

MINUTES

CITY OF HARTFORD, ALABAMA

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

October 16, 2023

JOHNNY HUGHES COMMUNITY CENTER COURTROOM, 405 SOUTH THIRD AVENUE, HARTFORD, ALABAMA 36344

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Wendel Nolen, Councilmembers Ron Adams, Melissa Clements, Ted Thompson, Zane Fowler and Paul Fondren

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Police Chief Annie Ward, City Magistrate Vernon Alford, City Attorney Bart Boothe See Attachment for others present.

CALL TO ORDER- The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRAYER AND PLEDGE- Councilmember Paul Fondren led the prayer which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER TO TAKE MINUTES: Paul Fondren volunteered. Zane Fowler made the motion which was seconded by Ted Thompson. The motion was passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2ND MINUTES- The October 2nd meeting minutes were examined. Melissa Clements made the motion to approve which was seconded by Ted Thompson. The motion was passed unanimously.

AGENDA AMENDED – Mayor Nolen added two items to the agenda. The first addition was the appointment of an interim police chief, and the other item was the Farm/City Banquet. Melissa Clements made the motion which was seconded by Ted Thompson. It passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS -No public comments were made.

JEANNA BRANNON – Ms. Brannon started by saying that she believes that the city's financial situation is much improved, and the city is not operating on borrowed money as she previously alleged. She said that she understands that Mrs. Marsh continues to work on updating Fiscal Year 23 and the accountants are finishing the audit of Fiscal Year 22 which she believes will give the city and citizens a good understanding of where the city stands. She encouraged citizens to reach out to the mayor and ask questions. She said she has had several good conversations with him recently which were productive and informative. She said that she believes the mayor's offer to talk to the public one on one is a good step forward.

APPROVAL OF THE AGREEMENT RENEWAL WITH WIREGRASS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION- Mayor Nolen recommended the city continue with this group another year. The motion was made by Zane Fowler. Ted Thompson

seconded the motion. Discussion about the rate was held and the rate will remain the same. The motion passed.

APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM POLICE CHIEF- Mayor Nolen said that Chief Ward's last day will be October 31st. He recommended Officer Zac Cooke be appointed as the Interim Police Chief. Melissa Clements made the motion which was seconded by Ted Thompson. The motion was passed.

FARM/CITY BANQUET – Mayor Nolen stated that the banquet will be held on November 28th at Ketchem's Restaurant this year. He said the city is asking to be a sponsor. Mayor Nolen recommended that the city sponsor the banquet with a donation of \$350 which was the same as last year. Zane Fowler made the motion which was seconded by Ron Adams. Paul Fondren asked about the nominations for Farm Family and Business of the Year. It was agreed that nominations will be taken at November 6th meeting. The motion was passed.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS – Mayor Nolen said that the city is current with all bills. He addressed the Sewer project and the delays in it being finished. He said the Farm/City Banquet will be on November 28th. He told the council that the 2nd Congressional District Dinner and Meeting will be on November 1st. He asked council members interested in attending to please let him know by October 20th. Mayor Nolen said that the Litchfield Sister City visitors will be coming in November. The city sponsors a lunch for the visitors on Monday, November 6th, at Owens Café in Geneva. He invited any council members to attend. Next, he said that Tyler Dunnaway from Carr, Riggs and Ingram will be at the November 6th meeting to go over the results of the audit for Fiscal Year 2022. He said that the work session will be next Tuesday to review the applicants for City Clerk and Fire Chief.

Melissa Clements said she wanted to clarify some information. She talked to Slocomb and said that last week we were compared to Slocomb as being in the same boat as them. She said that we are not because they had just received a new ambulance and a new fire truck is coming. She addressed her previous comments about how the city looked and had said we were down one employee in that department. She said that she discovered that we are down six employees in that department with one employee transferring from the street department to the water department. She said being down seven employees makes a big difference. She thanked Police Chief Annie Ward for her service to the city.

Next, Ted Thompson made comments. He said that coming up is the need to be aware of the climate. He said that FEMA has issued an opportunity for funding for communities to increase their resilience to the impact of climate change, including frequent and extreme weather events. He said that we do not have a building resilient structure to enable our citizens to be safe. He asked, "where would we go?" if we have the impact of a hurricane. He said that the city needs to apply for this grant now. He said that he did

not know if the city has a grant writer or someone in the community who would step up to help with this. He said the city needs to be aware of these programs.

Paul Fondren said that the Senior Citizen's Building does have a generator. He pointed out that Red Cross will not set up a shelter here during a hurricane due to the town's proximity to the coast.

Ron Adams brought up doing a reception for Chief Ward which would include the citizens. Also, he stated the need for getting something from the state to honor Chief Ward and her service.

Mayor Nolen asked everyone to remember the Fall Festival on October 26th.

There were no other remarks by any of the council members.

COMMENTS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS –

Police Chief Annie Ward reminded the council that Trick or Treating will be on Saturday, October 28th from 6-8. She said no streets will be closed but the police department will be out in force to monitor the traffic.

There were no other comments by department heads.

ADJOURNMENT- Mayor Nolan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Ted Thompson made the motion which was seconded by Councilmember Zane Fowler. The vote was unanimous in approving the adjournment.



Presiding Officer