



MINUTES
City of McDonough
City Council Meeting
McKibben Chambers City Hall
136 Keys Ferry Street
July 18, 2022
6:00 PM

The Regular Meeting of the City of McDonough City Council was held on Monday, July 18, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Sandra Vincent called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The City Clerk Ms. Christy Taylor called roll for the meeting, as follows:

Mayor Sandra Vincent	Present
Mayor Pro Tem Rufus Stewart	Present
Councilmember Jamal Burt	Present
Councilmember Benjamin Pruett	Present
Councilmember Scott Reeves	Present
Councilmember Vanessa Thomas	Present
Councilmember Kamali Varner	Absent (due to a family death)

Others in attendance were: Attorney Emilia Walker; City Clerk, Ms. Christy Taylor; Police Chief, Mr. Ken Noble; Fire Chief, Mr. Dave Williams; Community Development Director, Mr. Charles Reese; Facilities and Assets Management Director/Interim Public Works Director, Mr. Steve Morgan; Finance Director, Mr. Frank Milazi; Human Resources Director, Mr. Nick Calhoun; Municipal Court Administrator, Ms. Trisha Morgan; Stormwater Supervisor, Mr. Brandon Williams; City Planner, Ms. Diane Johnson; and Open Records Officer, Ms. Kathy Story.

Mayor Vincent noted that Councilmember Varner's sister had succumbed to her illness; and offered condolences for the family.

Mayor Pro Tem Stewart gave the Invocation; and Councilmember Thomas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Vincent called for a motion to approve the Agenda. Councilmember Pruett motioned and Councilmember Burt seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner was not present for the meeting.

Consent Agenda

A. Technology Services

Request approval for payment of invoice for annual maintenance of Tyler Police RMS software, at a total cost of \$20,051.93. Funding Source: 100.5.1535.52.1301 (TECHNICAL SOFTWARE MAINTENANCE)

B. Public Safety – Police Department

RedSpeed Contract: Adoption of School Zone Speed Detection Ordinance 22-07-18(1)

C. Approval of the July 7, 2022 City Council Workshop Minutes

Mayor Vincent called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Stewart motioned and Councilmember Pruett seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner was not present for the meeting.

There were no public comments.

Finance Director Mr. Frank Milazi discussed the adoption of the 2022 Tax Millage Rate.

- Proposed rollback rate of 3.033, mills from 3.615 mills.
- No tax increase.
- Rollback will support 2022-2023 adopted budget

Henry County Tax Commissioner Mr. Michael Harris was in attendance at the meeting, and he briefly addressed Mayor and Council.

Mayor Vincent opened the Public Hearing.

No one spoke in favor. No one spoke in opposition.

Mayor Vincent closed the Public Hearing.

Councilmember Pruett motioned to approve the 2022 Millage Rate and to adopt Millage Rate Ordinance 22-07-18(2); and Mayor Pro Tem Stewart seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner was not present for the meeting.

Human Resources Director Mr. Nick Calhoun presented the request to amend the City's nepotism policy to allow relatives of City employees to work for the City, as long as they do not belong to the same reporting structure. Mr. Calhoun noted that the Human Resources Department and the City Administrator's Office would not be included in the proposed policy change. Prior to any discussion, Mayor Vincent noted that there are currently staff members employed with the City who are related, whose relationships were grandfathered in prior to the nepotism policy being adopted.

Discussion ensued. Councilmember Pruett noted that he supports the amendment to the policy, to allow members of the same family to be employed with the City, and he added that he would be willing to consider a more lenient policy as it relates to departments.

Councilmember Thomas expressed concerns relative to changing the nepotism policy, and she asked what prompted this item to be placed on the agenda at this time. Mr. Calhoun stated that many local governmental entities are experiencing difficulties in finding qualified employees to fill vacancies; and in some instances, potential employees are being disqualified from consideration because they have family members who are currently employed by the City. He also noted that in recent months Department Heads have requested that this amendment to the policy be considered, which resulted in the item being placed on the agenda.

Councilmember Thomas said that as written, the policy prevents the issues that can arise from family members working together, adding that the policy is also written to promote diversity. She stated that she believes that changing the policy would deter diversity in the workplace by allowing family members to work together for the City.

Mr. Calhoun responded that adding the amendment to the policy would simply allow family members to apply for positions at the City, to be considered for employment. He noted that all applications will continue to be submitted through the Human Resources Department, and only the most qualified candidates will be considered for hire. Mayor Vincent added that the “great resignation” is real, and it has left many entities without employees. She noted that this would simply be another tool in the toolbox to assist with the staffing shortages that are occurring. She said the City is currently suffering from staff shortages in several departments, including Public Safety. Discussion continued.

