

MINUTES

JACKSON CITY SPECIAL CALL COUNCIL MEETING

June 9, 2020 – 9:00 A.M.

GEORGE A. SMITH MEETING ROOM

Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, and Roll Call:

The Council of the City of Jackson met in a special call session on **Tuesday, June 9, 2020**, at 9:00 A.M. Mayor Scott Conger gave the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. The mayor then called the roll. Councilmembers Ernest Brooks II, David Cisco, Johnny Dodd, Russ McKelvey, Ross Priddy, Paul Taylor, and Marda Wallace were present. Absent were Gary Pickens and Harvey Buchanan. For the City of Jackson, Mr. Bobby Arnold, Finance, Mr. Stan Pilant, Planning, Ms. Susan White, Purchasing, and Ben Smith, Building. Guests also in attendance were Jeff Watlington from Watlington Construction. Also present was Sandy Maxwell recorder of the minutes.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes for June 2, 2020, meeting were approved and signed.

Proclamations:

1. None

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Scott Conger reminded the audience this is a public hearing, and open to public comment for opposition to or in favor of items on the first readings. Anyone is allowed to speak when the appropriate items are up for discussion.

FIRST READINGS:

1. **Consideration of a budget amendment to move \$750,000 from Debt Service fund balance to Debt Service revenue and expense.**

Mr. Bobby Arnold from the Finance Department stated that this amendment would provide a budget for the estimated amount that we've talked about in the previous meeting that the debt service expenditures are going to exceed, which projected June 30, 2020, available budget.

Mayor Conger then asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in favor of or opposition to the ordinance. There being no one present to speak in opposition to or in support of the ordinance, Mayor Conger declared the public hearing closed.

Councilmember Taylor said, to clarify, this is moving \$750,000, which has accumulated from previous or ongoing budget ordinances to move over into the debt service to pay for that overage. Per Mr. Arnold, that's correct. Councilmember Taylor asked if Mr. Arnold knew the total general fund balance draw this year? Mr. Arnold said he believed it was about 1.1 million.

Councilmember Cisco made a motion, seconded by Johnny Dodd, to approve the agenda item as submitted. Upon a call for a vote, all 7 voted aye, 2 being absent, motion passed.

SECOND READINGS:

- 1. Consideration of a Budget Amendment to transfer an amount not to exceed \$500,000 from the General Fund to the Debt Service Fund.**

Councilmember Brooks made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cisco, to approve the agenda item as submitted. Upon a call for a vote, all 7 voted aye, 2 being absent, motion passed.

- 2. Consideration of a Budget Amendment to approve Dog Park funded by a grant from Boyd Foundation.**

Councilmember Dodd made a motion, seconded by Councilmember McKelvey, to approve the agenda item as submitted. Upon a call for a vote, all 7 voted aye, 2 being absent, motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Update re: Vacant Property Ordinance**

Stan Pilant from the Planning Department reported, beginning in September of 2019, they developed an inventory of vacant buildings in the way of identifying which ones were genuinely vacant and needed to pay the registration fee. Those that were actually occupied or they were in the middle of a rehab, or those being actively marketed. Starting with over 140 properties, a few of those properties were automatically removed because they were government-owned, 55 of those were truly vacant, 50 of them were partially vacant, 16 properties were available for rent, or actively marketed, eight properties were in rehab. Five are multi-tenant vacant properties. They processed 134 properties, still having to turn 13 properties over to our city attorney, who will be handling through a summons to environmental court. We have contacted our building officials and inspectors to begin the rotation again, even though it has not been a full 12 months. To determine if any additional vacant properties were missed the first time, or have become vacant. Our goal is to identify other properties and process the last group through the environmental court, which has been slow due to COVID-19 interruptions. The same is true for the inspectors who have also had their hands full with essential businesses and non-essential businesses, so they have not been able to start over again but are hopeful to start soon.

Councilmembers had a few questions is there a spreadsheet and a map for the properties and could the council get an update about every six months, so the council could see how well this ordinance is or is not working. Could the council get a copy of the numbers that were presented today and if the ordinance will put us (City) in a better position to collect the property taxes on these properties. Mr. Pilant said, ye to all questions and explained the properties come from our tax roll, so the collection of taxes is already a part of the equation but may not always to possible to other reasons.

