

City of Reidsville

Minutes

FILE

Regular City Council Meeting

Monday- September 13, 2021

Draft Copy-NOT APPROVED until OCTOBER 18, 2021

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Reidsville City Council was held on Monday September 13, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. in the Reidsville City Hall Chambers. Members of Council present were:

Mayor, Curtis Colwell
Councilwoman, Carolyn Crume-Blackshear
Councilman, Bruce Conner
Councilwoman, Lindsay Bennett
Councilman, Doug Williams (Absent)
Councilwoman, Verdie Williams

City Attorney Duann Cowart-Davis and Nivea Jackson, City Clerk were present in their perspective roles. The guests were welcomed and Mayor Colwell asked Councilman Bruce Conner for a word of prayer. After the prayer, the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance aloud in unison.

Mr. Colwell reminded the Council that they had minutes to review, and he would entertain a motion to approve the minutes, if there were no corrections to be made. Lindsay Bennett offered a motion to adopt last month's minutes.

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett
2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear
Vote: Carried unanimously

The Department Supervisors' reports were next on the agenda. The Fire Chief was absent but, a report had been submitted for review. No discrepancies noted. Police Chief Stacey Wilds gave the report for the Reidsville Police Department. Chief Wilds introduced Officer Heather Hayes as a "Rookie in training" for the PD. Ms. Hayes will be completing Officer training through GPSTC in Savannah. Council has asked to meet all new City employees no matter their position with the city. Water/Sewer and Street and Lanes supervisor Rodney Deloach has returned from medical leave. James Hester had been filling in for Rodney in his absence which was longer than originally expected. James had done a great job as reported from everyone who came in contact with him. Rodney Deloach had been trying to fill the Assistant Public Works Director position for months. Bruce Conner added that James operated with minimal direction and did an excellent job filling in. In gratitude for all the hard work that Mr. Hester had done while Rodney was out, Councilman Bruce Conner offered a motion to promote Mr. James Hester to Assistant Public Works Director to fill the vacancy in the Water/Sewer Department.

Motion by: Bruce Conner
2nd by: Verdie Williams
Vote: Carried unanimously

Rodney Deloach did announce that he now had available 2 full time positions, and would be running the help wanted ad in the coming weeks newspaper. Administration was next to give a report. It was given by Councilwoman Blackshear. She assured the Council that the City has received American Rescue Plan Act funds but were following mandate to use funds as prescribed. "These are federal dollars", said Mrs. Blackshear and we have to make an account for all that is spent from this account. She said that the Council is proposing to sit down and make a plan for allocating the funds in a way that helps the citizens. Donald Prestige, who was sitting in the audience, raised his hand with a question. Mr. Prestige wanted to know if Mrs. Blackshear was aware of how much the city was owed in back taxes. She acknowledged that she did. He inquired, "how much" to Mrs. Blackshear? Mrs. Blackshear answered "a substantial amount" it is over one hundred thousand dollars. She said the city was taking steps to collect all outstanding owed taxes. She stated that the city is recovering from Covid-19 and that she is sure the citizens were too but that measures would be taken to give people an opportunity to pay what they owe. She also made mention that people were slowly coming in to pay their past due water bills. The delinquent amounts have drastically improved by measures already being enforced at City Hall.

City Commissions reports were next. Mike Caldwell and Vickie Nail were present representing the Downtown Development Authority. They are meeting and in talks to hopefully bring a Huddle House back to Reidsville. Next, the Surrency-Atkins Playground Commission Chairman Earnest Armstrong and Treasurer, Karen Deloach, were present to give a report to the Council. The commission is requesting permission to cordon off an area of the park to create a walking trail. Mr. Armstrong says he has spoken to Mr. Kennedy concerning creating a walking trail. The commission is also requesting help from the city to assist in the creation of the walking trail. They are currently conducting a fundraiser to raise funds. The fundraiser is a raffle for \$200 worth of gasoline fuel. The drawing is set for October 16th. Councilwoman Verdie Williams offered a motion to allow the SPC to preplan for a walking trail and to install new water faucets inside the park. She stressed that the SPC has been proactive in restoring the park and keeping it active for the whole community.

Motion by: Verdie Williams
2nd by: Bruce Conner
Vote: Carries unanimously

Next on the agenda was the old business of derelict properties. Mr. Burns has received a citation to appear in court in October to answer for his plans to clean up the store front property as well as the hotel property. The Church Street property deconstruction is being financed by the Glennville Bank for "A Place in Paradise" fitness center, who are currently owners of the building. The owners have been ill and hospitalized but have assured that deconstruction would begin immediately.

The first topic under new business is United Rentals. The city has a current contract with this company, and we are currently being billed \$6,600.00 monthly for the rental of an aerator pump at the WWTP. The city has been renting this pump for two and a half years. Upon audit of this account by Rodney Deloach, Public Works Director, Nivea Jackson City Clerk and the Finance Committee it was decided that the terms should be renegotiated. This monthly charge was \$1100 too much and was being double billed to the city. The rental company agreed that terminating the old contract and beginning new at a rate of \$2,550.00 monthly could be possible after clearing up old delinquencies. The company waved some of the late fees, applied some discounts and credited unapplied payments. The final amount owed totaled \$59, 024.90. The City is proposing to use ARPA funds to satisfy this old debt and start new. ARPA funds are allowable for the use of Water/Sewer and Broadband related expenses. Councilman Bruce Conner offered a motion to use ARPA

funds to exhaust old contract with United Rentals up to \$60K. The cancelling of the old contract will then allow the City to start a new contract at \$2,550.00 per month for the rental.

