

THE CITY OF REIDSVILLE
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY APRIL 10, 2023
DRAFT COPY (NOT APPROVED UNTIL MAY 8th)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Reidsville City Council was held Monday April 10, 2023 at 5:00pm at the Reidsville City Hall Council Meeting Room.

Members of Council present were:

Curtis Colwell- Mayor

Carolyn Blackshear-Mayor Pro Tem

Lindsay Bennett-Councilwoman

Donald Prestage-Councilman

Douglas Williams-Councilman (absent)

Verdie Williams-Councilwoman

Duann Davis, City Attorney, Nivea Jackson, City Clerk, and Kelly McRae, Finance Clerk were all present in their respective roles.

The Mayor began by calling the meeting to order at 5:00pm and welcomed the Council and citizens to the meeting. The Mayor led the meeting in a word of prayer. The Mayor then announced that he would entertain a motion to approve two sets of meeting minutes from March's meetings.

Donald Prestage makes a motion to table the vote on the minutes because they did not receive the minutes at the planning session. The Council received the minutes during the minutes prior to the start of the meeting. The Council did not proceed with the monthly planning session on Monday April 3, 2023 for lack of a quorum. The Mayor asks if Mr. Prestage is referring to both sets of Minutes. Mr. Prestage agrees, "yes" to not approving both sets of minutes.

Motion by: Donald Prestage

2nd by: Lindsay Bennett

Vote: Carries with 2 opposes (C. Blackshear and V. Williams)

The Mayor asked for the monthly Department updates.

- Sydney Clifton is reporting for the Fire Department. No discrepancies noted
- Stacey Wilds reported for the RPD
- Rodney made the report for Water/Sewer and Street and Lanes.
Councilwoman Williams has asked the Public Works Director to elaborate on the installation of a Serta valve on Alliance St. Rodney is informing the Council that he would like to have a serta valve installed on the line near Alliance which would keep Deloach from having to cut a larger section of the City off in that area for his current repairs. L and L utilities has been contracted to fix that area and could complete the installation in addition to their current scope of work. Councilman Prestage is asking why Deloach doesn't have a 3rd bid. Deloach contends that he cannot get other companies to make bids in a timely manner. Councilwoman Blackshear asks Deloach if the repair is necessary. Deloach insists that it is. Blackshear makes a motion to accept L and L's bid and have the repairs completed.

Motion by: Carolyn Blackshear

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Vote: Carries, with 1 opposition (D. Prestage)

V. Williams asks that a note be added to the meeting. Williams would like it noted that with so much major building going on, the jobs that they are requesting bids on are small jobs. Contractors are slow to give bids on small jobs with the oversaturation of major work out there for companies. Deloach adds that he has called others and they make promises to come bid on jobs and never show up. The purpose of this is to keep forward progress going on repair work instead of having work linger. The need for the repair has gotten worse.

- Devin Jarriel, Building Inspector gave the report for that department
- Councilwoman Blackshear gave the report for Administration. She noted that budgets were being revised in the coming month with Department heads and their respective Council. Budget review would be in June.

Blackshear made mention that some of the Council and staff had attended the recent mandated Attorney General training and that it was very informational. Blackshear notes important dates on the bottom of the agendas to encourage Council's participation outside of just regular City Council meetings. Blackshear noted the upcoming GMA Council retreat would be at the end of the month on a Saturday as to not conflict with the Council who have conflicting work schedules to promote attendance.

- Downtown Development was asked if they had a report. None was given
- Surrency Playground was asked if they had a report. None was given
- The Ethics committee was in attendance and was invited to give a report. They have constructed an application/form for Ethics submissions for the Council to review for approval.

The Mayor asks if there is any updates on property taxes. Nivea Jackson adds that Wendell from GTS has called. She has not gotten back to him but is awaiting an update on the lists that Councilwoman Blackshear and Prestage were working on. A new list would need to go to GTS to send letters to.

The Mayor is asking for an update on the USDA loan. Jackson is advising the Mayor that they will be submitting all new financial documentation for the USDA loan because the new bid to complete the WWTP remodel is \$5M higher than originally estimated in 2019. New rate studies would need to be submitted to see if the debt service would need to be adjusted.

