, Susan Kovas and Annie Reid; City Administrator Stephanie Jackson; City Attorney Latonya Edwards; and Payroll Specialist Sylvia Young.

ABSENT: Council Members Linda Tinker and William King; and HR Director Carla Roof.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Wanda Stringfellow. Roll call, quorum established.

II. PRAYER

Councilwoman Kovas led Council in prayer.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Stringfellow led Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. CITIZENS FORUM

John Massey – Mr. John Massey expressed to Council his concern about law enforcement officer's accountability and he explained the purpose of the Citizens Review Board.

Joey Brown - Mr. Joey Brown informed Council that he was representing himself, along with current and former citizens of this town, who are concerned about current matters, along with the emotionally intense local events in Chester. He stated that the community has been very critical towards leadership and the government regarding certain matters. He expressed to Council that not only was it an emotionally intense climate for us as a community but also a spiritual weakening in the community because we can't

see and acknowledge justice or the lack of justice. In conclusion, he asked Council to make a decision today not based on colors but to make their decision based on facts and to acknowledge right and wrong.

V. PETITIONER

Dwight Land - Mr. Dwight Land informed Council about an encounter he experienced with Public Works Director/Building Official Reginald McBeth concerning an inoperable vehicle located at 219 Gadsden Street. Also, property owner Gail McCullough informed Council that she did not receive a certified letter from Mr. McBeth in reference to an inoperable vehicle or zoning ordinance violation. Mr. McBeth informed Council that a certified letter was mailed and signed received by Mrs. McCullough. After a brief discussion, Mayor Stringfellow advised Mrs. Jackson to get with Mr. McBeth to make sure that Mrs. McCullough and Mr. Land receive necessary information to move process along to prevent delays with the operation of Mr. Land's business. Mayor Stringfellow informed Mrs. McCullough and Mr. Land that the City Administrator will contact them tomorrow to make sure that they receive a copy of the certified letter mailed by Mr. McBeth and a copy of zoning ordinance violation.

VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Administrative Report – City Administrator Stephanie Jackson – Mrs. Jackson gave Council the following highlights from report:

COVID-19 Update – Mrs. Jackson gave Council an update concerning COVID-19 pandemic. She informed Council that as of Thursday, June 19, 2020, SCDHEC reports 21,533 positive coronavirus cases in South Carolina and 621 deaths. She reported that Chester County has 127 positive cases and one known death. She stated that this disease is spiking in several states. She stated that City Hall is closed to the public; however, she wanted the public to know that employees will continue to assist customers through telephone calls and emails. She informed Council that she will organize a team of representatives from each department and possibly Council to brainstorm ideas to develop a safeguard plan to implement for the reopening of City offices when that date arrives.

Community Organizer's Request for Community Event – Mrs. Jackson informed Council that she had received an application from Chester Downtown Development Association (CDDA) in reference to their annual Hog on the Hill event scheduled for July 31st thru August 1, 2020. She asked Council to consider the approval and restrictions for special event applications during pandemic. After much discussion, Council requested that City Administrator and City Attorney work together to formulate a COVID-19 safeguard plan with guidelines to present to Council at next meeting. Mayor Stringfellow expressed the importance of the City implementing a COVID-19 safeguard plan before issuing permits for special events. Also, Council instructed Mrs. Jackson to contact CDDA to request information concerning their COVID-19 safeguard plan to protect citizens. Attorney Edwards advised Council to make sure vendors at event have liability insurance that includes COVID-19. Council tabled CDDA application submission until next Council meeting. No action taken.

Evergreen Cemetery Lawn Care Bid Award Announcement – Mrs. Jackson gave Council an update concerning Evergreen Cemetery Lawn Care Bid Award Announcement. She informed Council that the City

received three bid proposals for Evergreen Cemetery lawn care. The following bid proposals were submitted:

Bidder #1: C & C Lawn Service, Owner, Cornelius Caldwell – bid amount per month is \$4,500.

Bidder #2: Yard Wizard, Owner, Darryl Washington – bid amount per month is \$6,125.72.

Bidder #3: Bobby 8 Landscaping, Owner Christy McCullough – bid amount per month is \$5,714.28.