2. Consideration of a contract for Madison Academic

Councilmember Marda Wallace presented a summary of the two options or hiring an owner representative, Watlington Construction, for the Madison Academic building project. This amendment was attached by the council when the motion passed at the February 25, 2020 meeting. Ms. Wallace explained that Watlington Construction, the company to represent the city (as the owner of the project), gave the city two options with some potential savings to the city. Option 1) a representative would be overseeing the Madison project daily basis (40 hours a week). Option 2) there would be project management checks (approximately 13 hours a week), and City employees would be there in some capacity daily checking on the project. She called on Ben Smith from the City of Jackson Building Dept. and Jeff Watlington from Watlington Construction to further explain the roles of the owner representative and how city employees could be used.

Several Councilmember asked questions, like how many employees and from which Dept. would be a part of the check-in and what their role would be. After several questions were asked and answers were given between the council and the presenters, Councilmember Dodd suggested that we (the council) amend our amendment. Councilmember Paul Taylor reminded the council that the reason they sought representation of the job site was that past projects were not appropriately managed, and they came in over budget.

Councilmember Dodd made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, to rescind the agenda item for the previous meeting. Before voting, the mayor reminded council that aye vote would be a vote to take this contract off the table altogether, and nay vote would be to keep our agreement with Watlington Construction for owner representation on the Madison Academic High School. Upon a call for a vote, Councilmembers Brooks, Dodd, Cisco, McKelvey, and Wallace voted (5) aye, Councilmembers Taylor, and Priddy voted (2) nay, and 2 being absent, motion passed.

For the full details, listen to the June 9, 2020 video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofJacksonTN731>, from time marker 13:20 – 59:30.

3. Revision to Debt Management Policy

Mr. Bobby Arnold from the Finance Department stated that our existing policy limits our annual debt service as a percentage of our total tax property tax revenue, which includes PILOT & IDB. The current amount is set at 26.6%, and Mr. Arnold recommends an increase to 28%.

Councilmember Priddy asked since this pertains to FY21, should we wait until after the budget hearings are finished, so we have a better understanding of the budget numbers.

Councilmember Taylor made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Brooks, to table the agenda item until after the budget hearings. Upon a call for a vote, Councilmembers Brooks,

McKelvey, Priddy, Taylor, Wallace voted (5) aye, Councilmembers Dodd and Cisco abstaining (2), and 2 being absent, motion passed.

4. Consideration of a resolution to support an application to the Economic Development Administration for a Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance CARES ACT grant for F.E. Wright access road.

Lauren Kirk, from the Mayor's Office, stated we are applying for the cost of the access road at Tiger Jones Industrial Park, which, if you recall this is part of the Great Wolf Lodge project, the city owns that property and responsible for putting in the access road. Southwest Tennessee Development is applying on our behalf to help with the cost as well. We are asking now because of the special CARES Act funding from the FDA and also because if we don't get the funding now, we can reapply in October for regular public funding.

We are applying for about 50% of the cost, which is at or slightly above their average award. We're also going to be applying for a Delta Regional Authority for \$1 million. Since this project does have a regional economic impact, so that would take the cost from 6.4 million. It would go down to 2.4 million, and we would, of course, look for other local assistance to make this road happen. This particular project is a few years out, so we have some options; decline the grant if Great Wolf Lodge decides not to come, asking Madison County to help fund the road, adding it to the city budget in a few years, when the project is firmer, on how to handle this grant if awarded.

Questions asked by Councilmember included: confirming the money was part of the CARES Act through the FDA. Have other grants been sought, and was there an update about the Great Wolf Lodge's decision to still come to Jackson? Has our Planning Department put any numbers together to confirm the cost of the road, and have we (City of Jackson) already committed to building the road.

After additional questions were asked and answered given between the council and the presenters, Councilmember Taylor made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Wallace, to approve the agenda item as submitted. Upon a call for a vote, Councilmember Brooks, Cisco, McKelvey, Priddy, Taylor, and Wallace voted (6) aye, Councilmember Dodd abstaining, 2 being absent, motion passed.

For the full details, listen to the June 9, 2020 video at <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofJacksonTN731>, from time marker 01:02:00 to 01:13:00.

ADJOURN.


SCOTT CONGER, MAYOR