

## **MINUTES**

### **CITY OF HARTFORD, ALABAMA**

### **CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**February 5, 2024**

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

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

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** City Clerk Melissa Rosser, Interim Police Chief Zac Cooke, Chief Mark Shehee, Jerry Sorrells, Attorney Bart Boothe. See attachment for others present.

**CALL TO ORDER-** The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

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

**APPROVE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 16, 2024-** Councilman Paul Fondren made a motion to approve the minutes as read. Councilman Zane Fowler seconded the motion. All were in favor, no discussion. Motion carried.

**APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2024 SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING-** Councilman Ron Adams made a motion to approve as read. Councilman Ted Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor, no discussion. Motion carried.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC** –Stanley Tindell would like to say that he hopes Hartford will be blessed in 2024. He has been here in Hartford his entire life and he wants to say what a blessing Paul Fondren has been for the city. He stated that he is thankful that we have Jerry Sorrells and through all the storms that Hartford did not experience a lot of power loss. He praised Jerry for his excellent job in taking care of the city. Stanley would also like to thank Melissa Clements for what she done for Annie Ward and say how blessed Hartford was to have Chief Annie Ward and Greg. He stated that Hartford has a special place in his heart and that he is proud to live here.

**OREN YORK SKATEBOARD PARK-** Oren York stated that he would like for the city to consider putting in a skate park so that the people who like to skateboard will have a safe and dedicated place to skate. He stated that as of now, they must skate in front of businesses, on the sidewalks, and he feels that this is unsafe for pedestrians as well as the boarders. He feels that it would be beneficial to the city as well as those who enjoy skateboarding. Councilman Zane Fowler asked if Oren knew about how many

skateboarders, we have around the city that would utilize the park? Oren said that he was not sure of a number, but it would be a lot. Councilman Zane Fowler asked what type of equipment would be required or needed. Oren stated that there would need to be rails, smooth pavement, ramps, and a bowl. Oren said that the closest place to go for people who wanted to skate would be Taylor or Enterprise. Mayor Nolen stated that he has spoken to the recreation director, and he will be looking into grants and funding for this project. Councilwoman Melissa Clements stated that she was proud of Oren and his friends for gathering a petition and taking responsibility in coming before the council about this matter.

**TANTALUS SUPPORT AGREEMENT-** Jerry Sorrells stated he did not feel the need for the city to purchase the Premium package for the Tantalus agreement. He stated that after we finish the upgrades and become more advanced in the process, he would eventually suggest moving up in package. The package that we need is currently \$12,124.00 plus the server hosting cost of \$4400.00 for a total of \$16524.00. This is a year-to-year contract and we pay fees every year for renewal. Councilman Ron Adams asked if Jerry could explain the package differences and if that the package that we purchase is sufficient for what we need. Jerry stated that the more advanced in the process that we become, will determine when we will need to increase the package. He stated that he has already been changing out meters with broken LED displays and has installed the meters that he had on hand. Councilman Ron Adams asked if the more advanced process will allow citizens to read their own meters and be able to monitor their usages better. Jerry stated yes. Councilman Paul Fondren asked Mayor Nolen if the funding was available for the purchase. Mayor Nolen stated yes. Councilman Paul Fondren made a motion to approve the funding for the Tantalus Agreement. Councilman Zane Fowler seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed. No discussion.

**ZONING ORDINANCE 02-05-2024 - SHILOH/HWY 52-** Mayor Nolen stated that the proper procedures and requirements have been followed for the re zoning of the property. The planning commission has met and the public hearing was held. Mayor Nolen stated property would be re zoned from R-1 to B-1. Councilman Paul Fondren made a motion. Councilman Ted Thompson seconded the motion. Attorney Bart Boothe stated that there was an ordinance that needed to be adopted. Councilman Paul Fondren made a motion to suspend the rules and have consideration to consider the ordinance. Councilman Ted Thompson seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried. Councilman Paul Fondren made a motion to adopt ordinance 02-05-2024. Second was made by Ted Thompson. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**ZOLL MEDICAL BILLING-** Mayor Nolen asked Mark Shehee to explain the Zoll Medical billing. Mark stated that last year the city paid Enterprise Rescue \$38,430.36 for billing. The rate was at 5%. The rate for 2025 has increased to 7%. The city is already using Zoll software but in order to do our own billing with them, there is a one time fee of \$5540.00 and yearly cost of \$11,358.24 with a 5 year contract. It will save the city