Duann Davis is giving an update on where things lie with Liftstation 1 land use. The company who has not been confirmed landowner would like for the City to submit plans on the new liftstation before they would make any decision on land use rights. Davis is checking into who is the rightful owner of where the Liftstation is to be located for legalities. Mr. Prestage is asking if Hofstadter is working on providing this. Rodney Deloach reminded the Council that Hofstadter's bid for the Liftstation is very costly. Donald Prestage makes a motion to have Hofstadter look into doing the work for Liftstation 1.

Motion by: Donald Prestage

2nd by: Lindsay Bennett

Vote: Carries unanimously

New business was discussed next. Mayor Colwell is asking Councilwoman Williams to discuss handicapped parking. Councilwoman Williams begins explaining that Public Works Director Rodney Deloach has already ascertained a bid from the Contractor that has completed several City sidewalk projects over the last year. The design would include 2 handicapped parking spaces that would be located directly in front of the City Hall doors completed with rails for handicapped accessibility for a patron from either side of their vehicle. Currently handicapped accessibility parking is located in the rear of the building creating a longer walk for someone who needs handicapped parking. The work would extend the current front parking lot to allow for a side street access to the parking lot and create more parking spaces in the front. Councilman Prestage suggested that the sidewalks be extended and finished at City Hall in previous meetings. Mr. Prestage is asking where the money would come from to complete this project. Nivea Jackson answered, Street and Lanes budget. Prestage says he is inquiring because it would be an unbudgeted item. Councilwoman Blackshear adds that there is money in the budget to do projects like this. The bid given was for \$3600 to complete the sidewalks and add handicapped parking at the City. Councilwoman Blackshear offers the motion that the current bid be accepted and the project completed using Street and Lanes budget.

Motion: Carolyn Blackshear

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Vote: Does not carry, 2 opposes (Prestage and Bennett)

Verdie Williams asks D. Prestage "Donald was this not your idea, isn't this what you suggested and wanted"? Councilman Prestage answers, "it is not that. I just suggest that we get three bids before we vote on anything." Councilwoman Williams replies to him with a reminder that the Mayor can approve \$3000.00 projects without Council approval. The Mayor could approve a future bid if it were just \$600 less without Council input. This current bid option gives the Council a chance to look at it and approve it with support as a whole. I actually thought this was something you wanted Donald but, ok. It was a good idea, given that the option would be giving citizens a safer way to enter and exit our parking lot, complete your requested sidewalk request for citizens walking safety, and include (practically for free) safe, convenient, handicapped parking. I just want to

explain that this is over \$600. Prestage interjects, "it's about getting 3 bids". Williams says, " we get three bids when we can, and it is fine to put it off". The Mayor suggested we table it until the next meeting by vote.

Motion by: Carolyn Blackshear

2nd by: Donald Prestage

Vote: Carries unanimous

Next was restructuring of the zoning board. Councilmembers present submitted 2 names for nomination to the zoning board. Names were submitted to the City Attorney Davis.

Holly Dyar has given a draft of the Ethics submittal form. The form also explains the process for submissions and the terms and responsibilities of all parties linked to the form. She also explains that small changes made be made to the form but this was going to be it for the most part. Sydney Clifton asks from the citizen audience for Mrs. Dyar to clarify if she is stating that someone can make a claim anonymously. "Yes" she says but if that is something that the Council wants to change you should make that known. I think it is important that a person should be able to report something without fear of retaliation. She also notes that there is a down side to anyone wanting to report anonymously. You don't get to know how it ends. The committee cannot follow up with a question or interview from complainant who is anonymous. They may hurt the complainant's case". Sydney Clifton adds, " I just feel that everyone should have to face their accuser, just like in court. Unless, you will have a bunch of complaints". Dyar explains that the Ethics Committee just makes recommendations to the Council to act on or not. The complainant can still go file an appeal in Superior Court if they oppose the decision of the Committee. She also makes clear that they do not hear personnel issues. They are there to hear whether or not Council or those appointed by the Mayor are in violation of Ethics. Councilwoman Blackshear adds that HR hears personnel issues. An explanation of the Committee's procedures has been curated so that people know what to expect.

Councilwoman Lindsay Bennett offers a motion to table the vote until next month.

