

**City of New Bern
Board of Aldermen Meeting
September 8, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.
City Hall Courtroom
300 Pollock Street**

- 1. Meeting opened by Mayor Dana E. Outlaw. Prayer by Ethel Sampson. Pledge of Allegiance.**

- 2. Roll Call.**

Present: Mayor Dana Outlaw, Alderman Sabrina Bengel, Alderwoman Jameesha Harris (by telephone), Alderman Robert Aster, Alderman Barbara Best, Alderman Johnnie Ray Kinsey, and Alderman Jeffrey Odham. Absent: None. A quorum was present.

Also Present: Mark Stephens, City Manager; Michael Scott Davis, City Attorney; and Brenda Blanco, City Clerk.

- 3. Request and Petition of Citizens.**

Jacqueline “Katt” Marshall of 181 Craven Street read a letter that she had written to the Mayor regarding Halloween. Although she expressed concerns about COVID-19, she wanted to see Halloween still take place in 2020. She suggested people wear gloves when handing out candy.

Ethel Sampson of 1038 Sampson Street read an anonymous letter she received thanking her for promoting the rebuild of Stanley White Recreation Center at its original location.

Consent Agenda

- 4. Consider Approving a Proclamation for HistoriCorps.**

Jeannie Tyson requested a proclamation for HistoriCorps, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit comprised of volunteers who assist with the preservation of historic structures on public lands.

- 5. Consider Accepting a Petition to Annex Property at 215 Bernhurst Road and Adopting a Resolution to Call for a Public Hearing on the Annexation.**

Mary Kerr Rowlett petitioned the City to annex her property located at 215 Bernhurst Road, which is a 2.21-acre lot located in Number 2 Township. It was requested a public hearing be scheduled for and conducted on September 22, 2020 to consider the request.

6. Approve Minutes.

Draft minutes from the August 25, 2020 meeting were provided for review and approval.

Alderman Odham made a motion to approve Items 4-6 of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Alderman Aster. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

7. Conduct a Public Hearing on the 2020-2021 CDBG Draft Annual Action Plan.

The CDBG Annual Action Plan serves as the City’s application for funding under the Entitlement Cities Program. The plan provides a summary of the actions, activities, and specific federal and non-federal resources that will be used to address the priority needs and specific goals identified in the Strategic Plan section of the Consolidated Plan for the year 2020. The FY20-21 CDBG draft Annual Action Plan has been on display for public inspection since August 28, 2020. After conducting the public hearing and receiving comments, the plan will be presented to the Board at its September 22nd meeting for consideration. Amanda Ohlensehlen, Community and Economic Development Manager, shared a Power-Point presentation reviewing the highlights of the plan. Minor rehabilitations that were previously administered by Development Services have been suspended through the plan. The plan provides that rehabilitation efforts would be overseen by the Redevelopment Commission (“Commission”), and the funding would be utilized for rehabbing rental property that is owned by the Commission in the Greater Five Points area. Alderman Best expressed concern with eliminating the minor rehabilitation program to assist individual homeowners. Mrs. Ohlensehlen explained the past challenges with homeowners’ inability to qualify for that program.

Mayor Outlaw opened the public hearing, but no one came forward to speak. Alderman Bengel made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Alderman Aster. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

8. Consider Adopting a Resolution to Close Specific Streets for MumFeast 2020.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, MumFest was safely reimaged and renamed as MumFeast. Lynne Harakal, Executive Director of Swiss Bear, requested to use the “Talbot’s lot” at 304 and 308 South Front Street and to block off 5 parking spaces adjacent to the lot on each Friday and Saturday in October. Additionally, she requested that the 200-300 blocks of Middle Street, 300-400 blocks of Pollock Street, and the 200 block of Craven Street be closed each of those days from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Mrs. Harakal described the plans for MumFeast, noting the Talbot’s lot would be utilized for food trucks.

Alderman Bengel made a motion to adopt a resolution to close specific streets for MumFeast 2020, seconded by Alderman Aster. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

9. Discussion of Radio Project Upgrade.

The Police Department made a presentation at the Board's July 28, 2020 meeting on the need to upgrade the radio system. After some discussion and a desire was voiced to possibly join forces with Craven County and Havelock, a motion was made to table the decision on the upgrade. Mr. Stephens explained if the Board decided to move forward, the next two agenda items would authorize staff to secure approval and obtain financing for the upgrade.

Alderman Bengel suggested the discussion of the radio project be delayed until the October financial work session. Chief Summers explained the software for the current radio system is no longer supported. He stated the upgrade would be effective for approximately eight years. Knowing the software impacts Police, Fire and other departments, Alderman Aster felt it was critical to have the discussion and not delay a decision.

