

City of Reidsville

Minutes

Regular City Council Meeting

Monday - March 13, 2023

5:00 p.m.

DRAFT COPY-NOT APPROVED UNTIL APRIL 10th, 2023 COUNCIL MEETING.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Reidsville City Council was held on Monday March 13, 2023, at 5:00 pm. Members of Council present were:

Curtis Colwell, Mayor (absent)

Carolyn Blackshear, Mayor Pro Tem

Lindsay Bennett, Councilwoman

Donald Prestage, Councilman

Doug Williams, Councilman

Verdie Williams, Councilwoman

Duann Davis, City Attorney; Nivea Jackson, City Clerk, and Kelly McRae, Finance Clerk were also present in their respective roles. The audience was welcomed by Mayor Pro Tem Blackshear who presided over the meeting in the absence of Mayor Colwell who is ill. The prayer was given by Captain Greg Carr who was in the audience. The audience recited the pledge of allegiance in unison. Mrs. Blackshear gave an update on the Mayor. She stated that he is out of the hospital but couldn't attend due to a doctor's appointment. She also encouraged all to pray for his speedy recovery. Mrs. Blackshear called for a motion and second to accept last month's minutes. Two sets of minutes were given at the planning session to each Council member for review. Councilman Prestage stated that the meeting held on February 13TH was not technically a meeting since no voting happened and a quorum was not present. Mrs. Blackshear objected and stated that it indeed was a regular council meeting in which no business was transacted; it was for informational purposes only. Councilwoman Verdie Williams offered a motion to accept both the Regular and Called meetings minutes.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2nd by: Doug Williams

Vote: Carried by Majority vote

Department Updates were next on the agenda:

- Fire Chief Jimmy Brown gave the monthly statistics for the Fire Department. No discrepancies were noted.
- Stacey Wilds gave the statistics for the Reidsville Police Department, no discrepancies noted.
- Public Works Director Rodney Deloach gave the Water Sewer/ Street and Lane Department updates. Mr. Deloach stated that he has installed a new fire hydrant at the site of the new Dollar General Store. Councilman Prestage asked Rodney the status of the backhoe repair. Rodney reported that he has spoken to the mechanic, and it should be done in about a week. Councilman Prestage asked if we are leasing or purchasing the backhoe currently being used. Rodney informed him that it is being leased. Mr. Prestage asked the status of the repair of the road in front of Mr. Ray Joyce's house on College Avenue. Rodney stated that the guy doing the repair will be coming out this Friday to make the repairs. Mr. Prestage stated that he is receiving a lot of complaints for work outstanding to include on Adon St. Mr. Prestage stated that the work that is going on at Alliance and Main Street began last year and is asking for an update on the expected completion of this project. Rodney explained that he is going a different route than originally planned for this particular project. Rodney is making the repair in hopes of not having to cut off the City's water supply or such a vital part of the town that includes business and the hospital. Prestage is also inquiring about the leaking water from fire hydrants, namely the one on Main Street. Rodney says that his strategy is to get the parts to fix multiple hydrants at once. Most of the repairs again require the City's water supply to be cut during repairs. The cut offs create issues such as air in the lines and sediment surfacing and boil water conditions. Prestage stated that his concern is that this hydrant has been leaking for some time. Rodney says that there is no way to complete some of these without disrupting the City's water supply. Councilwoman Verdie Williams added that there are so many water/sewer projects all over the City and that many times it has to be prioritized considering parts, labor, and manpower. Councilwoman Blackshear thanked Rodney for his services.
- The Recreation Dept report is next. Councilwoman Bennett adds there is nothing new going on.
- Devin Jarriel, the Building Inspector, is giving his update to the Council. Jarriel says that Councilwoman Williams has been discussing the lights attached to the downtown businesses. The lights need servicing and will need to be removed. The concern with this is that the buildings in which the lights are affixed to are very old. It is possible to damage the structure of the roof while removing the lights and this would make the City liable. Councilwoman Bennett interjected stating that she has campaigned to have the lights removed years ago because it is an eyesore in downtown. Devin will investigate the liability for the City. The lights will remain off. Jarriel has an application to rezone the area behind the Big Peach storage. The Council is restructuring the zoning board which is on the agenda.
- Next was administration. Nivea Jackson and Kelly McRae updated the Council. Jackson reported that we are correcting postings and issues with the software. This will make the biggest difference during the audit. Kelly McRae is entering city budgets into the system and making corrections as well.
- The Mayor ProTem asked if anyone was present from the DDA. There was no one present.
- Mayor ProTem Blackshear introduced the Ethics Committee to the Council. She asked if anyone on the committee wanted to update Council. Attorney Holly Dyar with the committee stated that they have had a meeting and have been organizing. She explained according to the Council their mission. Blackshear added a note that she specifically wants the Committee to have total autonomy to work and hear cases without involvement from the council.

