



City Council Regular Meeting Meeting Minutes – Electronic Meeting

April 14, 2020

I. CALL TO ORDER

6:07PM

Mayor, Billy Keyserling - All members of Council in attendance (Mike McFee, Nan Sutton, Phil Cromer, Stephen Murray and Mayor Keyserling).

II. INVOCATION

A. Mike McFee, Mayor Pro Tem

III. PROCLAMATIONS/COMMENDATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

A. Proclamation proclaiming April 2020 as Child Abuse Prevention Month

Motion to approve made by Murray and seconded by Cromer.

Proclamation read by Mayor Pro Tem, Mike McFee.

B. Character Education Proclamation - Michael Johnson, Lady's Island Elementary School

Motion to approve made by Murray and seconded by Cromer.

Proclamation read by Mayor Pro Tem, Mike McFee.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment

V. MINUTES

A. Worksession and Regular Meeting - February 11, 2020

Motion to approve made by Murray and seconded by Sutton.

Councilman Cromer found one error in the Worksession minutes. Page 1 under presentation, third paragraph, like should be likes.

Motion to approve was unanimous.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Ordinance amending Part 5, Article C (Beaufort Redevelopment Incentive Program) and Part 10, Chapter 3 (Incentive reimbursements grant program for certain annexations) - 2nd Reading

Motion to approve made by Cromer and seconded by McFee.

David Prichard, Community and Economic Development Director, gave an overview of the proposed changes, stated that City Council through Worksessions reviewed the Redevelopment incentives that have been on the books, some of which have not been used and therefore Council decided not to leave them on the books and some of them were redundant. This is just going through the ordinance and updating to ensure that they are relevant and if they are still the goals of City Council.

Bill Prokop, City Manager, addressed correspondence received from the Coastal Conservation League regarding their request to not eliminate the incentive for occupancy of empty/vacant buildings (Sec. 5-2023). Correspondence attached.

Councilman Murray made a motion to amend Part 5, Article C (Beaufort Redevelopment Incentive Program), and Part 10, Chapter 3 (Incentive reimbursements grant program for certain annexations) to keep Section 5-2023. Motion seconded by McFee.

The amendment was unanimous.

Mayor Pro Tem, Mike McFee made a motion for a second amendment, which is to add definition language and clean up the subsections as presented by Mr. Prichard. Motion seconded by Cromer.

The amendment was unanimous and passed on 2nd Reading.

B. Ordinance amending Part 7 and adding a new Chapter 17, Development Impact Fees for Fire Service - 2nd Reading

Motion to approve made by McFee and Cromer.

Reece Bertholf, Fire Chief, gave an overview of the ordinance.

Motion to approve was unanimous and passed on 2nd Reading.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Request for Co-Sponsorship from Dragon Boat Beaufort for use of Waterfront Park for Dragon Boat Beaufort Race Day 2020 event Saturday, June 27, 2020

Motion to approve made by Cromer and seconded by McFee.

Rhonda Carey, Events/Tour Operations Coordinator, gave an overview of the event.

Event was approved unanimously.

B. Street closure request from Ngome Lifestyles Boutique to host a fashion show event on Sunday, August 30, 2020

Motion to approve made by McFee and seconded by Cromer.

Rhonda Carey, Events/Tour Operations Coordinator, gave an overview of the event.

Event was approved unanimously.

C. Street closure request from Holy Trinity School to host Swing Bridge 5K/Run and Prayer Walk event on Saturday, October 17, 2020

Motion to approve made by Cromer and seconded by McFee.

Rhonda Carey, Events/Tour Operations Coordinator, gave an overview of the event.

Event was approved unanimously.

D. Resolution Supporting Fair Housing Month

Motion to approve made by McFee and seconded by Cromer.

Mayor Pro Tem, Mike McFee, read the resolution.

Motion to approve was unanimous.

E. Resolution in Support of Local Options Sales and Use Tax Referendum (LOST)

Motion to approve made by Cromer seconded by McFee.

Mayor Pro Tem, Mike McFee, read the resolution.

Mayor, Keyserling, stated that this resolution urges Beaufort County to put this item on the ballot. The County will be getting something similar from the Town of Port Royal and the Town of Bluffton; he is unsure of the Town of Hilton Head.

Bill Prokop, City Manager, wants the public to know and understand over 40% of what is collected is paid by visitors not our taxpayers.

Motion to approve was unanimous.

F. Authorization to allow City Manager to enter into Street Sweeping Contract

Motion to approve made by McFee and seconded by Cromer.

Kathy Todd, Finance Director, gave an overview of the Request for Proposals, RFP 2020-110 Street Sweeping Services process.

Motion to approved was unanimous.

G. Authorization to allow City Manager to enter into Negotiations with Benefits Administrator

Motion to approve made by McFee and seconded by Cromer.

Kathy Todd, Finance Director, gave an overview of the Request for Proposals, RFP 2020-111 Benefits Brokerage Services process.

Motion to approve was unanimous.

VIII. REPORTS

City Manager's Report

Mayor and Council this Covid-19 is influencing all of us in many ways. The City of Beaufort will be subject to financial strain for the next 6-9 months, due to loss of revenue from our business license, A-tax, H-Tax, personal property, permits, etc. It is difficult to guesstimate the full impact due to the uncertainty of the situation. I am estimating up to a \$1.8 to \$2.0 million impact on us for the current fiscal year ending June 30. This will mean we will have to release all our committed fund balance and use those dollars along with our unrestricted Fund Balance to complete this year. Furthermore, I foresee council being put under tremendous pressure to wave additional fees and to spend money on stimulating a fast recovery of our local economy since many businesses are suffering and want to get back on their feet as quickly as possible. We fully understand that, however, they must understand we have many of the same problems and are restricted as to the use of funds and revenue sources.

Everyone needs to realize that we will be entering our hurricane season, within 60 days, with a fund balance that will be down to about 25% instead of the 28-30% that is needed. We will just not have the cushion of extra revenue to meet the request that you will be getting from multiple sources.

As a staff, we have put in place the following to reduce our expenses:

1. A hiring freeze has been put in place for all open positions, with a few exceptions.
2. Each Department has reviewed their planned spending for the balance of this year and has cut back their operating cost to minimum levels.
3. All capital projects that are not stormwater driven have been put on hold.
4. All overnight travel and training have been stopped, except for police and fire academy training - when that reopens.
5. We will be monitoring our revenue and expenses monthly to adjust when necessary.

I want to emphasize this is cutting back on current staffing needs, services, and maintenance projects that are needed.

Our approach to next year's budget will be much the same, knowing that we will have to come back to council on or before January 2021 with a requested budget amendment. Our goal is to develop a budget that will be less than this year's budget. We will be projecting very little money, if any, to be distributed to the non-profits and others who have counted on the A-Tax and H-Tax funds in the past.

I personally want to thank my entire staff for what they have been doing, working from home, caring for family, and in some positions being exposed to the virus because they have a job to do, and are willing to do it every day in these uncertain times.

Debris pick up - we see double the yard waste pick up as compared to last year, and I want to thank Waste Pro for the extra trucks and efforts they have been putting in the last month.

Lastly, thank you to the public for really following the guidelines for social distancing; hopefully, we will soon start to see light at the end of the tunnel.

Mayor's Report

Mayor stated he has gotten many emails thanking him for standing up during this COVID crisis. He has received some complaints about big box stores, however as the City Manager has told us, City staff visited the establishment and saw that precautionary measures are being put in place. We have a continued homeless problem. The City is looking into what can be done with the homeless. Let us all continue to be careful.

Councilman Cromer

Councilman Cromer stated a hardy thank you to all citizens for doing what you are doing. Have faith, and this too, will pass.

Councilwoman Sutton

Thank you to staff for doing what you are doing. Bay Street is a ghost town, and she is looking forward to when they can open back up.

Councilman Murray

Councilman Murray echoed the sentiments already stated. He believes the City is doing a really good job social distancing and following the rules. Encourages all to continue doing that.

The Beaufort Digital Corridor is accepting applications for the Executive Director position. The BDC is hoping to have a new Executive Director by the end of the month.

Councilman Murray has heard from business owners that the paycheck protection program has begun funding, and the loans are being made. The unemployment benefits this week include the additional \$600.00. The good news is that the federal government money is starting to flow down to the local level. He encouraged citizens and business owners to take advantage of these resources.

Councilman McFee

Councilman McFee also echoed the sentiments of other Council members regarding social distancing.

IX. ADJOURN

8:00PM

Disclaimer: All City Council Worksession and Regular Meeting minutes are recorded. The Live stream can be found on the City's website at www.cityofbeaufort.org (Agenda section). Audio recordings are available upon request by contacting the City Clerk, Ivette Burgess at 843-525-7018 or by email at iburgess@cityofbeaufort.org.