

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

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

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, March 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 via teleconference (Zoom). Those also present in person were the General Counsel, 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

Vice-Mayor Gavin called the meeting to order and called upon Council Member Box to offer the Invocation.

II. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 17, 2021.

Council Member Box made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Meeting of February 17, 2021. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

III. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS.

Council Member Box made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for February 17, 2021, in the amount of \$421,106.71. 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:

Council Member Mickens made a motion to move Item "E" from the Consent Agenda to Item "F" on the Policy Agenda. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

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All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

POLICY AGENDA:

Vice-Mayor Gavin added Item "G" to the Policy Agenda.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, with the above amendments. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. The Vice- 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, John McRight, effective March 2, 2021.
- B. Approve request for a Fire and Rescue Firefighter: William Boyd, to attend "Haz-Mat Awareness & Operations, to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of \$25.00 for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses.
- C. Accept letter of Retirement from Chief Operating Officer, effective June 25, 2021, and authorize HR Director to begin the normal recruitment process for position.
- D. Approve request to advertise for Legal Publications Bid.
- E. MOVED TO POLICY AGENDA AS ITEM "D".
- F. Accept letter of resignation from Police Officer, Dillard Robinson, effective February 18, 2021.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, with amendments. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion. The Vice-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

There were no comments from the Vice-Mayor and Council Members.

B. BOARD VACANCIES

David Armstrong, COO, announced vacancies on various boards and remarked that some 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.
- 1 Vacancy, 3-Year Term for Kevin Stafford expires 03/01/2021.
- Appointment will be made March 2, 2021.

APPLICANT:

- Kevin Stafford

Council Member Box made a motion to appoint Kevin Stafford to the Zoning Board of Adjustment & Appeals for a 3-Year Term, until March 2, 2024. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

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

Council Member Jones made a motion to reappoint Kevin Stafford to the Board of Adjustment & Appeals of Development Codes for a 1-Year Term, until March 3, 2022. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

- 1 Vacancy, 5-Year Term for Dr. Jo Shumake expires 03/01/2021.
- Appointment will be made March 2, 2021.

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APPLICANT:

- Dr. Jo Shumake

Council Member Box made a motion to reappoint Dr. Jo Shumake to the Columbus Municipal School District Board for a 5-Year Term, until March 1, 2026. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion, with the exception of Council Member Mickens, who opposed.

The motion carried 4/1.

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA

Julie Parker and Concerned Southside Citizens regarding Crime

Julie Parker, along other Concerned Citizens on the south side of town, participated in the virtual meeting. Each member was permitted to speak and voice concerns regarding crime in the area and offered solutions. Julie Parker and the committee made several demands/requests for the Police Department:

- ✓ Who is investigating the drive-by shooting that occurred on February 19, 2021
- ✓ Extra patrol in “hot” spots
- ✓ Ratio between citizens of Columbus and Police Officers
- ✓ More responsiveness from the Police Department
- ✓ Proposal/estimate on cost of placement of surveillance video on 7th Street South
- ✓ More street lights
- ✓ List of properties/houses on Southside and Northside where criminal activity is occurring
- ✓ Social media campaign
- ✓ Public Relations department to collaborate
- ✓ Community policing and neighborhood watches re-implemented
- ✓ City of Columbus/Lowndes County to collaborate

Chief Shelton came to the podium and responded to concerns.

VIII. POLICY AGENDA

A. Discuss/Approve advertising to recruit a Public Fire and Life Safety Education Officer

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Council Member Box made a motion to approve the request to authorize the HR Director to begin the normal recruitment process to fill the vacant Public Fire and Life Safety Education Officer. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

B. Discuss/Approve adoption of Columbus Fire and Rescue Annual Compliance Report: 2021.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to adopt the Columbus Fire and Rescue Annual Compliance Report: 2021. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

C. Discuss/Approve adoption of Columbus Fire and Rescue Annual Program Report: 2020.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to adopt the Columbus Fire and Rescue Annual Program Report: 2020. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

D. Discuss/Approve awarding the 2021 Sidewalk and Street Improvements project to the lowest response bidder.

Kevin Stafford, dba Neel-Schaffer, Inc. reported that bids have been received for the 2021 Sidewalk and street Improvements project and he prepared to make a recommendation. The lowest proposal received was submitted by TM Production, LLC in the amount of \$210,890.00; however, this contractor did not have a current certificate of responsibility issued by the State of Mississippi Board of Contractors at the time of the submission of the bid. The second lowest proposal received was submitted by JEM Contracting, LLC in the amount of \$317,000.00. Mr. Stafford recommends awarding the bid to JEM Contracting, LLC. Council Member Mickens made a motion to award the 2021 bid for Sidewalk and Street Improvements to JEM Contracting, LLC in the amount of \$317,000.00. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

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E. Discuss/Approve Hazardous Pay for Poll Workers.

Brenda Williams, City Registrar, participated in the virtual meeting and remarked that due to COVID, she is experiencing difficulty in finding poll workers and requests that the City offer Hazardous pay of \$50.00 for poll workers. Council Member Jones made a motion to approve Hazardous pay of \$50.00 for poll workers. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

Governor Tate Reeves' Executive Order

Vice-Mayor Gavin presented the latest Governor's Executive Order for discussion. General Counsel Jeff Turnage elaborated on the Executive Order, section by section, focusing on number VII dealing with Face Coverings. Council Members offered comments. Council Member Mickens made a motion to table this matter until the Council has had time to read the Executive Order. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Council Member Stewart made a motion to continue with the Mask mandate until the next Council Meeting. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion, with the exception of Council Members Box and Beard, who opposed.

The motion carried 3/2.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to suspend the debate. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

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ADJOURNMENT:

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

Approved by: _____
Bill Gavin, Vice-Mayor

**Deliah T. Vaughn
CFO- Secretary-Treasurer**

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