

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

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

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, January 5, 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). The General Counsel also participated via (Zoom). Those present in person were the COO, CFO, 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 MEETINGS OF DECEMBER 15 & 22, 2020.

Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Meetings of December 15 & 22, 2020. Council Member Box seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

III. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS

Council Member Gavin made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for January 5, 2021, in the amount of \$866,744.39. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members 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.

REPORTS, PROCLAMATIONS, RECOGNITIONS AGENDA:

Add "Swearing In" of one (1) Police Officer.

POLICY AGENDA:

Add Item "D" – *Discuss/Approve promotion of one (1) CPD Officer to the position of Police Corporal.*

Add Item "F" – *Discuss/Approve request to promote one (1) Forensic Scientist to Assistant Director for the Columbus Forensics Lab.*

Add Item "G" – *Discuss/Approve request to promote two (2) Forensic Lab Trainees to Forensic Scientist I.*

Council Member Gavin made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, with the above amendments. 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.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve request for Fire and Rescue Marshal, Alan Lewis, to be reimbursed for tuition for classes pertaining to his position in the amount of \$600.00.
- B. Approve request for four (4) Fire and Rescue Firefighters: Lukas Borntrager, William Boyd, Landon Hill and Thomas Parsons to attend the "EMT Course" to be held in Mayhew, MS, and approve payment of \$7500.00 for registration and books.
- C. Approve request for three (3) Fire and Rescue Firefighters: Clayton Aldridge, Onterrio Lowery and Andrew Williams to attend the "NREMT Exam" to be held in Tuscaloosa, AL, and approve payment of registration and reimbursement of meal expenses. Amount for registration is included in Item "E".
- D. Approve request for Fire and Rescue personnel, Mike Chandler and Alan Lewis, to attend the "Virtual Excellence Conference" to be held online, and approve payment of \$398.00 for registration.
- E. Approve request to purchase twenty (20) recertification and seven (7) certification vouchers from the National Registry of EMTs at a cost of \$1,086.00.
- F. Approve request to accept a donation of surplus items received from Vanesia Mravich, of Allentown, PA.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Council Member Gavin 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

Mayor Smith updated the Council on the following events:

- Status of the Drive-By shooting. There is a \$75,000 bond for the first perpetrator and no bond on the second one. Citizens can feel free to call the Columbus Police Department without fear of appraisal.
- Highway 82 Round-about near Harvey's Restaurant – hopefully Highway 82 will be open for traffic by Friday, January 8, 2021.

B. SWEARING IN OF ONE (1) CPD OFFICER

Mayor Smith swore in one (1) new Police Officer, **TIMOTHY TATE**, as he recited the Oath of Office. The CPD Command Staff was present and Chief Shelton presented the employee with the Oath of Office and pinned on his insignia.

C. BOARD VACANCIES

David Armstrong, COO, announced vacancies on various boards and remarked that no appointments can be made tonight.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT & APPEALS OF DEVELOPMENT CODES

- 1 Vacancy, 1-Year Term for Alan Lewis expires 01/07/2021.
- Requirement: Fire Protection Engineer or Contractor
- Appointment will be made January 5, 2021.

APPLICANT:

- ALAN LEWIS

Council Member Gavin made a motion to approve the request to reappoint Alan Lewis to the Board of Adjustment & Appeals of Development Codes for a 1-Year Term, until January 5, 2022. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

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

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA

VIII. POLICY AGENDA

A. Discuss/Approve request for the HR Director to advertise for one (1) vacant Forensic Scientist Trainee (Criminalist Section) position.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to authorize the HR Director to advertise for one (1) vacant Forensic Scientist Trainee (Criminalist Section) position. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

B. Discuss/Approve request for the HR Director to advertise for one (1) vacant Help Desk Technician position.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to authorize the HR Director to advertise for one (1) vacant Help Desk Technician position. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

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

Council Member Beard made a motion to hire **JOINAY WATTS** as an Entry-Level Police Officer, contingent upon a successful drug screen and pre-employment physical. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

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The motion carried.

D. Discuss/Approve promotion of one (1) CPD Officer to the position of Corporal.

Council Member Box made a motion to approve the request to promote **Officer AARON ANDREW** to the position of Police Corporal, with the hourly rate of \$17.30, effective immediately. Chief Shelton pinned on Corporal insignia. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

E. Discuss/Approve Derelict Property Docket

ROBERT L. WRIGHT

211 Sylvan Road

CASE NUMBER 20-0274

RUBBISH AND GARBAGE

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0274**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property has been **remediated** by the owner, and it is his recommendation to enter the proposed Order under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, finding that this property was in such a state of uncleanness as to be a menace to the public health and safety of the community. This Order should provide for such re-entry as the Statute allows. Council Member Jones made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11, and for an Order stating the City may remediate the property with respect to cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) month period immediately following the Order, with further notice to the owner as required by law. Costs are to be assessed as allowed under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

WILLIE DAVIS

149 Beech Street

Case Number 20-0267

BURNED STRUCTURE

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The General Counsel called cause number **20-0267**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Jones made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

**Joseph Davis and Willie G. Davis
2603 – 6th Avenue North
Case Number 20-0283 RUBBISH AND GARBAGE**

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0283**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Jones made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried

**GEORGE M. MARTIN
1402 – 17th Avenue North
Case Number 20-0272 VEGETATION**

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0272**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the

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Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Jones made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried

JOYCE M. ORR

515 – 15th Street North

Case Number 20-0405 MAINTENANCE CODE VIOLATION

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0405**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Jones made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

LOVIE J. FUQUA

1408 Military Road

Case Number 20-0271 VEGETATION

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0271**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Jones made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order

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stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried

F. Discuss/Approve request to promote one (1) Forensic Scientist to Assistant Director for the Columbus Forensics Lab

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to promote **CLAUDETTE GILMAN** to Assistant Director of the Columbus Forensics Lab with an increase from \$22.28 per hour to \$22.60 per hour. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

G. Discuss/Approve request to promote Forensic Lab Trainees to Forensic Scientist I.

Council Member Jones made a motion to promote **Shanna Cunningham** and **Hunter Mooney** to Forensic Scientists I and adjust their rate pay from \$14.43 to \$16.83. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

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 Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members 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.

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Mayor Smith apprised the Council of one (1) Pending Litigation matter and two (2) Personnel matters and remarked that these matters warrant being heard in Executive Session.

Council Member Jones made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a Pending Litigation matter and a Personnel matter. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members 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 Pending Litigation matter and two (2) Personnel matters.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

OPEN SESSION:

Council Member Beard made a motion to end the discussion of these matters and return to Open Session. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members 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) Pending Litigation matter and voted unanimously to hire an Attorney to represent the City of Columbus; discussed two (2) personnel matters involving performance of two employees - one in the Police Department and one in Public Works and voted to discuss one matter at the first meeting of the Council in February 2021 and voted to terminate one employee in the Public Works Department for violating City policy and misconduct.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

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

Deliah T. Vaughn
CFO- Secretary-Treasurer

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