Mrs. Jackson informed Council that C & C Lawn Service submitted the lowest bid proposal in the amount of \$4,500 per month and insurance information was included within package. Mrs. Jackson presented to Council her recommendation to award bid to the lowest bidder, C & C Lawn Service. Upon motion by William Killian and seconded by Susan Kovas, Council voted [5-1] to accept the bid proposal submitted from C & C Lawn Service. Carlos Williams recused himself from vote, because C & C Lawn Service, Owner Cornelius Caldwell is his brother.

Police Report – Chief Eric Williams – Councilwoman Douglas informed Council that she had some questions for Chief Williams in reference to SOP’s etc., data she received from him about the Police Department. She thanked him for providing her with the information she requested from him. She made a request that Chief Williams, Public Safety, Human Resources Department and labor attorney review some of the things that are challenging to her. She requested that the following items be included within SOP’s and polices reform:

1. Prohibit choke holds (to not restrict someone’s airways).
2. Officer complicity (Including all staff) – no tolerance for bad behavior and that we are holding each other to an ethical standard.
3. Patterns of behavior and psychological evaluations
4. Police body cameras – Official policies reflects the State law. Body cameras are part of police officer uniforms.

Chief Williams responded to Councilwoman Douglas’ requested items listed above. Also, Mayor Stringfellow requested that Chief Williams submit to City Administrator the written body cam policy to include in the next Council package. Chief Williams stated that he had already submitted body cam policy to City Administrator and Public Safety Committee; however, he apologized for not providing policy within Council package.

Recreation Report – Christopher White - Red, White, & Boom Celebration – Recreation Director, Christopher White, gave Council an update concerning Red, White, & Boom Celebration. He informed Council that the event hosted by the Recreation Department has been scheduled on Thursday, July 2, 2020, gates to open at 8 p.m. and the show to start at 9 p.m. The public is asked to stay in their cars to view fireworks show due to COVID-19 restrictions. Councilwoman Douglas requested an update from Mr. White concerning the suspended rentals reported in package. Mr. White gave Council an update

concerning suspended rentals and the reopening of the City swimming pool. Councilwoman Douglas expressed her concerns about the reopening of the swimming pool in reference to public safety due to COVID-19. Mayor Stringfellow stated that public safety of residents comes first. After discussion, Mayor Stringfellow request that Mr. White schedule a meeting on Wednesday, June 24th with the Recreation Committee to discuss CDC new guidelines.

Upon motion by Susan Kovas and seconded William Killian, Council voted [Unanimous] to accept department reports as presented in package. Motion passes.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance - Councilwoman Reid gave Council an update concerning the Finance Committee. She reported that the Finance Committee has met, and they discussed the continuation of monitoring city financial status and their planning to do monthly monitoring. No action was taken.

Properties – Councilman Williams gave Council an update concerning the Properties Committee. He reported that the Properties Committee discussed City owned property and they plan to bring their recommendations along with a package to present to Council at the next meeting. Also, he reported that the Committee plans to discuss utility cost at the Farmers Market at their next scheduled meeting. No action was taken.

Public Safety – Councilwoman Kovas gave Council an update concerning the Public Safety Committee meeting. She reported that the Committee had a very productive meeting on June 18th. They met with the Fire Chief, James Jackson, and discussed the fire contract approval and the replacement of four open positions within the Fire Department. Also, the Committee met with the Police Chief, Eric Williams, and discussed the following items:

1. Receiving the COPS Grant from the Department of Justice in the amount of \$382,000, which will give the Police Department three new officers for three years, but after that, the City would have to pick-up those officers.
2. Waiting to hear from two other grants submitted with the possible funding of one million dollars for the department.
3. Resignation – Department received a patrol officers' resignation which the department is seeking to replace position.
4. Four officers are attending the Police Academy.
5. Cars speeding on Harris Street - the Police Chief will be putting up the speeding electronic sign and will patrol area.
6. New training and policy revisions, SOP's scores from the Municipal Association for last year were 96%; however, this year scores are 100% for their Standard Operating Procedures.

7. The establishment of an Anti-Police Brutality Committee composed of five members, members will include other law enforcement agencies and civilians.

No action was taken.

Public Works – Councilwoman Kovas gave Council an update concerning the Public Works Committee. She reported that the Public Works Committee met on June 1st. The Committee discussed beautification program for residential recognition of beautiful yards, garbage collection increase since COVID-19 pandemic quarantine, recycling program, and vacancy ordinance for downtown buildings. No action was taken.

