

MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CITY OF COLUMBUS, MS

**JANUARY 19, 2021
5:00 P.M.**

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in the Court Chambers of the Municipal Complex. Mayor Robert E. Smith, Sr. presided over the meeting. All Council Members participated in the meeting via teleconference (Zoom), with the exception of Council Member Gavin, who was absent. Those participating in person were the COO, CFO, the General Counsel, the Police Chief, Assistant Police Chief, and the HR Director. All other Department Heads participated via tele-conference.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order and called upon Council Member Box to offer the Invocation.

II. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF JANUARY 5, 2021.

Council Member Box made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Meeting of January 5, 2021. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

III. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS

Council Member Stewart made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for January 19, 2021, in the amount of \$509,082.75. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

IV. CONFIRMATION OF/OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no changes to the Consent Agenda.

POLICY AGENDA:

There were no changes to the Policy Agenda.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Council Member Beard seconded the motion. The Mayor called for discussion, and there being none, all Council Members voted in favor of same, with a unanimous vote.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Accept letter of resignation from Fire and Rescue Administrative Assistant, Tabitha Barham, effective February 1, 2021.
- B. Approve request for Fire and Rescue Firefighter, Clayton Aldridge, to attend "Fire Service Chaplain" class to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of \$125.00 for registration, \$30.00 for travel and reimbursement for meal expenses.
- C. Approve request for two (2) Fire and Rescue personnel: Wes Mims and Marco Rodriguez, to attend "HSART Ground Refresher" course to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of \$30.00 for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses.
- D. Approve request for four (4) Fire and Rescue personnel: Lukas Borntrager, William Boyd, Landon Hill and Thomas Parsons, III, to attend the "HazMat Awareness & Operations" class to be held virtually; however, students must travel to Jackson to register. Approve payment of \$2,560.00 for registration, \$75.00 for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses.
- E. Approve permit request submitted by Natashea Coleman-Brown, on behalf of Franklin Academy, to host "Franklin Academy Bicentennial Celebration" to be held on February 12, 2021 from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., with 3rd Avenue North between 5th Street North and 6th Street North being blocked on Thursday, February 11, 2021 for set-up, beginning at 3:00 p.m. and will remain blocked until 6:00 p.m. on Friday, February 12, 2020.
- F. Accept letter of resignation from Animal Control Officer, Courtney Ross, effective January 7, 2021.
- G. Approve request for two (2) CPD Officers, Mark Underwood and Christopher Ware, to attend the "Crisis Intervention Team Training" to be held in Meridian, MS, and approve payment of \$60.00 for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion. The Mayor called for

discussion, and there being none, all Council Members voted in favor of same, with a unanimous vote.

VI. REPORTS, PROCLAMATIONS, RECOGNITIONS AGENDA

A. General Comments from the Mayor and Council Members

The Mayor and Council heard an update from Kevin Stafford on the progress made with the Paving Project. Mr. Stafford participated in the meeting virtually.

B. Monthly Report from the Columbus Fire and Rescue Department for December 2020

The Monthly Report from the Columbus Fire and Rescue Department for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

C. Annual Report from the Columbus Fire and Rescue Department for 2020

The Annual Report for the Columbus Fire and Rescue Department for 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

D. Monthly Report from the Municipal Court Division for December 2020

The Monthly Report from the Municipal Court Division for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

E. Monthly Report from the Public Works Department for December 2020

The Monthly Report from the Public Works Department for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

F. Monthly Report from the City Planning and Community Development Department for December 2020

The Monthly Report from the City Planning and Community Development Department for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

G. Monthly Report from the Code Enforcement Department for December 2020

The Monthly Report from the Code Enforcement Department for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

H. Monthly Report from the Columbus Recreation Department for December 2020

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The Monthly Report from the Columbus Recreation Department for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

I. Monthly Report from the Columbus Police Department for December 2020

The Monthly Report from the Columbus Police Department for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

J. Monthly Report from the Building Inspection Department for December 2020

The Monthly Report from the Building Inspection Department for December 2020 was presented. No action was taken.

K. Monthly Financial Report

Deliah Vaughn, CFO, distributed the Monthly Financial Report for December and remarked that the City currently has a combined total of \$14,175,157.28 which includes the \$6.2 Bond money for paving. The General Fund has a total of \$10,756,813.80 and Special Revenue Funds totaling \$3,418,343.48. The General Fund Operating Cash for the month of December was \$1,194,077.67, prior year was \$988,211.60, which is \$205,866.07 more than December 2019. The Sales Tax collections for the month were \$802,364.78, which is an decrease of \$5,568.67 compared to the same time last year.

Sales tax for the prior month was \$846,933.41. Prior year was \$788,697.35. The City received \$58,236.17 more in December 2020 that we did in December 2019.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

- 2 Vacancies, 3-Year Terms for Wythe Rhett and Quinn Brislin expire 01/20/2021.
- Appointments will be made January 19, 2021.

