

**Minutes
Kinston City Council
Regular Meeting
Monday, February 6, 2017 at 5:30 pm**

Mayor Murphy called the City Council meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Councilmember Felicia Solomon led the prayer.

Boy Scouts Jackson Crocker, Troop 392; Jason Taylor, Troop 555 and McKallen See, Troop 555, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Scout Jackson Crocker stated he is with Troop 392 at Westminster Church, he is a Life Scout and is looking for eagle projects and finishing up merit badges.

Those present: Councilmembers Sammy Aiken, Felicia Solomon, Joseph Tyson, Mayor Pro Tem Robert Swinson and Mayor BJ Murphy

Those absent: Councilmember Wynn Whittington

Also present: Tony Sears, City Manager and James P. Cauley, III, City Attorney

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Aiken and upon a unanimous vote (*Councilmember Whittington was absent.*) the agenda was adopted.

CITIZEN COMMENT

PRESENTATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

Bill Ellis, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced Chris Hatcher, Kinston native and Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher, his wife Jenny and their 10 month old son. During Hurricane Matthew Bryan Hanks and United Way wanted to put together a game at Grainger Stadium for the National Guard who were in Kinston and all of the proceeds would go to United Way to help flood victims. We called Chris Hatcher, and we could not have put the game together without Chris and Bryan. We have never called Chris to ask him to do something where he hasn't done it. It is great when someone makes it to the major leagues, does a great job in life and comes home to be a part of the community. He has worked for Parks and Recreation the past several years during his break. This year after the hurricane he worked at the Lenoir County Landfill.

Mayor Murphy thanked Mr. Hatcher and his family. He presented a Certificate of Appreciation and Mr. Ellis presented a photo of Mr. Hatcher and the National Guard at Grainger Stadium.

MINUTES

Consider approval of the minutes of the regular Kinston City Council meeting held on Tuesday, January 17, 2017.....Monique Hicks

Councilmember Tyson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Solomon and upon a unanimous vote (*Councilmember Whittington was absent.*) the minutes were approved.

ACTION AGENDA

1. Consider approval of a fireworks show at Grainger Stadium for the Freedom Classic on Friday, February 24, 2017 at 9:30 pmBill Ellis

Bill Ellis, Parks and Recreation Director, stated the Convention and Visitors Bureau will sponsor the fireworks for opening night of the Freedom Classic, pending all of the permits. Air Force and Navy will arrive Thursday night. Friday at Kinston Country Club there will be a lunch for coaches and captains of the teams to talk about academy life and playing college baseball. Tickets are being sold. Friday the game starts at 6:00. Saturday there will be a flyover at 2:00, hopefully with F-15s. There will be veterans to parachute in with game balls. Sunday there will be another flyover and Sunday night there will be a banquet at King's at 7:00 and the public is invited. Anyone wishing to volunteer to hold the flag should call the Pride of Kinston or Parks and Recreation. We need 75-100 volunteers for each game. All of the hotel rooms are completely sold out.

Mayor Pro Tem Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Solomon and upon a unanimous vote (*Councilmember Whittington was absent.*) the fireworks were approved.

2. Update on Grainger StadiumBill Ellis
(*This update was added.*)

Bill Ellis, Parks and Recreation Director, stated we have made good progress on the stadium. The Salt Wood Products site has been completely demolished and hauled off. We will crush the blocks to spread gravel on the site concession stand which will be completed two weeks in advance. Additional parking will be available behind the former Coastal Wholesale building. The roof goes up on the concession stand starting Wednesday and it should be completed in approximately two weeks. The locker room improvements have been made and the carpet is being installed and should be done by the Freedom Classic. Everything is on schedule. We will have parking signage and the Wood Ducks have hired parking attendants.

Councilmember Tyson asked about the usage of the batting cages at Mock. Mr. Ellis stated they are being used and will be used by the Wood Ducks when it is raining. Other ball teams

including Lenoir Community College, Recreation teams, travel teams, and others use it. We have built new outdoor batting cages with roofs.

2. Consider approval of the recommendation for the historic nomination of the Imperial Tobacco Building to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NCSHPO)Adam Short

Adam Short, Planning Director, stated the Imperial Tobacco building is located at 426 North Herritage Street and is under consideration for being added to the National Registered Historic Places. The State’s Historic Preservation Office requires a recommendation from the City. The Historic District Commission met and discussed this location and they have forwarded a recommendation to the City Council to approve it and to forward it to the State Preservation office. Originally, this was the office building for Imperial Tobacco Company. It was built around 1925 and in the 1980’s it was converted into apartments and most recently further renovated and updated for long term stays.

Councilmember Tyson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Solomon and upon a unanimous vote (*Councilmember Whittington was absent.*) the recommendation was approved.

3. Consider approval of the 2016-17 Street Resurfacing candidates and authorize staff to pursue bids from outside vendors.....Rhonda Barwick

Rhonda Barwick, Public Services Director, stated this year there is \$200,000 in Street Resurfacing. Each year we take our 2012 streets condition survey that takes into account the condition of each street and grades each street. The survey is online at www.kinstonpublicservices.com under information and reports. Included is a list of the streets that are next on our list of streets that need to be resurfaced. If the list is approved, we will follow up with the solicitation of bids. If the bids are low, we will look at the next street on the list to see if it can possibly be included.