(Mayor Outlaw momentarily stepped out of the room at 6:41 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Aster presided over the meeting until the Mayor's return.)

Alderman Odham voiced concern about making a rash decision and questioned whether it would be best to pursue a new system versus an upgrade.

(Mayor Outlaw returned to the room at 6:45 p.m.)

Mayor Outlaw also voiced a desire to delay a decision until the financial work session in October. He asked about the impact on the General Fund, and Mr. Stephens explained the majority of usage and cost of the system would be absorbed by Fire and Police.

10. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the Submission of an Application to the Local Government Commission for Financing of a Radio Project Upgrade and the Pleasant Hill Community Building.

To proceed with the radio system upgrade and the Pleasant Hill Community Center Building, authorization is needed to file an application with the Local Government Commission ("LGC") for approval of the financing. Once the application is submitted, it is anticipated the LGC would consider approval at their November 3, 2020 meeting. The combined financing for both projects is estimated not to exceed \$1,803,895. After receiving LGC approval, the City would need to hold a public hearing on the financing.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the submission of an application to the LGC for financing of a radio project upgrade and the Pleasant Hill Community Building, seconded by Alderman Best. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

Prior to the vote on the motion, Foster Hughes, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided some detail for the design of the community building. The facility will host activities and would also be available for rental.

11. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the Financing of a Radio Project Upgrade and the Pleasant Hill Community Building.

Proposals were sought from three banks for the financing of the radio project upgrade and the construction of the Pleasant Hill Community Center Building. As mentioned earlier, the total loan amount will not exceed \$1,803,895. BB&T was the only bank to respond, and it offered a loan term of 10 years with a fixed interest rate of 1.75%. Mayor Outlaw expressed concern that only one bank responded, and he asked if staff needed to be more zealous in seeking bids.

Alderman Best made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the financing of a radio project upgrade and the Pleasant Hill Community Building, seconded by Alderman Aster. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

12. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the Financing of Fire Apparatuses.

The Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget approved the purchase of two fire apparatuses, a Sutphen Pumper and a Sutphen Aerial platform. Proposals were sought from three banks for the financing of the fire trucks for an amount not to exceed \$1,720,621. Again, BB&T was the only bank to respond. The proposed term of the loan is 15 years with a fixed interest rate of 2.060%.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the financing of fire apparatuses, seconded by Alderman Bengel. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

13. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the Financing of FY20-21 Capital Purchases.

The current year's budget approved certain capital equipment and vehicle purchases. Financing proposals were sought from three banks, and BB&T was the only bank to respond. The proposed term for the \$1,210,673 loan is 59 months with a fixed interest rate of 1.190%.

Alderman Odham made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the financing of FY20-21 capital purchases, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

14. Consider Adopting a Budget Ordinance Amendment for the Coronavirus Relief Funds.

Session Law 2020-4 appropriated funding for the Coronavirus Relief Fund ("CRF") as issued by the NC Pandemic Recovery Office. Of the funds designated for

Craven County, the County allotted \$497,477 to the City of New Bern for expenses that support the County's CRF plan. The budget amendment acknowledges and appropriates the funding for various medical, public health, safety and compliance costs associated with COVID-19.

Alderman Bengel stated she had been contacted by a couple of nonprofits that requested some of the funding. Mr. Stephens explained the difficulties with choosing nonprofits to receive funds. The City will utilize the money in a way that will allow the City to continue to provide services during the pandemic. Alderwoman Harris asked about the ability to use the funds to assist citizens with utility payments and other needs. She thought the Board would have input on the plan before it was finalized. Mr. Stephens explained that although the City's plan had been submitted, it could be modified and resubmitted to the County. He also pointed out the Governor previously provided relief for utilities, and the City's CDBG plan makes provision to assist citizens. Mary Hogan, Director of Finance, explained the items that were presented in the plan, which included building and workstation modifications to allow for protection while serving citizens, an upgrade to the Customer and Payment Services phone system to better handle the call volume, purchase of personal protective equipment, etc. She noted the CRF plan could not be used to assist citizens with utility payments.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a budget ordinance amendment for the Coronavirus Relief Funds, seconded by Alderman Odham. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

15. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving a Utility Preliminary Engineering Agreement with NCDOT for the US 70 Havelock Bypass.

The NC Department of Transportation ("NCDOT") requested the City relocate its electric utilities to facilitate highway construction of the US 70 Havelock Bypass. The preliminary engineering costs are estimated at \$81,800. Similar to agreements approved at the Board's last meeting for other projects, this agreement recognizes and establishes the estimated cost and terms for reimbursement from NCDOT. The balance of reimbursable engineering and construction expenses will be forthcoming as a separate agreement.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a resolution approving a utility relocation agreement with NCDOT for the US 70 Havelock Bypass, seconded by Alderman Bengel. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

16. Consider Adopting an Amendment to the 2019 Electric Improvements Project Fund.

This capital project ordinance appropriates funding for expenses related to the NC Department of Transportation ("DOT") utility relocation projects. As discussed, the City will relocate certain electric and fiber infrastructure to facilitate some of DOT's roadway improvement projects. Most of the expenses associated with the electric

relocation will be reimbursed by DOT. While the total costs of the projects have not been identified, the amendment provides for estimated costs of \$2,301,814.

