

Chester City Council Meeting
July 27, 2020, 6:30 pm
Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor Wanda Y. Stringfellow; Council Members Annie M. Reid, Angela Douglas, TaTanish Campbell and Carlos Williams, Councilman Killian and Councilwoman Kovas; City Administrator Jackson and HR Director Carla Roof.

ABSENT: Councilwoman Tinker, Councilman King and Attorney Edwards.

PRAYER: Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas led in prayer.

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

CITIZENS FORUM: No one was present to speak during Citizens Forum.

PETITIONER: Mr. Tony Goodwin and Makeda Baker was not present to speak.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilwoman Reid made a motion to approve the minutes as presented for 3-2-20, 3-19-20, 4-27-20, 5-11-20, 5-18-20, 5-26-20, 6-8-20, 6-22-20, 6-29-20, 7-16-20 & 7-17-20. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas seconded the motion. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas stated that she would like the minutes of July 17, 2020 to be corrected stating that she left the meeting prior to Executive Session due to a family obligation. Councilwoman Reid stated that she would like the minutes of the June 22, 2020, be correct to reflect that she stated the cars were speeding not racing. With no further corrections, the motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Kovas and Councilman Killian joined the meeting.

2018-19 Annual Financial Review – Gary Bailey, Love Bailey Certified Public Accountants – Mr. Bailey informed Council that his firm has completed the 2018-19 audit. Mr. Bailey indicated they did not have any issues and things went very smoothly. A summary overview was provided to Council and an unmodified opinion was issued. Council indicated they would like to take more time to review the proposed audit. After much discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to approve the 2018-19 Annual Financial Review as presented. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administrative Report: Mrs. Jackson provided Council with an updated figure concerning COVID-19 cases. Discussion took place concerning the current spending freeze on spending and hiring. Mrs. Jackson requested from Council to extend the spending freeze through the month of August. Mr. Wood and Finance Chairwoman Reid agreed to extend the spending and hiring freeze. Councilwoman Reid made a motion to extend the hiring and spending freeze through the month of August. Mrs. Jackson stated that any positions that are currently in the budget, we will be able to hire. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Jackson informed Council the fencing at Joe Collins Stadium did not include large gates. Mrs. Jackson proposed to use the remaining funds in the One Cent Sales Tax to install the gates and the remaining balance from the Parks and Recreation budget. Received two estimates over \$1000.00. After

much discussion, Councilman Williams indicated that he would provide the funds for the inward gate in the amount of \$338.00. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to allow Mrs. Jackson to move forward with installing the gate at Joe Collins Stadium. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Dennis Corporation – Pavilion – Mrs. Jackson requested the Dennis Corporation be used for this project. Councilman Williams motion to use Dennis Corp for the Pavilion Project. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Municipal Court COVID-19 Protocols – Mrs. Jackson indicated that participants coming to court will be required to wear a mask and social distancing will be practiced.

DataMax Contract – The City has received over \$80,000.00 from businesses coming into our City to do business. This is new revenue and there is more money out there. Currently we are getting 50%, after the 3rd year, 100% will be received.

DJJ – Mrs. Jackson requested that Council renew the proposed contract as presented. Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to approve as presented. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas requested that Mrs. Jackson have TruVista provide an updated report to reflect the downtown WIFI usage from March through July 2020.

Finance – Mr. Wood indicated that he will be onsite on Friday to clean up some misclassifications. I will be amending the departmental reports to help with the budget. Some funds will be moved to the general fund on Friday. Discussion took place concerning the Water Works account. Mr. Wood indicated he has not touched the Water Works account because Council was unsure what to do. If he receives a blessing from Council, he will handle. The Summer Feeding owes five hundred thousand dollars to the general fund. Council needs to provide direction as to how Council would like him to handle. Mr. Wood informed Council this goes back to 2011. Mr. Wood said the program did not provide a reimbursement to the City. Much discussion took place, Mr. Wood stated that Council was given bad information on the program. The due-to due-from, has been on the books for a long time. Mr. Wood stated that going forward, this will not be a problem. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to move the \$16,000.00 from the Water Works account to the General Fund. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. After discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas withdrew her motion. Councilwoman Kovas withdrew her second to the motion. The motion was withdrawn.

Fire – No comments

Human Resources – no comments

Police Department – Chief Jackson indicated he has received two additional resignations in his department. Mayor Stringfellow wanted to know if we have any update on the Bodycam grants. Chief Williams provided an update to Council. WatchGuard is currently searching for any grant opportunity that is available. All patrol vehicles currently have the equipment in the cars.

Triangulation Equipment Grants. Chief Williams stated he has found several options, but they require a large percentage of match. Chief Williams would like for Council to allow him to move forward with working with the County to move forward with obtaining funding.

Public Works – Council wanted to know from Mr. McBeth, if his report was June or May? Mr. McBeth indicated it was June. Mayor requested an update on Nuisance and Abatement. Mr. McBeth provided an update. Vehicles and cleanup of property are what we are working mostly on. Condemnation – Mr. McBeth indicated there are grants available that we can apply for. Much discussion took place concerning the daily routes in the Public Works Department. Mayor Stringfellow indicated that she has received numerous calls concerning garbage pickup routes and why the routes are not getting completed. Council discussed concerns with sidewalks, culverts and the overall shape of the City.