Motion by: Bruce Conner
2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear
Vote: Carried unanimously

Millage Rates were next to be discussed. The Council has adopted the previous year's budgets, the city waiting for a new audit to be complete. The Council has agreed to leave the current year's millage rate as is as well. Sam Sullivan was next on the agenda. Sam Sullivan is petitioning for his company, All Green, for a sanitation rate increase. He explained to the Council that his operation costs have risen 200% in some areas. He is asking that the city raise the price of residential and commercial garbage disposal costs. Bruce Conner objected to raising the costs for citizens and businesses. He said that having to pay more would be tough on anyone. Sullivan added that his company hadn't increased the garbage fees in years. He also noted that the City of Reidsville has not increased their fees in a number of years and has the lowest charge for disposal around the surrounding Cities. The Council has asked to table the issue until next month to give them time to consider their options. The next item brought up was the noise ordinance concerning Jake Brakes. Councilwoman Lindsay Bennett asked if we could include in the ordinance the banning of the use of Jake brakes in residential areas. "I know sometimes its necessary but its excessive near the area where I reside which is near Highway 23 North. Trucks using Jake Brakes can be heard near the City Hall", stated Mrs. Bennett. She also appealed that this could be scary for the elderly and impede hearing as a safety hazard within the city limits. Mrs. Bennett offered the motion to ban the use of Jake Brakes within the City limits.

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett
2nd by: Bruce Conner
Vote: Carried unanimously

The next topic of discussion was the uniforms for the Water/Sewer and Street and Lanes. Currently, the city has a contract with UniFirst Uniform Store to provide water/sewer and street/lanes employees with uniforms. Rodney Deloach, Public Works Director feels he would save the city money by ordering each employee the safety lime green T-shirt and jeans. The city is paying for uniform shirts that do not help with safety and are very hot when worn during the summer months. This would cut down on the need to laundry T-shirts and pants professionally. The new "uniform" would make employees highly visible during their job duties as well as comfortable. The wash and wear maintenance would be easy for employees to maintain and if needed cost effective to replace. Verdie Williams offers the motion to buy the Street and Lane and Water/Sewer employees shirts and jeans as uniforms in lieu of keeping on the UniFirst contract.

Motion by: Verdie Williams
2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear
Vote: Carried unanimously

The next item of discussion on the agenda is whether to do a city sponsored Halloween Night. "Covid-19 cases are up and have been affecting our children citizen this season heavily. Having an event involving children in large numbers who may or may not potentially be protected from Covid-19 is not a liability that the city should engage in", says Mrs. Lindsay Bennett. This pandemic is getting worse and the funeral homes are filling up. The city should not want to be a part of this pandemic spreading to possibly children.

Lindsay Bennett offered a motion to not have a city sponsored Halloween. Kids will still be able to "Trick or Treat" just not at a city sponsored event.

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett
2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear
Vote: Carried unanimously

Lastly, on the agenda was the Police Department's Tahoe lease. The PD has reserved two new Tahoe's for lease. These Tahoe's would replace 2 of the current Chargers that the PD has in its fleet. The Chargers have needed a lot of mechanical repairs. The current Tahoe's in our fleet have only needed normal wear and tear maintenance. The new Tahoe's would apply to a 3-5-year lease at the city's discretion. Together the yearly cost would be \$25k with a \$1.00 buy out at the end of the lease. PD Chief Stacey Wilds has also worked the cost to outfit the vehicles in the cost and is willing to use monies from his PD Tech and seizure funds to offset the cost to the city to have the equipment put in upon the lease's start. Bruce Conner offered a motion to purchase two PD Tahoe's on lease.

Motion by: Carolyn Blackshear
2nd By: Verdie Williams
Vote: Carried unanimously

Officer Wilds also found a clause that would allow officers to take home their work vehicles for up to 25 miles from the city limits. Under this clause, officers can respond from home directly to the incident scene and not need to come and get their unit from the PD station in Reidsville. This will also make our force better able to respond from home to provide mutual aid to anyone who may need it without jurisdictional risks.

With no further business or comments to discuss, Bruce Conner offered a motion to the mayor to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Motion by: Bruce Conner
2nd by: Verdie Williams
Vote: Carried unanimously

Recorded by: Nivea Jackson, City Clerk

Minutes were approved on: October 18, 2021 at the regular Reidsville City Council meeting by the following councilmembers:

<u>Carolyn Blackshear</u>	Carolyn Blackshear... Ward 1 - Post 2
<u>Lindsay Bennett</u>	Lindsey Bennett..... Ward 2 - Post 2
<u>Bruce Conner</u>	Bruce Conner Ward 2 - Post 3
<u>Doug Williams</u>	Doug Williams..... Ward 2 - Post 1
<u>Verdie Williams</u>	Verdie Williams..... Ward 1 - Post 1

Date Filed: 10-19-2021

By: Nivea C Jackson