

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

**FEBRUARY 2, 2021
5:00 P.M.**

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 2, 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 in person, except Council Member Mickens, who participated via teleconference (Zoom). Those also present in person were the COO, CFO, the General Counsel, 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 19, 2021.

Council Member Stewart made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Meeting of January 19, 2021. Council Member Beard 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 February 5, 2021, in the amount of \$946,967.16. Council Member Stewart 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:

**MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

Change Item “F” to read: *Accept letter of resignation from two (2) Public Works Department employees, one effective January 25, 2021 and one effective January 29, 2021.*

Delete Item “E” – *Approve request for the City of Columbus CFO to issue a check for payment to the Mississippi State Department of Health for registration of twenty-two (22) EMT-Basic personnel.* This information was added to the docket.

Council Member Beard 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. Accept letter of resignation from Fire and Rescue Engineer, Donald H. Tedford, effective January 15, 2021.
- B. Approve request for two (2) Fire and Rescue personnel: Duane Hughes and Alan Lewis, to attend “Engine 24 Repair” to be held in Richland, MS, and approve payment of \$50.00 for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses.
- C. Approve request for Fire and Rescue Chief of Training, Mike Chandler, to attend the “Smoke Diver” class to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of \$30.00 for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses.
- D. Approve request for two (2) Fire and Rescue personnel, Joseph Denton and Josh Connors, to attend the “Smoke Diver” class to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of \$840.00 for registration, \$30.00 for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses.
- E. DELETE
- F. Accept letter of resignation from Public Works Department employees, Ladarius Moore, effective January 25, 2021 and Demarco Hudson, effective January 29, 2021.
- G. Accept letter of resignation from CPD Officer, Christopher Blaylock, effective February 5, 2021.
- H. Approve request for the Elections Commissioners, Registrar and Clerk to attend the “2021 Municipal Election Certification Training” hosted by the Secretary of State’s Office to be held at Itawamba Community College, Belden Center, Belden, MS. (The December 16, 2020 Certification Training was cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic).

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

Council Member Gavin thanked everyone for their phone calls and cards during his illness.

Council Member Jones thanked the Police Chief and a Police Sgt. for assistance in identifying a hit-and-run that hit his parked vehicle.

B. SWEARING IN OF ONE (1) CPD OFFICER

Mayor Smith swore in one (1) new Police Officer, **JOINAY WATTS**, as she 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 her insignia.

C. BOARD VACANCIES

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

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT & APPEALS

- 1 Vacancy, 3-Year Term for Gregory Jefferson expires 02/06/2021.
- Appointment will be made February 16, 2021.
- No Applicants at this time

- 1 Vacancy, 3-Year Term for Kevin Stafford expires 03/01/2021.
- Appointment will be made March 2, 2021.

APPLICANT:

- Kevin Stafford

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT & APPEALS OF DEVELOPMENT CODES

- 1 Vacancy, 1-Year Term for Kevin Stafford expires 03/03/2021.
- Requirement: Engineer
- Appointment will be made March 2, 2021.

APPLICANT:

- Kevin Stafford

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

- 1 Vacancy, 6-Year Term for Dr. Jo Shumake expires 03/01/2021.
- Appointment will be made March 2, 2021.

APPLICANT:

- Dr. Jo Shumake

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA

- Wanda Holley – 2019 Fiscal Year Audit. Council Member Mickens' phone connection was lost and he could not be reconnected.

Wanda Holley, CPA with Watkins, Ward and Stafford and the City's Auditor, delivered the 2019 Fiscal Year Audit and discussed various specific issues therein.

VIII. POLICY AGENDA

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

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to hire **RACHEL MCCORD**, as a Police Officer, contingent on successful completion of a pre-employment drug screen and physical. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

B. Discuss/Approve acceptance of MDOT Multimodal Grant Funding Agreement for Columbus Lowndes County Airport Open Hangar Rehabilitation project.

Kevin Stafford, dba as Neel-Schaffer, Inc. remarked that cost is \$189,534.00. FAA will pay 99% of this cost and the City and County is responsible for 1%, which is \$957.25 for each entity. Council Member Box made a motion to accept the MDOT Multimodal Grant Funding Agreement for Columbus-Lowndes County Airport Hangar Rehabilitation project and pay the City's portion of \$957.25. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

C. Discuss/Approve Engineering Contract for the CLCA Open Hangar Rehabilitation project.

Council Member Gavin made a motion to award the Engineering Contract for CLCA Open Hangar Rehabilitation project to Neel-Schaffer, Inc. in the amount of \$31,100.00. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

D. Discuss/Approve advertising for bids for the CLCA Open Hangar Rehabilitation project.

Council Member Gavin made a motion to approve the request to advertise for bids for the CLCA Open Hangar rehabilitation project. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

E. Discuss/Approve Derelict Property Docket

SHAWN MORRIS

512 – 18th Street North

CASE NUMBER 20-0170

MAINTENANCE CODE, VEGETATION

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0170**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property has been **remediated** by the owner, and it is her 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 Beard seconded the motion.

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2, 2021

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

DANIEL LEHNHARD
1106 – 9th Avenue North
Case Number 20-0234

VEGETATION

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0234**. No one appeared. The Code Enforcement Officer was asked what her recommendation was. Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, remarked that the property owner requested an extension to remediate the property and 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 give the property owner a **10-day extension** to remediate the property and board the windows, and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Jones made a motion give the property owner a **10-day extension** to remediate the property, and that an Order be issued for the property 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 remove rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Beard seconded the motion

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

ROBERT BENTIL
503 – 11th Street North
Case Number 20-0226 **DILAPIDATED**

The General Counsel called cause number **20-0226**. 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 for the property owner to immediately take care of the vegetation and apply for a permit prior to the next Council meeting and if the owner had not made significant progress before the next meeting, that the property be immediately abated by the City. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2, 2021

The motion carried.

PAUL R. RAINEY
2104 – 7TH Street North
Case Number 20-0279 VEGETATION

The General Counsel called cause number **19-0279**. 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 Gavin 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) month period. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

F. Discuss/Approve Bid Award for Fire and Rescue Department Radios.

Pat Mitchell reported that the Fire and Rescue Department applied for an AFG (Assistance Firefighters Grant) to purchase radios and was awarded the Grant in the amount of \$263,000.00. The City was required to bid the Radios out and hold a Reverse Auction. Three (3) proposals were received and verified according to specifications. The vendors were: Teletec Communication, LLC, Precision Communications and Comsouth, Inc. A Reverse Auction was held and Teletec was the lowest bidder; therefore it is recommended that the bid be awarded to Teletec Communications, LLC. Council Member Jones made a motion to award Radios bid for the Columbus Fire and Rescue Department to Teletec Communications, LLC in the amount of \$180,000.00. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

CLOSED DETERMINATION:

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

**MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

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 meeting.

Mayor Smith apprised the Council of one (1) Personnel matter involving an employee in the Police Department and remarked that this matter warrants being heard in Executive Session. Council Member Gavin 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 involving an employee in the Police Department.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

All parties involved were invited back into the Court Chambers. Mayor Smith apprised Attorney Starks and his client of the Council's decision and they exited the meeting..

OPEN SESSION:

Council Member Beard made a motion to end the discussion of these matters and return to Open Session. Council Member Gavin 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 involving the job performance of an employee in the Police Department and voted to place an employee in the Police Department on Special Duties pending the outcome of his case in the next term of court.

**MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

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 Gavin and unanimous vote, the Mayor announced that the meeting was ADJOURNED.

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

Deliah T. Vaughn
CFO- Secretary-Treasurer