Alderman Best made a motion to adopt an amendment to the 2019 Electric Improvements Project Fund, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

17. Consider Adopting an Amendment to Section 46-2 “Discharge of Firearms or Pellet Guns” of Chapter 46 of the Code of Ordinances.

Changes have been made to Section 46-2 of the Code of Ordinances to include a new section for the allowance of indoor firing ranges. Currently, there is no provision for indoor ranges. Discussion ensued about the possibility of eliminating the two areas in the City that permit hunting.

Alderman Odham made a motion to adopt an amendment to Section 46-2 “Discharge of Firearms or Pellet Guns” of Chapter 46 of the Code of Ordinances, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

18. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the Addition of a Street Light on Brookshire Drive.

Roseanna Cash, a resident on Brookshire Drive, requested additional street lighting at the cul-de-sac on her street. The Department of Public Utilities evaluated the area and determined the current lighting meets the City’s light standard. However, the Police Department recommended the installation of an additional light for security. The estimated cost of installing a light is \$2,095.18, and the monthly utility charge for service will be \$20.28.

Alderman Bengel made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the addition of a streetlight on Brookshire Drive, seconded by Alderman Odham. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

19. Appointment(s).

Alderwoman Harris made a motion to appoint Kurtis Stewart to the Stanley White Recreation Center Advisory Committee, seconded by Alderman Bengel. The motion carried unanimously 7-0. Mr. Stewart will fill the seat vacated by Kandi Midgette-Ward, who resigned on August 26, 2020.

(Alderman Kinsey momentarily stepped out of the room at 7:36 p.m.)

Alderman Best stated she also had a citizen who was interested in serving on the Stanley White Creation Center Advisory Committee, and she questioned whether there was a set number of members established for the committee. Mr. Hughes explained the resolution establishing the committee would need to be revised to expand the committee. Prior to presenting a new resolution for the Board’s

consideration, Alderman Best stated she would speak with the individual to see if they were still interested.

20. Attorney's Report.

The City Attorney had nothing to report.

21. City Manager's Report.

- At tomorrow's staff meeting, Mr. Stephens will discuss opening offices on Monday, September 14, 2020. Precautions will be taken to ensure staff remains as safe as possible. The City does not want to encounter a situation in its public safety departments similar to that which occurred in Clayton.
- The Board was asked about a potential date for the financial work session.

(Alderman Kinsey returned to the room at 7:39 p.m.)

Alderman Odham made a motion to schedule a special workshop for 4 p.m. on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at City Hall, seconded by Alderman Best. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

22. New Business.

Mayor Outlaw

Complaints have been received about activities taking place on the property of the former Eckerd building.

Mayor Outlaw asked about assisting the New Bern Housing Authority with some of their needs. Mr. Stephens stated Board direction would be needed if the desire is to allow the Housing Authority to utilize City Hall for its meetings. Staff would need to stay after hours to close the facility. Costs for streaming the meetings, airing the meetings on CityTV3, and paying personnel to stay late have been provided to the Authority.

Alderman Best

Chief Summers was asked to work with the Highway Patrol to monitor speeders along Highway 55 near the daycare center.

Alderman Aster

A FEMA appeal for approximately \$900,000 is pending. The process provides that the City must submit an appeal to the State, who then submits it to FEMA. FEMA has indicated the State was four days late in submitting the appeal. However, FEMA was 54 days late in answering the appeal.

Alderman Bengel

The Downtown Business group desires for enforced parking in Downtown New Bern to resume on Monday, September 14th. Some of the restaurants will continue to have curbside pickup, but the spaces will be reduced from two to one.

23. Closed Session.

A closed session was not needed.

24. Adjourn.

Alderman Odham made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. The motion carried unanimously 7-0, time being 7:51 p.m.

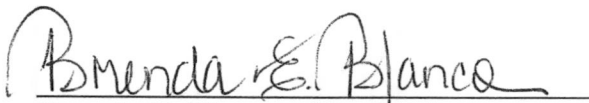
The attached documents are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

NOTE: For additional details and information on the Board of Aldermen meetings, please visit the City of New Bern's website at www.newbernnc.gov. Video and audio recordings of the meeting have been archived.

Minutes approved: September 22, 2020



Dana E. Outlaw, Mayor



Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk