

City of Reidsville
City Council Meeting
Monday August 8, 2022

Draft Copy- Not approved by Council until September 12, 2022

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Reidsville City Council was held on Monday August 8, 2022 at 5:00 pm. Members of Council present:

Carolyn Crume- Blackshear

Bruce Conner

Lindsay Bennett

Verdie Williams

Doug Williams (absent)

Donald Prestage

City Attorney DuAnn Cowart-Davis was present. Nivea Jackson, City Clerk was present.

The audience was welcomed by Mayor Carolyn Blackshear. Next, the attendees were led by Councilwoman Verdie Williams in a word of prayer, followed by the pledge of allegiance which was done in unison by all.

Donald Prestage asked if he may have a word before the meeting began. Councilman Prestage announced the passing of former Councilwoman Betty Adams. He asked the citizens to keep her family in prayer and to know the City offers its condolences. Betty Adams served two terms on Council.

The Mayor asks for Department reports. Jimmy Brown, Fire Chief began giving the Fire dept's activities for the month. This was followed by Chief Stacey Wilds for the Reidsville Police Dept.

The Mayor stopped to entertain a motion to adopt the last months minutes.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear

Vote: Motion carried unanimous

James Hester Asst. Public Works Director gave the statistics for the Water/Sewer and Street and Lane Depts. Verdie Williams is also making a report on behalf of the Water/Sewer dept as well. Williams is reporting that the Limb truck is fixed. "The truck had been down and we are still getting calls about limbs," Williams acknowledged. She wants the citizens to understand that the

truck will only pick up small limbs and yard debris. "It is not for large lot cleanup and heavy debris". Williams also announced that the female Detainees were out sick. The detainees are a big help to the grass cutting efforts City wide, Williams notes. The detail has been absent for two weeks with another estimated week absence. This puts a strain on Rodney's crew but they are trying to maintain. Williams is looking into Jennifer and Pine Street closures. Williams has received a request to close a street. Williams also is asking her Council members to consider adopting a policy on speed bumps. The City has no policy or code on distributing speed bumps. Williams has been requested by a citizen to have six speed bumps installed on a street. She believes this to be excessive but wants to do what's fair, and safe. Williams is highlighting information James Hester, Asst. Public Works Director made concerning Lift Station 1. Lift Station 1 has been held together for a long time and it is completely down now. Williams wants the Council to vote to have the City Engineering firm submit bids. There is a second Lift Station that will need work as well.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear

Vote: Motion Carries unanimously

Williams is further informing Council that there is 180 ft of 6ft pipe being installed on Nottingham. Rodney Deloach is still getting bids on a building for his department. The 280/Alexander Hotel project needs DOT approval. The meter at the new school has been read and is moving through the Water billing process.

Councilwoman Blackshear is reporting for Administration. Blackshear has given Dept heads employee evaluations to be completed. Blackshear acknowledges that City Hall needs more help in Administration. It is her recommendation that the City hire a finance officer. Blackshear says she is doing research into the job description in order to hire a qualified individual. Donald Prestage interjects that he would like to see the job description before an ad is placed. Lindsay Bennett asks to see if that job fits into the budget. Blackshear adds that she feels that a finance officer would lighten the load on Nivea Jackson's day to day activities. This person would ledger and do the bookkeeping aspects. Bennett is again requesting that a job description and affects on the budget be presented to Council. Blackshear comments that the City really needs that support.

Motion by: Carolyn Blackshear

2nd by: Donald Prestage

Motion: Carries unanimously

Donald Prestage is stating that his goal is to hire an individual with a good background.

Mr. Armstrong, Chairman of the Surrency Playground Commission was given the floor to give his report. Armstrong states that the Playground is in limbo. They have only been able to ascertain one bid for the bathroom/concession stand. Lew Graham was willing to give an estimate as well. Armstrong said that contractors have warned that bids are hard in these times because the costs are steadily rising and daily. Armstrong said he was expecting to have a bid for

the courts by the next meeting. He was having a guy come to give an estimate of the costs. The fence was moved to allow for more parking as well. Armstrong estimates that the court will cost \$6800 to complete. Carolyn Blackshear offers a motion to have the basketball court complete after an estimate

Motion by: Carolyn Blackshear

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Motion Carries: Unanimously

The Downtown Development Authority came to give their report next. Mrs. V. Nail is clarifying the confusion going on with the DDA's paperwork that must be returned to the Secretary of States Office. The Attorney has corrected the paperwork and has presented a copy for signature to the Council. The names and terminology needed to change to abolish the old Development Authority and adopt the new Downtown Development and its members. Nail want to address Zoning Board issues. Mrs. Nails is presenting Marc Nobles zoning change as approved. The Chairman forwarded a copy of approval. Nail was following up that Nobles was approved and notified by City Hall. Nail is disagreeing with being told that she could not serve on more than one board. She asked to see the proof of this. The Chairman informed her that he was told you could not. "There is nothing in writing that says you cannot serve on two boards. Multiple people serve on several boards because no one else wants to," states Nail. Nail announces that at the next meeting of the zoning they will vote and they will have new officers. Donald Prestage asks if everything was fine with the Nobles project. Nivea Jackson stated that Chairman Richardson in fact sent a recommendation to accept Nobles variance. Donald Prestage makes a motion to accept the Variance submitted by Marc Nobles.

