

City of Reidsville

MINUTES

City Council Meeting

Monday January 9, 2023 at 5:00pm

Reidsville City Hall

Draft Copy- NOT APPROVED until February 13th 2023

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Reidsville City Council was held on Monday January 9th 2023 at 5:00pm. Members of Council present:

Mayor, Curtis Colwell

Councilwoman, Carolyn Blackshear

Councilwoman, Lindsay Bennett (Absent)

Councilman, Donald Prestage

Councilman Doug Williams

Councilwoman, Verdie Williams

City Attorney, Duann Davis

City Clerk, Nivea Jackson

City Finance Officer, Kelly McRae

The audience was welcomed by Curtis Colwell, Mayor. Next the audience was led in prayer by Councilwoman Blackshear, and the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance in unison.

The Department Supervisor reports were next on the agenda. Jimmy Brown, Fire Chief made the report for the Fire Dept. Mayor Colwell interjected and announced that he would accept a motion to approve last month's meeting minutes if no corrections were needed.

Motion by: Doug Williams

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Motion carries: Unanimous

highlight “that streets are being swept and maintained and that Right-of-Way’s have been trimmed to not hinder drivers. Ditches have also been cleaned in various areas all over town”. Councilman Prestage wanted to know why is there standing water visible at the corner of Alliance and Main Streets. Mr. Deloach answered and stated that, “we were waiting for a part to arrive, but we are addressing the issue, and hopefully it will be fixed in a few days.” Councilwoman Bennett gave the report for the Recreation Department. She also mentioned that the two new ball fields were near completion, and they would like to schedule a ribbon cutting ceremony when the project is completed. Also, they would be trying to apply for additional funding through grants.

Councilwoman Carolyn Blackshear gave the report for Administration. She announced that budget meetings were continuous on every other Friday. Blackshear also gave each of the Council members a job description for a Finance Clerk at the Planning Session for review. Councilman Prestage asks, “How long will the position be advertised. Blackshear answers, until November 1st, which will be the deadline to apply, giving us two weeks to advertise the position”. Blackshear encouraged all Elected Officials to attend the Tattnall County Municipal Association Meeting on Tuesday October 25th at 6:30pm. The meeting will be held in the newly renovated County Extension Office in the Old IGA parking lot in Reidsville. The mayor asked if there was anyone present from the DDA. Mrs. Vicki Nails reported they would be continuing with their meetings. It was previously reported about T-Mobile coming soon so there was nothing new to report. Surrency Playground had no representatives in attendance. Karen Deloach reported by phone to the City Clerk that they had a balance of \$3,020.37. The new basketball court had been installed and the bleachers were ordered but awaiting installation. The mayor asked the City Attorney, DuAnn Davis to update Council on Dilapidated properties. Attorney Davis has been on medical leave and has not followed up on this matter and is requesting it be moved to next month. Blackshear is asking if any new properties had been added to the list. Davis answers that none had been added. She will be taking new properties to add to the list. Councilwoman Blackshear asked Rodney Deloach to look at the property on Pittman Street because large tree limbs have grown way over into the streets. Donald Prestage states that he has spoken to GTS about back taxes and that the Coordinator Mr. Wendell is still awaiting the list. City Clerk Nivea Jackson explains that GTS wants the list that is in QS1 to be curated to an Excel spreadsheet. The list is 236 pages Jackson stated. It is going to take time to get this list. Bennett asks, “why not give access to QS1 to GTS? “Then he will not need a list.” Jackson answers, “I am using the process that GTS has asked me to use. However, I will get him a list”. Donald Prestage states that he feels this list could be completed sooner. Jackson stated she would have the list by Friday. Councilwoman Verdie Williams stated that she is in touch with Ronnie McCall a representative for the VFW and working on the necessary steps for the Road closure at the VFW Building on highway 56.

Councilwoman Blackshear addressed the Council and stated that each council member had been given an Ethics guideline from the “Ethics in Government Manual” at the last planning session. She had also printed literature from GMA on “Code of Ethics”. This is guidance for Council to use to decide on the parameters for an Ethic’s Committee. The current Code states that the committee will need an Attorney that lives in the City of Reidsville. Currently, Attorney Davis is the only attorney that resides in the City of Reidsville and that conflicts with her now position as City Attorney for the City of Reidsville. Blackshear stated that the Council will need to decide on what suitable alternatives

or makeup to currently use (Choosing from Alternative A, B, C, or D) according to GMA Code of Ethics guidelines because our current charter ethics code causes a conflict. Vicki Nails stated she use to serve on the ethics board and there were only three members who could serve on the board. Our City Attorney formerly served on the Board as well before taking the role as the City Attorney and we did not have a problem with the member makeup at that time. Councilwoman Bennett wants to go on record as nominating Brian Nurzig as her nominee for a member of the Ethics Committee. Councilwoman Bennett stated, "regardless of the makeup, I want to go on record and nominate Brian Nurzig and I want it on record!" Mayor Colwell assured Mrs. Bennett it will go on record. However, Mr. Nurzig does have an active Ethics Complaint pending currently."

Mr. Edgar Johnson, a citizen of Reidsville was on the agenda to speak and was given the floor. Mr. Johnson asks the Council if they are familiar with Pine Forest Subdivision. He stated the homes in his neighborhood were apart of this planned community that never happened. Councilwoman Blackshear spoke to the topic. "I know about this subdivision because it was the hope of Mr. Waldo Surrency whose family once owned most of that entire neighborhood during that era. It never came to fruition because there was a lift station needed and it was too expensive for him to finance, and the subdivision was never finished. Only a few privately owned homes were constructed in the area." Mr. Johnson stated that, "in a subdivision every street must have a name. Pine Street is a city street and should be maintained by the city but isn't. This street is in my backyard and inaccessible to the public and I am requesting to have the street closed." Mayor Colwell stated, "that we will look into your request and get back with you on this."

Councilwoman Bennett requested the floor for closing comments. Bennett asked that the Council members and audience not respond to her as she was speaking directly to Attorney Davis as a legal reporter to the State on Elected Officials. Bennett is stating that unfactual representations on the part of the mayor on his qualifying paperwork. Bennett requested that the Attorney seek the District's Attorney to step in and remove Mayor Colwell for qualifying for office with unpaid taxes. Bennett is asking Colwell to voluntarily step down from his position as Mayor or face prosecution for qualifying under false pretenses. Mayor Colwell stated to Bennett, "take it wherever you want to take it, I will not step down". Councilwoman Williams stated she had a similar question. Williams stated she sought legal counsel from an Attorney in Augusta, Georgia and the Attorney advised her that unless she had been adjudicated for failure to pay taxes that, prosecution would be a waste of time. Colwell stated that he himself called the Secretary of States office to inquire as well. Mayor Colwell explains that his city taxes are current but were not at the time of qualification. He also noted he will stand his ground.

Councilman Donald Prestage announced that one of the citizens whose graves had been damaged at the City Cemetery has complained that the bill had not been paid and is requesting to have the bill paid. Councilwoman Blackshear announced again that every other Friday a finance meeting is conducted, and she goes through all invoices to be paid and that bill was not there at the last meeting. However, she stated that we will make sure that invoice is paid. Donald Prestage is requesting that a Council Member from Ward 2 preferable Lindsay Bennett interview alongside Mrs. Blackshear for the Finance position. Prestage stated that the Council is at a point where we need to get together and

do what's best for the city. Bennett is asking that this be done in a form of a vote to go on record. City Clerk Jackson interjects to the mayor, "there is a motion on the floor"

Motion made by: Donald Prestage

2nd By: No second

Motion: dies for a lack of second

City Clerk, Jackson asks to make a comment. In a previous meeting, a local citizen Jacqueline Jones made a public comment that the mayor was her biological uncle. She presented a printed copy of her Daddy's obituary that came from our local newspaper. "Mayor Curtis Colwell is not my uncle! she stated. What was read on the obituary is that my father has an Uncle Curtis Mosley, not Colwell. It says he is from Florida. It has been stated on Facebook on several occasions accusing the mayor of being my uncle and he is not. I have made highlights to the obituary for closer inspection. The mayor interjects, "yes that lie just keeps being spread online but we are going to stop that lie". "It is very demeaning for me that my father has been dead for 3 years, but I have to bring his obituary to work tonight to defend my position here with the city."

With no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn: Doug Williams

2nd By: Verdie Williams

The Motion: Carried Unanimously