Councilmember Thomas requested guidance from the Attorney Walker regarding the proposed change to the nepotism policy. Ms. Walker offered that the proposed policy change is at the discretion of Mayor and Council. She recognized that control measures have been put in place to eliminate the possibility of family members working in the same reporting structure; however, she added that there is no textbook legal answer.

Councilmember Reeves said that in his small business, employing members of the same family has been beneficial in that family members tend to have the same work ethic. He noted that he had personally done some landscaping work on the square recently because there were not enough workers available in the Public Works Department to get the complete the tasks.

Councilmember Thomas questioned what the City is currently doing to promote hiring. Mr. Calhoun replied that the City has not been able to hold any job fairs, as the Human Resources Department is currently also understaffed. He noted that presently the City is advertising jobs on the City’s website and online through the Georgia Municipal Association, Indeed, and other job search and social media sites. Discussion continued.

Councilmember Thomas said if the amendment is passed that the City should set a threshold on how many related employees can be hired, and that processes should be put in place to ensure that the related person is in fact the most qualified applicant for the position. Mr. Calhoun reiterated that the Human Resources Department would be exempt from relatives being hired, and that all applications are submitted and reviewed through Human Resources.

Councilmember Pruett motioned to approve the request to amend the City's nepotism policy to allow relatives of City employees to work for the City, so long as they are not in the same department or reporting structure, as recommended by the Human Resources Director; and Mayor Pro Tem Stewart seconded. The vote was five in favor and one in opposition. The motion passed. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, and Councilmember Reeves. Councilmember Thomas voted in opposition. Councilmember Varner was not present at the meeting.

Community Development Director Mr. Charles Reese presented a request that Mayor and Council authorize the engagement of The Collaborative Firm to provide a professional services agreement in relation to updating the Zoning Codes. He stated that last year the Community Development staff completed an in-house evaluation of the Codes, and more recently input was requested from Developers who work with the City to provide feedback related to the current Codes.

He explained that the City has reached out to The Collaborative Firm, a leading firm in Atlanta for providing City planning services, in an effort to engage their services to help identify updates that need to be made to the Zoning Codes. Discussion ensued. Prior to any vote it was determined that the agreement will come back to Mayor and Council prior to final approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Stewart motioned to authorize the engagement of The Collaborative Firm to provide a professional services agreement in relation to updating the Zoning Codes, and Councilmember Pruett seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner was not present.

Executive Session (if needed) for: Litigation O.C.G.A. 50-14-2
Real Estate O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(1)
Personnel O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(2)

Mayor Vincent called for a motion to go into Executive Session for Real Estate (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(1) and Personnel (O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(2). Councilmember Pruett motioned and Mayor Pro Tem Stewart seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner was not present for the meeting.

Mayor Vincent called for a motion to go back into Regular Session. Councilmember Pruett motioned and Mayor Pro Tem Stewart seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent, Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner was not present for the meeting.

Councilmember Burt motioned to approve a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a contract with Andrea Boyd to serve as the City's Chief Municipal Court Judge; and Mayor Pro Tem Stewart seconded. The vote was six in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Vincent,

Mayor Pro Tem Stewart, Councilmember Burt, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Reeves, and Councilmember Thomas. Councilmember Varner was not present for the meeting.

Councilmember Thomas announced that the City is currently looking for locations to add charging stations throughout the City. She requested that interested citizens provide location suggestions to her by contacting her at 470-817-8016, or through email at vthomas@mcdonoughga.org.

Mayor Pro Tem Stewart said the Henry County Board of Education is offering the Pathway Program, which provides free classes and a local learning and support system. He also said McDonough Middle School will have new hours this year with classes being held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Councilmember Reeves said he enjoyed being invited to the Big Spring HOA meeting, and he noted that the residents in attendance shared some concerns relative to the Geranium Park project.

Councilmember Burt said he is excited to see the ground has been leveled on Doris Street in preparation for the Community Garden. He said he attended a meeting on the Jonesboro Road development, adding that he looks forward to having both of these beautiful projects in his district.

Mayor Vincent thanked Mr. Steve Morgan, who has agreed to serve as the Interim Public Works Director for the City until the position can be permanently filled. She also noted that she has received reports that the numbers of Covid in Henry County are once again increasing, and she encouraged staff and citizens to take the necessary precautions in protecting themselves against the virus by wearing masks, practicing social distancing and sanitizing hands.

Mayor Vincent adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Christy L. Taylor,
City Clerk

OPEN MEETINGS COMPLIANCE NOTICE: This is a regularly scheduled meeting of Mayor and Council of the City of McDonough duly noticed pursuant to the requirements of the Georgia Open Meetings Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, et seq). Notice of the meeting schedule was published in the *Henry Herald* on December 29, 2021; and a copy the meeting schedule was posted at City Hall and on the City's website, as required by law.