Recreation – Mr. White was not present on Zoom. Mayor Stringfellow discussed how other cities are doing programs virtually. Mayor Stringfellow wanted to know about the fencing at the pool. Mayor Stringfellow stated that she had other questions that she wanted to ask Chris White who was not virtually on the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to approve the reports as presented. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance

Properties – Councilman Williams informed Council that the Committee came up with numbers for a bid and this will come up at the August meeting.

Public Safety – Councilwoman Kovas indicated she has a report under New Business.

Public Works – Offering mulch for free. Cardboard and cans need to be recycled. Looking for ways to restructure the department.

Recreation Committee – minutes provided.

Economic Development – July 13th report provided. The Committee would like help from Council . Rural Infrastructure Grant, Business Resource Website, one stop website for people looking to do business in the City, Bailey Bill will not be ready for the meeting today. This should be available for the August Meeting.

Mayor Stringfellow made a motion to approve the Committee Reports as presented. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Stringfellow informed Council that she requested the Housing Authority provide a monthly report for Council's review.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commission Appointments – This item will be deferred to the next meeting with the exception of the Recreation Commission. Councilman Killian made a motion to reappoint Charlie Hopkins to the Chester Housing Authority Commission. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to appoint Ned Holly to fill the expired seat of Nannette Austin on the Recreation Commission. Councilman Killian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Stringfellow made a motion to reappoint Courtney Caldwell to the Recreation Commission. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Stringfellow made a motion to appoint Mario Hughes to fill the expired term of Sarah Simpson on the Recreation Commission. Councilman Killian seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Williams made a motion to appoint Bernard Heath to fill the expired term of Helen McManus on the Recreation Commission. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to reappoint Tom Hamilton to the Recreation Commission. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to appoint Neek Emerson to fill the expired term of Ronald Canty on the Recreation Commission. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Contract – First Citizens, Church Street - The City will pay for the expenditure to have the meter separated and once separated, the electric bill will then be paid by the First Citizens Bank. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to accept the amended contract to include the installation at the cost of the City at 120 Church Street to separate the meter for the ATM and the funding will come from police finns and fees, general fund. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried with Councilman Killian not voting due to technical problems.

Bailey Bill – Discussed early in the meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution Policy and Procedures – Section 8.3 On Call /Call in/Stand By/ Available Status – Attorney Winters explained the proposed Resolution as presented. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to approve as presented. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution to Amend the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual for the City of Chester – Attorney Winters presented the proposed Resolution to reduce Compensatory accumulation. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas made a motion to approve as presented. Councilman Reid seconded the motion. After much discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Vacant Property Registry Update – Mayor Stringfellow requested that Council review the Vacant Property Registry and will discuss at the next meeting.

Public Safety Report – Councilwoman Susan Kovas – The Public Safety Committee provided a detailed report which focused on the following policies, as well as reviewed the SLED Report and the Attorney General's Findings. Use of Force, Off Duty Weapons Authorization, Investigating Use of Force Incidents, Medical Treatment, Use of Force Review, Administrative Leave, Psychological Services, Body Warn, Camera (BWC)

Executive Session – Councilwoman Reid made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:02 pm., for discussion of Legal Matter – Opioid Litigation, Legal Matter – Springsteen Site and Personnel Matter – Police Department. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas opposing the motion.

Councilwoman Reid made a motion to reconvene form Executive Session – 11:30 pm. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Stringfellow stated, while in Executive Session, Council discussed Legal Matter – Opioid Litigation, Legal Matter – Springsteen Site and Personnel Matter – Police Department. No action was taken.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to give the City Administrator the right to hire Micael Kozlaric to represent the City of Chester in a legal matter. Councilman Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Stringfellow stated that we have done an injustice concerning the Walmart shooting. I will hope that everyone takes into consideration with regards to the City's involvement. The statements in the report are different from what the Chief of Police is providing Council. There are so many inconsistencies. I would like you to know that the City is an "At Will Employee" and you can be terminated if it is Council's desire. We have done an injustice.

With no further business, Councilwoman Reid made a motion to adjourn at 11:35 pm. Councilwoman Kovas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof

Chester City Council Special Called Meeting
August 10, 2020, 4:00 pm
Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor Wanda Y. Stringfellow; Council Members Susan Kavas, Councilwoman Douglas, TaTanish Campbell, Annie Reid; City Administrator Stephanie Jackson and HR Director/MC Carla Roof.

NEW BUSINESS: Special Election Date – Ward IV – Administrator Jackson provided information to Council concerning the vacancy of Ward IV seat previously held by former Councilman William King. After much discussion, Councilwoman Reid made a motion to declare the Ward IV seat as vacated, previously held by former Councilman William King and the Special Election date will be held on October 27, 2020. Councilwoman Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

With no objection, Mayor Stringfellow indicated there are two Personnel items needed to be addressed concerning the Human Resources Department and the Public Works Department. Councilwoman Reid made a motion to go into Executive Session for the discussion of Personnel Matters in the Human Resources Department and the Public Works Department. Mayor Pro Tempore Douglas seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Council convened in Executive Session at 4:30 pm.

Councilwoman Kavas made a motion to reconvene from Executive Session at 5:10 pm. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

While in Executive Session, Council discussed a Personnel Matter in the Human Resources Department and a Personnel Matter in the Public Works Department. No action was taken.

Councilwoman Kavas stated with much regret she would like to make a motion to accept the resignation of Mrs. Roof who will be retiring from the City of Chester. Council woman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mayor Stringfellow opposing.

Councilwoman Reid made a motion to accept the resignation of Public Works Director Reginald McBeth. There was no second to the motion. The motion died due to no second.

Councilwoman Kavas made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Reid seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Roof