Mayor Murphy asked how a citizen would find out where their street is on the list. Mrs. Barwick stated citizens can call Public Services and we will look through the street condition survey. We do not go straight down the list because if we see a street on the list that we know has utility issues, the utilities funds may pay for the resurfacing after the work has been done.

Councilmember Aiken asked about the bad condition of Lenoir Avenue from Herritage Street to East Street. Mrs. Barwick stated staff will have to look at it. We also try to put roads together so that the contractor does not have to remobilize. We also consider the volume of traffic on a road. Years ago City Council wanted to pursue a 25 year cycle which means a road would be resurfaced once every 25 years, but we are not on that cycle because it would require that we have \$552,000 annually for resurfacing. We have done better in recent years and we have also had utility projects that have done some streets as well. \$552,000 would resurface about 4-1/2

miles per year, but \$200,000 has been the maximum that we have been able to fund over the past few years. If citizens see areas of potholes or anything that we can make quick repairs, just call Public Services and let us know.

Councilmember Aiken made the motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Swinson and upon a unanimous vote (*Councilmember Whittington was absent.*) the street candidates were approved.

4. Interim Financial Update.....Catherine Gwynn

Catherine Gwynn, Finance Director, stated this is a summary update as of December 31, 2016. Combined all funds, the city has received \$57 million in revenues, and we have expended approximately \$51 million. This does not include the Internal Service Funds. For Property Tax revenues, we budgeted \$9.76 million which makes up about 40% of the General Fund budget. We have collected approximately \$6.9 million which is about 71%. For sales tax revenues we budgeted \$3.9 million and in the State revenue franchise tax we have collected \$1.1 million which is about 48%. In debt set off we have collected \$58,000 in bad debts. Surplus sales have not done much but typically we spend the first months buying and at that point, departments turn in their equipment to be surplus, so typically the surplus revenues are received March to June. The City's expenditures are overall proportional which is about 48%. Hurricane Matthew expenditures are included. The city has expended approximately \$1.5 million in recovery and repair efforts so that does affect the expenditure amount.

Mayor Pro Tem Swinson asked how long does it take for the city to be reimbursed for Matthew expenditures. Mrs. Gwynn stated probably around another three to six months before we see our first reimbursement. We are still working on project work sheets which will take another 30-45 days to get them to FEMA, then they have to write them up. It is a very long and involved process. I hope in two to three months we would receive the first reimbursement from the State which comes through FEMA. We would get up to 75%, and we will have to wait until the project closeout to get the rest of the money. The whole process will take a couple of years, but we should receive a large portion of the money we expended within the next six months.

Mayor Murphy stated this is evident that a healthy fund balance is important.

Councilmember Tyson asked since the money was expended one year, and will be reimbursed the next budget year, what is impact? Mrs. Gwynn stated as long as we receive the project work sheets which will be the official statement from FEMA and the State saying they will give us a specific amount of money back, those expenditures can be moved from the operating funds to the special revenue fund so there is no year to year cash flow effect. If it doesn't happen, we will have an issue and we will have to present an amendment to City Council to appropriate fund balance for those expenditures and when the government authorize the money, we can put the funds back. We hope to get it done this fiscal year.

Councilmember Aiken asked the status of hiring a new Finance Director. Tony Sears, City Manager, stated we should have someone by mid March.

APPOINTMENTS

- 1. Consider the appointments of Nathan Perry and William Wilder and the reappointment of Brian Wiggins for three year terms to the Recreation CommissionBill Ellis**

Councilmember Tyson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Solomon and upon a unanimous vote (Councilmember Whittington was absent.) the appointments were approved.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Tony Sears, City Manager, asked the MIS staff to show the City Council the City's new website. This will be a test drive showing how it will look, and it is not the final product.

Jamika Little, MIS Program Analyst, showed the home page of the current website. The current website is over ten years old, it is no longer supported, not in compliance with the American Disabilities Act and the mobile usage is not scaled to tablets or phones. Each department will be responsible for maintaining their pages and content. We have worked for some time on the new website and we all worked together to ensure the success of the new website. Technology and information change regularly, and we will have an option to update the website every four years from Civic Plus. She demonstrated the new website and its new features.

Mr. Sears stated Mayor Murphy's seat on the Lenoir County Economic Development Commission has expired. They meet on an as needed basis. My recommendation is that we have someone on City Council to fill the seat.

COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

Mayor Murphy suggested that City Council consider attending the NCLM Town Hall Day.

Councilmember Aiken asked about the maintenance of the hanging baskets on Herritage Street. A citizen expressed her desire to keep the holly trees on Queen Street and her concern about a budget for new trees. Bill Ellis, Parks and Recreation Director, stated he will take down the baskets on Herritage Street.

Mayor Murphy stated Kinston Pro Action Team held a clean up on Tiffany Street by Richard Green Apartments. We would like to see more community clean up events to show appreciation for our community. The City is willing and able to provide the bags and pick up the bags to help groups that want to help with such projects. It takes someone from the community and we will walk hand and hand with them.

Mayor Pro Tem Swinson asked for a report on condemnation and demolition at the next City Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Swinson made the motion, seconded by Councilmember Aiken and upon a unanimous vote the City Council meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique Hicks, City Clerk