money. He stated that we would be converting one employee from part-time to a full time employee. We will be doing everything in house. Councilman Zane Fowler asked what the total savings would be. Mark Shehee stated the savings would be roughly \$100,000 over the course of the contract. Councilman Paul Fondren asked if they provide training for the software. Mark stated that they do. The \$5500 fee includes the training needed. Councilman Fondren asked that if we have one person doing the billing, if he had a back up plan. Councilman Ron Adams asked if the people doing the billing will still be able to do runs or if they will strictly do billing. Mark stated that it will cut down on the number of runs that she will be able to make, but she will still be able to do some runs. Councilman Ron Adams asked for clarification that we would have someone doing the billing who is also qualified to help with rescue. Mark stated yes. Mark stated that he was also approached by another city about doing billing for them, and if that were to happen, we could generate some revenue through billing for other cities. Councilman Adams asked Mark if he was confident that we can handle the billing. Mark assured him that we can. Councilman Adams asked if additional equipment will be required for the process and Mark stated that it should not. Councilman Adams asked how long it would be before this would take effect. Mark stated that he would think about 60-90 days. Mark stated that there has been some discussion about someone from city hall being cross trained in the billing for back up. Mayor Nolen stated that City Clerk Melissa Rosser would like to speak. City Clerk Melissa Rosser stated that even though the city pays Enterprise Rescue for billing, we still have to do a lot of the work involved in the billing. Melissa stated that the city, just this week, has had to issue several refunds due to Enterprise Rescue billing incorrectly. Councilman Adams asked if we are up to date and knowledge on the coding for billing. Mark stated that that would be part of the training needed but that the software does the majority of the coding for us. Mayor Nolen asked for a motion to enter into a 5 year contract with Zoll Medical for in house billing. Councilwoman Melissa Clements made a motion to enter into the contract. Councilman Paul Fondren seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

#### **RECONDITIONING OF FOOTBALL HELMETS FOR RECREATION DEPARTMENT-**

Mayor Nolen asked the council to approve the reconditioning of the football helmets for the recreation department at a cost of \$4008.75. They will need to be sent off now to be able to get them back before football season. This must be done every 3 years. Councilman Fondren asked if Rashaad was comfortable with this, and Mayor Nolen stated yes. Councilman Fondren asked if we have the funds for this. Mayor Nolen stated yes. Councilman Paul Fondren made a motion. Councilman Ted Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. No discussion. Motion carried.

**ELECTRICAL AND WATER METERS-** Mayor Nolen stated that in updating our electrical and water systems, we need to purchase some new water and electrical meters. Jerry Sorrells stated that he is currently out of meters. He has no more to distribute. Jerry stated that he has a stack of water work orders that cannot be filled until he gets more meters. Electrical meter cost (200) \$43400.00 water meters(60)

\$11400.00. Councilwoman Melissa Clements said that she searched ITRON on her phone and the search gave her several grant opportunities. She asked if we can get the model and information on the meters and apply and research grants. Jerry stated he was willing and said that Melissa can stop by city hall anytime to meet with him. Jeanna Brannon asked if this was the second phase of the smart meters. Mayor Nolen said yes. Councilwoman Melissa Clements made a motion to approve the purchase of the meters. Councilman Ted Thompson seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried. Jeanna Brannon asked for the pricing and where the funding would come from for the purchase. Councilman Ron Adams asked where the funding would be coming from and Mayor Nolen stated that we have money in the budget set aside and we will also propose it in the new budget. He stated that we will also search for grant money and if we find that we can obtain that, it will be used.

**AMBULANCE QUOTES-** Mayor Nolen asked Mark Shehee to give the council the information he has for the ambulance purchase. Mark Shehee advised the council that the current ambulance has become a money pit for repairs and it will not be very long before it needs to be replaced. The quotes presented to the council were for three different amounts. Mark reviewed the quotes with the council- \$169,800 smaller box ambulance, \$246,082.00 for same as we have now and \$393,020.00 for top of the line. Mark said that he also attached quotes for a power stretcher. Those are encouraged to save back issues and workers comp claims. Councilman Zane Fowler asked if Mark had gotten any quotes on the chassy. Mark stated he has requested quotes and they are backlogged but are working on the quote. Councilman Fondren asked what the lead time is for the ambulances. Mark stated the cheaper version is in production at this time and after customization, we would be able to receive the ambulance within a month possibly. Councilman Ron Adams asked about when the funding would need to be available- at the time of delivery or when we order. Mark stated that he and the Mayor had discussed using the ARP funds (appx. \$22,000) that the rescue department receives quarterly to pay towards a note on the new ambulance. The rescue department will receive these funds through December of this year that will equate to appx \$66,000. Councilman Zane Fowler asked if we would need to get a loan to pay for the ambulance. Mayor Nolen stated that we could pay for the ambulance and let the rescue department pay the funds back. Councilman Ron Adams discussed the funding with Mayor Nolen. He stated that grants aren't typically awarded for purchases already made. He stated that the funds would have to be available before the purchase of the ambulance. Mark stated that the ambulance would not come fully equipped. We would have some of the equipment needed that we can use in the new ambulance but not all of it. Councilman Adams asked if the city has any equipment or anything that we plan to trade in or sell for funds. Mark stated that he had checked into the trade in of the old ambulance but had not gotten a quote due to the salesman not seeing the ambulance in person. Councilman Adams stated that he would like to have more information on loans for funding. Mayor Nolen entertained a motion to table the discussion until we have further information on funding. Councilwoman Melissa Clements made a motion to table the discussion. Councilman Zane Fowler seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**MOVE COUNCIL MEETING FROM FEBRUARY 19, 2024 TO FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