APPLICANT:

- Quinn Brislin
- Wythe Rhett

Council Member Jones made a motion to reappoint Wythe Rhett and Quinn Brislin to the City Planning Commission for 3-Year Terms, until January 20, 2024. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA

VIII. POLICY AGENDA

A. Discuss/Approve request to hire one (1) Entry-Level Firefighter, pending successful completion of a pre-employment physical exam and drug screen.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to hire **KYLER KIDDER** as an Entry-Level Firefighter, contingent on successful completion of a pre-employment medical exam and drug screen. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

B. Discuss/Approve request to hire two (2) Laborers for the Public Works Department, pending successful completion of a pre-employment physical exam and drug screen.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to hire **ANTHONY WILLIAMS** and **JEREMY WINSTON** as Laborer at \$10.30 per hour, contingent on successful completion of a pre-employment medical exam and drug screen. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

C. Approve request to advertise for professional services for the 2018 HOME Investment Partnership Grant.

Council Member Box made a motion to approve the request to advertise for professional services for the 2018 HOME Investment Partnership Grant to include:

- Asbestos
- Lead Base Paint
- Legal/Attorney
- Appraisals
- Architects/Engineers

Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

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The motion carried.

D. Discuss/Approve hiring one (1) Part-Time CPD Officer, contingent upon a successful pre-employment physical and drug screen.

Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the request to hire **Richard Dye** as a certified part-time officer at \$15.75 per hour, contingent on successful completion of a pre-employment medical exam and drug screen. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

E. Discuss/Approve All-Way Stop for Park Circle at Prince George Street.

Kevin Stafford, dba Neel-Schaffer, Inc., reported that a study has been conducted and a request made to erect an All-Way Stop sign for Park Circle at Prince George Street. Currently, there is a one-way stop on Prince George Street and traffic along Park Circle does not stop. Per Section 2B-07, Multi-way Stop Applications, of the 2009 Edition of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), conditions are a minimum warrant requirement for an ALL-WAY STOP. Based on this recommendation, Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the request for an All-Way Stop for Park Circle at Prince George Street. Council Member Box seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

F. Discuss/Approve recommendations from the January 11, 2021 Planning Commission meeting.

P/C Docket No. 21-01

Carroll S. Rippy

Northeast Intersection of Waverly Ferry Road & Wilkins Wise Road

Parcel #57W00-00-01599 Track #2

A-2 General Agricultural District

**Request to rezone tract #2 from A-1 General Agricultural to C-1
Neighborhood Commercial**

The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval to rezone the tract from A-1 General Agricultural to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial. The Commission based their decision on a change in the character of the neighborhood and a public need.

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Council Member Mickens moved that the facts and findings of the Planning Commission be adopted as the facts and findings of the Mayor and City Council, and that the recommendation of the Planning Commission to rezone the tract from A-1 General Agricultural to C-1 Neighborhood Commercial be approved. The Commission based their decision on a change in the character of the neighborhood and a public need to be approved. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. The Mayor asked if anyone in the audience objected to the permitted use application. No one answered. There followed discussion, consideration, and review by the Council of the issues and facts presented by this request and the action taken by the City of Columbus Planning Commission.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

Other Business

Proposed Road Name Change

**Will Sanders
Port Director
Lowndes County Port Authority**

Request to change the name of Port Access Extension to Henry Weiss Boulevard

The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval to change the name of Port Access Extension to Henry Weiss Boulevard.

Council Member Jones moved that the facts and findings of the Planning Commission be adopted as the facts and findings of the Mayor and City Council, and that the recommendation of the Planning Commission to change the name of Port Access Extension to Henry Weiss Boulevard be approved. Council Member Box seconded the motion. There followed discussion, consideration, and review by the Council of the issues and facts presented by this request and the action taken by the City of Columbus Planning Commission.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

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CLOSED DETERMINATION:

Council Member Jones made a motion to go into closed session to determine whether it is necessary to go into Executive Session. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

All members of the public, with the exception of the Mayor, the Council, the General Counsel, the COO, the Police Chief, and the HR Director, exited the Zoom meeting.

Mayor Smith apprised the Council of one (1) Personnel matter related to the health condition of an employee in the Public Works Department and remarked that this matter warrants being heard in Executive Session. Council Member Beard made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

The Chief Operations Officer then announced to the general public outside the Council Chambers that the Council was going into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter related to the health condition of an employee in the Public Works Department.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

PERSONNEL MATTER:

Pat Mitchell, Human Resources Director, reported that an employee in the Public Works Department has been absent due to a serious illness and has exhausted twelve (12) weeks' of Family Medical Leave. Employee I. D. Number 918 last day worked was October 9, 2020. He was hospitalized on October 12, 2020 and remained in the hospital for an extensive period of time. Based on his physician's notes, he is recuperating well; however, he needs an extension of leave time to recuperate. Therefore, I am requesting an extension of up to twelve additional weeks of FML, which has been routinely permitted in the past. His Department Head concurs with this request. Council Member Jones made a motion to grant Employee I. D. Number 918 an extension of up to twelve (12) additional weeks of medical leave. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

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The motion carried.

OPEN SESSION:

Council Member Beard made a motion to end the discussion of this matter and return to Open Session. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

The Chief Operations Officer then announced to the general public outside the meeting room that the Council was back in Open Session.

The General Counsel announced that the Mayor and Council heard one (1) Personnel matter related to the health condition of an employee of the Public Works Department and voted to grant an extension of up to twelve (12) additional weeks of medical leave.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Mayor then asked if there was any other business to come before the Mayor and City Council. There being none, Council Member Beard moved that the meeting be adjourned. Upon second by Council Member Mickens and unanimous vote, the Mayor announced that the meeting was ADJOURNED.

Approved by: _____
Robert E. Smith, Sr., Mayor

Deliah T. Vaughn
CFO- Secretary-Treasurer