Recreation – Councilman Killian – No report. No action was taken.

Economic Development – Councilwoman Douglas gave Council an update concerning Economic Development Committee. She reported that the Committee discussed website updates, small business incentives, business outreaching, economic investors, vacancy ordinance and business license fees. No action was taken.

Upon motion made by Susan Kovas and seconded by Annie Reid, Council voted [Unanimous] to accept Committee reports as presented.

VIII. COMMISSION REPORTS - No reports submitted.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Second Reading Ordinance 2020-05 Rental Registry Ordinance – Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas – Council agreed to table item for discussion at next Council meeting.

First Reading Ordinance 2020-09 Council Compensation Policy – Councilman Carlos Williams – Mayor Stringfellow read Ordinance 2020-09 AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ATTENDANCE OF CHESTER CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AT REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS. Motion made by Angela Douglas to accept the First Reading Ordinance 2020-09 Council Compensation Policy. Motion seconded by Carlos Williams. Roll call, Council voted [2-4] motion failed. All in favor, Angela Douglas and Carlos Williams. All not in favor, Mayor Wanda Stringfellow, Susan Kovas, Annie Reid and William Killian.

Second Reading Ordinance 2020-04 Temporarily Suspend Compost and Mulching Fee for City Residents - Mayor Stringfellow read Ordinance 2020-04 AN ORDINANCE TO TEMPORALLY SUSPEND PAYMENT FOR COMPOST AND MULCH FOR CITY RESIDENTS FOR THE CITY OF CHESTER, EFFECTIVE MAY 26, 2020 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1, 2020, OR UNTIL THE DEPLETION OF THE SUPPLY. Motion made by Susan Kovas to adopt Ordinance 2020-04 An Ordinance to Temporarily Suspend Compost and Mulching Fee for City Residents. Motion seconded by Annie Reid. Roll call, Council voted [Unanimous] motion passed.

Commission Appointments – Mayor Stringfellow received four profiles for the Recreation Commission. Council agreed to postpone profiles until next Council meeting. Mayor Stringfellow informed Council that on June 17, 2020, Matthew Alexander submitted his official resignation from the Historic Preservation

Commission (HPC) because he has been reappointed to pastor a church in Lancaster. Motion made by Susan Kovas to regretfully accept the resignation of Matthew Alexander from the HPC. Motion seconded by Annie Reid. Roll call, Council voted [Unanimous] motion passed.

X. NEW BUSINESS

First Reading Ordinance 2020-06 City of Chester Budget Fiscal Year 2020-2021 – Mayor Stringfellow read Ordinance 2020-06 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AND THE LEVYING OF TAXES FOR ORDINARY PURPOSES IN THE CITY OF CHESTER FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2020, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2021, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHESTER, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPENDITURE THEREOF, THROUGH AN AMENDED BUDGET. Motion made by Annie Read to accept the First Reading Ordinance 2020-06 City of Chester Budget Fiscal year 2020-2021. Motion seconded by Susan Kovas. Roll call, Council voted [4-2] motion passed. All in favor, Mayor Stringfellow, Annie Reid, Susan Kovas, and William Killian. All not in favor, Angela Douglas and Carlos Williams.

New Body Cameras for Police Department – Mayor Wanda Stringfellow – Mayor Stringfellow stated that she asked to put item on agenda in lieu of what happened within the City limits with regards to the Walmart incident. She stated that one of the things that has continually come up since the body cam footage has been released, is the delay in footage and the fact there is no audio at the beginning of the body cam footage. She stated that one of the things that the Police Chief Williams has told Council is that there is about a minute or two-minute delay at the beginning of the recording for the body cam that the City of Chester Police Department currently uses. She stated that she begun looking and trying to search to find out if there were other body cams that were available where this delay does not occur. Upon talking to other Police Departments, she was informed that the most delay for recordings should possibly be about 30 seconds and we are looking at almost a two-minute delay once the police officer has engaged their body cam. Mayor Stringfellow stated that she wanted to put before Council that they began to equip their Police Department with some more modern technology. Body cam that will not have this type of delay. A delay that can make the difference in the outcome of some varied situations when being reviewed. In conclusion, she stated that's the purpose for this item being on the agenda.

After much discussion, Mayor Stringfellow asked Chief Williams to get with City Administrator to discuss grants monies available to purchase better equipment. Mayor Stringfellow asked Council if they had any objections to her request. Council had no objections to request.