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett

2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear

Vote: Carries Unanimously

The Mayor is asking for some clarification on special event forms from the Council. He is saying that “people have filled out our current special event form and through ‘word of mouth’ of whom I don’t know, but they are being told that there are stipulations and rules. I would like to know what those rules are especially for events that we have always had”. Donald Prestage answers, “first of all, I never said anything to anyone, so don’t look at me. I posed the question when it was posted to the Council on whether it was a ‘for profit’ event. You cannot use City funds to include facilities and personnel for those events. Ok, so that is the only issue I have with that. If it is ‘for profit’ the City should not be involved”. The Mayor asks what his stance was on Bucket Drives because that is a common “Special Event” and is for profit. “Even our own Fire Dept has participated in these”, adds Mayor Colwell. Duann Davis states that those are fundraisers and should only be conducted by nonprofit organizations. Councilwoman Blackshear asks, “what about the insurance requirement”? Councilman Prestage answers, “at one time the Council required all facility rentals to be accompanied with liability event insurance as a minimum. This has always been a requirement with parades”. The Mayor is in agreement with parades because there is a lot of liability there and especially at our recent night parades. Mr. Prestage concluded that, “ I just think it is a good idea for people to have the insurance and that protects the City from any problems”. Councilwoman Bennett adds that “the event form says to read the Liability Clause. What does our City’s liability clause say”? Davis responded that she did not know but would check. Sydney Clifton added that, “the Chamber was asked to provide insurance for all parades and they did”. Bennett responded that “ I would think with the bucket drive for the cheerleaders, the school requires athletes to carry liability insurance for events. The girls will be chaperoned by their coach just like at their sporting events. They should be covered and a fundraiser like that should be ok. I would

like to be clear on what ours says. Most clubs and organizations have some sort of liability insurance". Councilwoman Blackshear asks if applicants are given any sort of information stating the requirement for liability insurance. Nivea Jackson answers, "no, this special event form is what has always been given since I have been here". Blackshear agrees, "exactly, this is what has always been done, now is just when we question it". The Mayor agrees, "this was not ever a topic of discussion in the past, when anyone wanted to do something. Sydney when you were Mayor, there were Fire Dept boot drives all of time". Sydney Clifton answers, "we do not do those anymore. It is pretty cut and dry to me because first of all fire fighters are all adults. When you go to putting kids under a traffic light with cars, that comes with a lot of liability for the City. Fire fighters are covered on the City's insurance anyway. We are protected under worker's comp". The Mayor says those cheerleaders are chaperoned, and the instructor told me she has done this drive in the past when I wasn't Mayor. Donald Prestage states, "I just don't want anyone thinking it is me that doesn't want these events. All I am saying is we should have the forms filled out with a liability waiver signed. I feel like it is our job to protect the City and that is all that I want". Duann Davis agrees she will check into the City's liability disclaimer or draft one that relinquishes the City from liability or claim. Bennett stated that her desire is just to make sure that the kids are safe as well. I hope we can get this solved before May 6th.

The Mayor is closing with remarks from the Council. The Mayor asks Bennett if there were any updates from the Rec Department. Bennett reports that she has asked Derrien to look into getting some grants to finish his lighting project. Donald Prestage is asking Rodney Deloach when he will begin spraying for mosquitos. Rodney answers with let him check on the prices of the spray and get back with the Council. Mrs. Verdie closed with the reminder that the City of Reidsville has claimed April as Fair Housing Month and the City has books displayed at the local library encouraging the City's support of equality. "You will see these flyers locally around town". Carolyn Blackshear adds that they will be reworking budgets with Dept heads and Council. She also is requesting for the Police Department to "check into the many donut tire marks randomly on the City streets. People have reported it is a low rider truck making the marks. It's a safety issue for our citizens on our streets". Mrs. Verdie asks if she can add one thing. She says that the engineers and Rodney have identified a neighborhood that is on

City water, but not on City sewage. This project would add a whole neighborhood to City services for sewage thus increasing revenue. The CDBG grant would foster the financing of this project. The Council will need to start thinking about what they want. It has to be a moderately low income neighborhood. Councilwoman Blackshear adds that the area by San Reid apartments would be an ideal neighborhood. That would create revenue. Mrs. Verdie please look into this”.

The Mayor requests a motion to adjourn.

Carolyn Blackshear offers a motion to adjourn at 5:45p