**DUE TO PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY-** Mayor Nolen asked for a motion to reschedule the council meeting to February 20<sup>th</sup> due to the President's Day Holiday. Councilman Paul Fondren made a motion to move the meeting. Councilwoman Melissa Clements seconded the motion. Motion carried. All were in favor.

**ADVERTISE AND ACCEPT APPLICATIONS FOR POLICE CHIEF-** Mayor Nolen asked for a motion to advertise and accept applications for the open position. Zane Fowler made a motion. Ron Adams seconded the motion. Mayor Nolen called for a roll call vote. Melissa Clements- NAY, Ted Thompson- YAY, Zane Fowler- YAY, Paul Fondren-YAY, Ron Adams- YAY. Motion carried. No discussion.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS-** Mayor Nolen stated that he is glad the water leak in town was found and repaired.

Councilwoman Melissa Clements wanted to ask about the water leak and appreciates the updates as they were provided. Jerry Sorrells assured the council that they worked hard to find the leak and repair it. He stated that he feels like the people just want to know what is going on. Melissa also wanted to say that she took her boys to sign up for baseball and noticed all of the hard work done by Rashaad and his family for the Recreation Park. She said that we need to work on getting him some help out at the park during the busiest time of the year. Melissa stated that there is money in the budget for him to hire part time help. Mayor Nolen stated that he and Rashaad talked, and he will be hiring a part time person currently and was told he could pick up some seasonal help. Melissa wanted to thank the people who helped Rashaad with sign ups.

Councilman Ted Thompson stated that he concurred with Melissa's comments about Rashaad and he is needing some help. Ted stated that Rashaad needs a full-time employee to help him and that he is constantly using family to help him. Ted also asked if we could start working on the ordinances. He wants the council to set aside time to discuss what needs to be done with them. Mayor Nolen stated that we could set a work session. The council decided that on February 29, 2024, they will have a work session to discuss ordinances at City Hall @ 6:00 pm.

Attorney Bart Boothe made a comment that the City Clerk has done a great job in uncovering and unearthing things in the city office that need to be dealt with. He stated that in doing so, a contract with Municode was found. This company helps organize and code ordinances. The city has already paid a fee to this company to help us. He feels that we should utilize this contract and get them the information that is needed for them to help organize our ordinances.

Councilman Ron Adams wants to be sure that the Father Daughter Dance is promoted. He feels that the council could possibly pitch in and help where needed for the event. He asked if we had a status update on the Winston Howell race. Mark Shehee stated that we are still getting in sponsors but will need help the week before and of course the day of the race.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD COMMENTS** – Chief Mark Shehee gave the January report on calls for the rescue/fire department. 131 EMS calls, 10 fire calls. The numbers are down from December but are still around the same call volume expected. Mark stated that he had given the council a copy of an agreement with a grant writer to assist us with funds for the rescue/fire department. He stated that we do not pay them unless the grant is awarded and at that time, we will pay 5% of the amount to the writer. He requested that the council give the mayor the authorization to enter the contract with this grant writer. Councilwoman Melissa Clements made a motion to allow the mayor to enter the contract with the grant writer. Atty Bart Boothe stated that in a grant situation, 5% could be a large fee. Councilman Paul Fondren said that the council's motion should be to allow the mayor to pursue funds that he sees necessary. Mark stated that the grants would be presented before they were applied for. Motion was seconded by Paul Fondren. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**- Mayor Nolen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Council member Paul Fondren made a motion to adjourn. Council member Ted Thompson seconded the motion. Motion carried.



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Presiding Officer