First Reading Ordinance 2020-07 Citizens Review Board – Mayor Wanda Stringfellow – Mayor Stringfellow read the First Reading Ordinance 2020-07 Citizens Review Board for the City of Chester, S.C. Council had discussion about ordinance revisions and their concerns. Motion made by Annie Reid to accept the First Reading Ordinance 2020-07 Citizens Review Board for the City of Chester, S.C. Motion seconded by William Killian. Roll call, Council voted [5-1] motion passed. In favor, Mayor Stringfellow, Susan Kovas, Carlos Williams, Annie Reid and William Killian. Not in favor, Angela Douglas.

Resolution 2020-02 to Establish the City of Chester Police Department's Citizens Academy – Street Law 101 Citizens Course – Mayor Stringfellow – Mayor Stringfellow read Resolution 2020-02 to Establish the City of Chester Police Department's Citizens Academy – Street Law 101 Course. Motion made by Susan Kovas

to accept Resolution 2020-02 to Establish the City of Chester Police Department's Citizens Academy – Street Law 101 Course. Motion seconded by Annie Reid. Roll call, Council voted [Unanimous] motion passed.

Police Department – SOP (Standard Operations Procedure) – Council had much discussion of SOP's. Motion made by Mayor Stringfellow to terminate employment for three officers, Nicholas Harris, Justin Baker and Lavar Richardson, for the violation of SOP's by not initiating body cam at shooting incident at Walmart. Motion seconded by William Killian. Roll call, Council voted [2-4] motion failed. All in favor, Mayor Stringfellow and William Killian. Not in favor, Susan Kovas, Annie Reid, Carlos Williams and Angela Douglas.

Walmart Security Policy and Insurance Coverage – Mayor Stringfellow asked Mrs. Jackson for an update on Walmart security policy and insurance coverage. She asked is the City still providing security for Walmart when we were told in a previous meeting that the City was not? Mr. Jackson stated that questions would better be answered by Chief Williams. Chief Williams gave Council an update concerning Walmart security. He informed Council that Walmart corporate office requested temporary security due to threats they received to protect citizens shopping. He stated that Walmart does the scheduling for security services; however, the only thing he is responsible for, is knowing what officers are working at Walmart. Also, Mrs. Jackson informed Council that City insurance and workers comp will not cover officers working off duty. After much discussion, no action was taken.

First Reading Ordinance 2020-08 Sale of Fire Department Vehicles – Administrator Jackson and Fire Chief Jackson - Mayor Stringfellow read the First Reading Ordinance 2020-08 An Ordinance of the Sale of Certain Equipment Belonging to the City of Chester, S.C. Motion made by Annie Reid to accept Ordinance 2020-08 An Ordinance of the Sale of Certain Equipment Belonging to the City of Chester, S.C. Motion seconded by Susan Kovas. Roll call, Council voted [Unanimous] motion passed.

First Reading Ordinance 2020-10 June 19th as a Paid Holiday for City Employees – Juneteenth Holiday - City Administrator Stephanie Jackson – Mayor Stringfellow read the First Reading Ordinance 2020-10 An Ordinance to name June 19th as a paid holiday for City Employees. Motion made by Carlos Williams to accept the First Reading Ordinance 2020-10 June 19th as a paid holiday for City Employees. Motion seconded by William Killian. Roll call, Council voted [Unanimous] motion passed.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Stringfellow stated a motion was needed for Council to enter into Executive Session to discuss Legal Advice – Ariane McCree Case – Attorney David Morrison, Evaluation – Administrative Department, and Contractual Agreement – Fire Department. Motion made by Susan Kovas to enter into Executive Session for the discussion of Legal Advice – Ariane McCree Case – Attorney David Morrison, Evaluation – Administrative Department, and Contractual Agreement – Fire Department. Motion seconded by Annie Reid. Roll call, Council voted [Unanimous] motion passes. Council entered into Executive Session at 10:28 p.m.

Motion made by Susan Kovas to move out of Executive Session at 12:13 a.m. Mayor Stringfellow stated that no action was taken in Executive Session. Motion seconded by Annie Reid. Council voted [Unanimous] motion passed.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, motion to adjourn by Annie Reid. Motion seconded by Angela Douglas. Roll call, Council voted [Unanimous] motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sylvia Young