Motion by: Donald Prestage

2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear

Vote: Carries Unanimously

Councilwoman Bennett asks if we can go ahead and vote on the DDA amendments. The Attorney encourages this vote

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett

2nd by: Donald Prestage

Vote: Carries Unanimously

The Mayor is moving on to Dilapidated Properties. The Attorney is going to prepare a proposal based on a similar method done by the City of Collins for dilapidated properties. Davis will bring to the next meeting.

Donald Prestage is given the floor to speak on delinquent back taxes. Mr. Prestage has spoken to Government Tax collection and they have a program to help Cities to collect delinquent taxes owed. The cost to collect will fall on the taxpayer and not the City for collections. Prestage is

stating that those delinquent taxes affects our operating budget and adds to our bottom line. Prestage has asked the company to come in and speak with the Council. The County also uses the firm. Mr. Prestage feels this is a win-win for collections. Lindsay Bennett offers a motion to have the tax firm come.

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Motion: Carries unanimous

Verdié Williams announces the September delinquent water account collections. All accounts with a balance on September 16, 2022, will be cut off. There will be an announcement in the paper, on the website, and a door hanger 3 days prior to the cut off the accounts. Former Mayor Clifton says that if the City is going to do water cut offs, bills need to be in the citizens hands by the 1st of every month.

The Mayor is asking to postpone all comments from the floor because the Council needed to move into Executive Session and would entertain comments at the end. Brian Nerzig asked to speak with the Council. Nerzig is informing the meeting that he and his wife Kimberly have filed charges against Verdie Williams, Carolyn Blackshear, Curtis Colwell, and Nivea Jackson for the meeting that was held on July 20, 2022 with the Attorney General's office. Nerzig says the charges is because the Council held a meeting and he feels local code, State and Federal laws were broken. Although the meeting was listed in the paper, he felt that the City did not do enough to let specific citizens who have been concerned with the projects relevant to the meeting know. Nerzig says the sign on the door listing the meeting was invisible from the road. Mr. Nerzig feels the notice in the paper and the sign on the door is unethical as a notice. Nerzig is also asking that Lew Graham follow policy and take all permits through zoning. Mr. Nerzig says that he has nothing personal against any permits he just wants the process followed. Nerzig admits that he has open records requests filed and unfulfilled concerning the Wilds property. He feels her permit was an "improper use of power" from the Council. Blackshear comments that "The Council was acting under the advice of the Attorney," Mrs. Williams asks in what other way would he have liked to be notified?" Mr. Nerzig says we have an adequate parking lot and a billboard could be purchased. The meeting could be listed on the website. There is even a notification service that can be paid for to complete notifications." Mrs. Williams asks Mr. Nerzig what his issue with the Wilds property. He says that Mrs. Wilds doesn't have access to a safe right of way onto her portion of the property except through his property.

Donald Prestage interjects with he was misunderstood about how many properties were inclusive in the July 20 vote on permits. The Attorney responds with we are unsure if the third property even falls under the vote. Bennett asks is there was a plat issued on the property. Bennett states, "under the Mayor system we are in, the weak Mayor system, plats should not be signed off on. I know I haven't approved any plats or permits. A Mayor's responsibility is to act out the wishes of the Council. Bennett is offering a motion to bring Misdemeanor charges against whomever signed off on plats.

Williams asks the Attorney, "isn't the Mayor assigned to handle the day-to-day operation of the City? The Attorney states yes. Well Bennett states, I am talking, I am not done talking. Bennett reads the code on the Mayors duties. Bennett says the Mayor is supposed to be here to answer questions. He cannot sign off on anything without the Council's approval. Permits should be going through the zoning committee and then brought to us to approve. Bennett is making a motion that all permits be brought to the Council by zoning." Davis asked, "subdivision zoning permits?" "No" Bennett answered, "everything." "I made the motion turn it down or not." Vickie Nail has stated "your code states it should go this way, it has never gone this way." Davis says that some changes need to be made of the City's definition of what a subdivision is. Some work on the policy, code, and definitions needs to happen. The Mayor redirects that there is a motion on the table.

Motion by: Lindsay bennett

2nd by: Donald Prestage

2 opposing votes

Vote: no movement

Blackshear is saying you are making motions at people when it is the charter that needs updating. It has for a while. This was talked about before you and Donald came back to Council Lindsay. Lindsay Bennett comments, "if you all would read, you will learn a lot" Brian Nerzig asked what is the process for changing the Code? He is offering his opinion to Council on how this should be accomplished though a third party firm.

Mayor Colwell encourages the meeting to move forward. Mr. Prestage is reading the Policy on attendance and Council member roles and responsibilities. He is stating that Doug Williams has been absent on many occasions not fulfilling his role as Council member. V. Nail recanted approaching Doug Williams and he stated that he intended to resign to her. Donald Prestage is asking that the City attorney speak with him and offer him a chance to resign. Mordena Richardson, a citizen in the audience asked, "has anyone talked to or asked Doug who is with the City?" Nivea Jackson stated she spoke with Doug and he told her he intended to stay. Lindsay Bennett offers a motion to begin removal process of Councilman Doug Williams if he fails to attend the meeting on August 23rd Public Forum.

Carolyn Blackshear makes a motion to go to Executive session at 7:03pm

2nd by Donald Prestage

Verdie Williams makes a motion to return to Regular Session

2nd by: C. Blackshear

Lindsay Bennett makes a motion to get another survey from Robert Sanchez, look at it against EPD regulations and against Land application,

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett