

MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CITY OF COLUMBUS, MS April 2, 2019

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. in the Court Chambers of the Municipal Complex. Mayor Robert E. Smith, Sr., presided over the meeting, and all Council Members were present. Also present, were the COO, General Counsel, Police Chief, Human Resources Director, and all Department Heads.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order and called upon Dr. James A. Boyd, pastor of Zion gate M. B. Church, to offer the Invocation.

II. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS OF MARCH 14 & 19, 2019

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Meetings of March 14 & 19, 2019. Council Member Taylor seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

III. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS FOR April 02, 2019.

Council Member Taylor made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for April 2, 2019 in the amount of \$497,163.60. Council Member Gavin 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:

Change Item "H" to *Approve request to refund citizens for four (4) clean-up deposits, two (2) sports refunds, one (1) full refund and one (1) refund balance.*

POLICY AGENDA:

Add Item "D" – *Discuss/Approve new CFO recommendation.*

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Change Personnel Matters to five (5).

Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, with the above amendments. Council Member Jackson seconded the motion. The Mayor

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called for discussion, and there being none, all Council Members voted in favor of same, with a unanimous vote.

The motion carried.

V. CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Accept letter of resignation from two (2) CPD officers: Cole Britt and Roger Tate, effective March 29, 2019, and approve requests for compensation of unused vacation leave for both officers and submit unused sick leave to PERS for one (1) officer.
- B. Approve permit request submitted by JoAnn Richardson on behalf of Coleman Head Start Center, to host a "Storybook Parade" to be held on April 12, 2019 from 09:45 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at 723 – 22nd Street South and the Sandfield project area.
- C. Approve permit request submitted by Glenn Lautzenhiser on behalf of Christian Community in Prayer, to host the "National Day of Prayer" to be held on May 2, 2019 from 12:00 Noon until 12:45 p.m. in front of the Lowndes County Courthouse, blocking Second Avenue North for 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- D. Approve request for Joshua Connors, Fire and Rescue employee, to attend the "CPAT Exam" to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of \$40.00 for registration, \$96.00 for lodging, \$50.00 for travel and reimbursement for meals.
- E. Approve request for six (6) Fire and Rescue personnel: Scott Swain, Joshua Boyer, Melvin Junkin, Chip Kain, Steve Loden and Marco Rodrigues to attend "Swift Water Refresher/Exercise" to be held in Philadelphia, MS, and approve payment of \$50.00 for travel and reimbursement of meals expenses.
- F. Approve request for seven (7) Fire and Rescue personnel: Chief Andrews, Assistant Chief Hughes, Training Chief Chandler, PIO Anthony Colom, Battalion Chiefs Mike Gibson and Scott Swain, and Captain Wes Mims, to travel to Jackson, MS, and attend "MSFA Firefighter 1001-1-11 Graduation", and approve payment of \$50.00 for travel and reimbursement of meals.
- G. Approve request to refund three (3) citizens: Shambria Williams \$370.00, Chelcia Evans \$750.00, and Pamela Brownlee #270.00 for cancellation of Trotter rental.
- H. Approve request to refund citizens: Keriston Moore, Chiquita Dent, Laketra Vaughn and Leroy Jones the sum of \$150.00 each for cleanup deposits; Sylvia Jefferson \$55.00 and Annie Hinton \$35.00 for sports refunds; and Andrea Moore a full refund of \$275.00.

Council Member Taylor made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, with the above amendments. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. The Mayor called for discussion, and there being none, all Council Members voted in favor of same, with a unanimous vote.

The motion carried.

VI. REPORTS, PROCLAMATIONS, RECOGNITIONS AGENDA:

A. General Comments from the Mayor and Council Members

Mayor Robert Smith, Sr., approached the podium in front of the Council Members to present a report/proposal to the City's financial concerns. He was accompanied by the City's Department Heads. Mayor Smith began by stating that the City is facing financial challenges that call for immediate action. He discussed long-term City debt and discussed proposed financial changes. The City will implement an immediate hiring and position freeze. A local outside accounting firm will be put in place to monitor the City finances, as long as necessary; changes will be implemented to the City's health insurance; discretionary spending will cease on non-essential items; the Municipal Court Division will now be opened for business five (5) days per week; and J5-GBL has agreed to NOT bill the City for the remainder of this year, with the exception of special project. The estimated cost savings will be \$1,183,712.00. Council Member Gavin made a motion to approve the proposed cost saving strategies. Council Member Taylor seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

B. Board Vacancies

David Armstrong, COO, announced vacancies on various boards and remarked that no appointments will be made tonight.

TREE BOARD

- 1 Vacancy, Reid Nevins' 3-Year Term Expires 4/19/2019.
- Appointment will be made on 4/16/2019.
- No applicants at this time

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA:

• Theresa Barksdale – Use of Boy Scout Building

Ms. Theresa Barksdale came before the Mayor and Council and requested permission to use the Boy Scout Building for the upcoming elections. Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the request for Lowndes County to use the Boy Scout Building for the upcoming elections. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

Royce Chatman – Automobile Damage and Insurance Claim

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Mr. Royce Chapman came before the Mayor and Council regarding damages to his automobile after hitting a pothole. After identifying the location, Mr. Casey Bush remarked that that location is under MDOT's Jurisdiction.

Paul Swain – Old Train

Mr. Paul Swain came before the Mayor and Council to announce that he will be resigning from his position of refurbishing the old train the end of April. Mayor Smith thanked him for his services.

VIII. POLICY AGENDA:

A. Consider/Approve request to award Legal Advertising Bid.

Pat Mitchell, Deputy Clerk, reported that she has advertised for bids for Publication of legal notices and received two responses as follows:

The Columbus Packet:

1st Run	0.6 cents per word
2nd Run	0.5 cents per word

The Commercial Dispatch:

1st Run	0.008 (0.8) cents per word
2nd Run	0.008 (0.5) cents per word

Ms. Mitchell recommended awarding the bid to The Columbus Packet. Council Member Taylor made a motion to award the Legal Publications bid to The Columbus Packet, effective April 8, 2019. Council Member Gavin seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

B. Discuss/Approve Derelict Property Docket.

ALEXIS EARL BLUNT
402 Waterworks Road
Case Number 18-0396 Structure

The General Counsel called cause number **18-0396**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Tomarris Jones stated the property was in such a state of uncleanness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate**

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abatement and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Taylor made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

CHARLIE GORDON
c/o ROOSEVELT GORDON
AND JACQUE CHAMPION
22nd Street South
Case Number 19-0021 Vegetation; rubbish and garbage

The General Counsel called cause number **19-0021**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Tomarris Jones stated the property was in such a state of uncleanness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Taylor made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

AARON ANDERSON
1812 – 3rd Avenue South
Case Number 19-0009 Structure

The General Counsel called cause number **19-0009**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Tomarris Jones stated the property was in such a state of uncleanness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Taylor made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or

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dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

DAMION D. AND CHAVON N. HILL
1815 – 3rd Avenue South
Case Number 19-0008 Structure

The General Counsel called cause number 19-0008. Ms. Chavon N. Hill appeared, offered an explanation of why the property was dilapidated and requested an extension. Code Enforcement Officer Tomarris Jones stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** on the structure and give the property owner a **45-day extension** on the vegetative portion, and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Taylor made a motion to give the property owner a 45-day extension in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) Council Member Jackson seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

C. Discuss/Approve Precinct Changes.

Ms. Brenda Williams, City Registrar came forward and requested approval of precinct changes:

Ward 4
Precinct 8 – Hunt School

Precinct 8 – Hunt School was damaged by the tornado. Rev. Peoples have agreed to allow the city to use Stephen Chapel Baptist Church, Family Life Center, 2008 7th Avenue North, Columbus, Mississippi 39701 as a voting precinct and will submit an approval letter.

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Ward 5

Precinct 9 – MUW Carrier Lodge

Mississippi University for Women MUW will no longer maintain Carrier Lodge. Therefore, Precinct 9, Carrier Lodge, needs to be relocated. I have spoken with Rogena Bonner, City Property Manager, about the use of the old Boy Scouts Hut, 300 Second Avenue North, Columbus, Mississippi 39703 (inside Hitching Lot Farmers Market parking lot). This building is located within Ward 5 and is owned by the City.

Teresa Barksdale, Lowndes County Circuit Clerk is also requesting the use of this building as a voting precinct for County Elections.

Precinct 10 – Union School

Due to lack of maintenance at Precinct 10, Union School needs to be relocated to Fifteenth Street Church of God In Christ, 917 - 15th Street North, Columbus, Mississippi 39701 (across the street from Union School). Rev. Marion Bonner has honored the use of the church and will be forwarding a letter of approval. Lowndes County also uses the church as a voting precinct.

If approved, new voting cards will be mailed to all voters affected by the changes.

Council Member Box made a motion to approve the precinct changes, effective immediately. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion. All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried.

D. Discuss/Approve new CFO recommendation.

Pat Mitchell, Human Resources Director, remarked that a committee has completed the selection and interview process to fill the vacant position of Chief Financial Officer/Secretary-Treasurer/City Clerk. The Committee recommends Ms. Deliah Vaughn for hire at an annual salary of \$75,000.00.

Council Member Taylor made a motion to hire Ms. Deliah Vaughn as CFO/ Secretary-Treasurer/City Clerk at an annual salary of \$75,000.00, contingent on successful completion of a pre-employment medical exam and drug screen. Council Member Box seconded the motion.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Council Member Gavin made a motion to reopen the position and readvertise to increase the pool of more qualified applicants. Council Member Jones seconded the motion. Following discussion, Council Members Mickens, Jones, and Gavin voted in favor of the motion. Council Member Taylor, Box, and Jackson opposed. Mayor Smith broke the tie by opposing the motion.

ORIGINAL MOTION:

Council Members Taylor, Box, Jackson and Jones voted in favor of the original motion. Council Members Mickens and Gavin opposed.

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The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Mayor then asked if there was any other business to come before the Mayor and City Council. There being none, Council Member Taylor 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: _____
Robert E. Smith, Sr., Mayor

Patricia Mitchell
City Deputy Clerk

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