The meeting moved into old business. Delinquent property taxes update was first. Councilman Prestage, The City Attorney, and the City Clerk have met to come up with a strategy for handling the delinquent taxes. Year 2022 taxes have been billed; they've come due and are now delinquent if not paid. Phase 2 of collections will begin. Councilman Prestage, The City Attorney Davis, Kelly McRae, and Nivea Jackson will attend a tax seminar on March 21st. The City had not been charging penalties and fees in previous years but accounts that are delinquent will endure the fees and penalties. Delinquent properties were next on the agenda. City Attorney Duann Davis updated the Council on the property on Church St. The new owners wanted clarity from the City on the expectations of bringing the property up to date and off the list. Davis requests any updates to be given to her. Councilwoman Lindsay Bennett asked about the other properties that were previously voted on to act upon. Davis advised that she has not taken any action on Burn's property. It is still awaiting municipal court action. Jarriel is asking the Council to look at demolition guidelines for the City. Attorney Davis advised that if a property is demolished and rebuilt, we would need to decide on the guidelines. Jarriel asked that building permits be updated to include the types of building we have going on in our area and also refresh the paperwork the City has on work being done in the City.

Next on the agenda is water leaks and new water tap rates. The Council was given rate sheets that reflect the current prices and the new proposed rates. Basically, under the new rates, the customer will be responsible for the cost of the ever-changing and costly materials. (Handout was made available). Rodney Deloach stated that the fees have not been looked at in over 5 years. The rising costs currently mean that the city is undercharging for the taps. It is actually costing the city to make taps. Councilwoman Verdie Williams offers a motion that the new fee list be accepted for the water taps.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2nd by: Doug Williams

Motion: Carried by a tie breaker (Mayor ProTem)

Opposed: Donald Prestage and Lindsay Bennett

Water leaks Policy was next being discussed. Under the new leak policy, the Council is deciding whether to give citizens an 8-10% credit on "acts of God" water leaks that do not move through the sewer. Blackshear is rereading the Policy to inform the citizens. Citizens would need to prove the diagnosis and repair of the leak and an 8-10% discount on an elevated bill would be given. During the colder weather, many citizens had broken pipes and have asked for assistance. Lindsay Bennett made a motion to give a 10% discount to citizens who can prove that they have a leak. Donald Prestage is contending that if a leak cannot be proven, credit shouldn't be given. Bennett is contending that the 4th measure on the proposal is contradictory and should be left off. A signed affidavit would suffice as proof and the account should be updated.

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett

2nd by: Donald Prestage

Motion: Carried unanimously

Next on the agenda is the update on the USDA loan. Nivea Jackson updated the Council. There was a bid opening for the contract. The bid is \$5M over the original bid of \$3.3M on the project. The reason for the increase is the bid was done in 2019 and materials and labor have gone up. The project has been scaled back and a new request for more grant money from USDA has gone out through our engineering firm.

Next, is an update on Liftstation 1. Attorney Davis has talked with possible owner Troy Smith and still checking on the legalities of the liftstation concerning the property.

Next, was new business on the agenda. The Council was presented with two different insurance firms (Jackson and Associates and Lighthouse) on possible healthcare alternatives for the City healthcare insurance. The City currently uses Jackson and Associates as a firm and is a member of the United Healthcare group insurances. The City pays for its entire full-time employees healthcare benefit plan. Verdie Williams made a motion to stay with Jackson and Associates. Williams contended that longstanding relationships have proven to work in the City's advantage especially with so much change all around. Doug Williams agreed and stated that they have been very dependable in the past. The current plan ends on April 1st.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2nd by: Doug Williams

Motion: Carried Unanimously

Next on the agenda is handicapped parking at City Hall. The current parking lot that is right in front of City Hall closest to the front doors, would be exclusive for handicapped parking. Councilman Prestage proposed to finish the sidewalks around City Hall and Councilwoman Williams proposed to connect the parking lot and offer a different entrance and exit to City Hall and a safer entry/exit than the one in the front of the building. Next on the agenda was CDBG Grant administrator choice. Councilman Doug Williams made a motion to accept ALGA as the Grant administrator for our CDBG Grant.

Motion by: Doug Williams

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Motion: Carried Unanimously

Councilman Doug Williams asked to be excused from the meeting due to his job calling. There is no longer a quorum present at the meeting and no motions were made thereafter. Councilman Donald Prestage asked that the Zoning Board restructuring be tabled until a full council is available. Due to not having a quorum present after Councilman Williams exited, Mayor ProTem Blackshear stated that a called meeting would be necessary to finish the items on the agenda.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.