
THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERPERSONS

The special meeting of the Mayor and Board of Alderpersons was held in the Courtroom at City Hall at 6:06 p.m. on Tuesday, January 14, 2025. Mayor Betty Alford-Olive presided.

Roll call was as follows:

Present: Angela Tappin (District A) Charles Bradford (District B), James Green (District C), Darry Green (District D), Howard Loche (District E)

Absent: None

The Invocation was given by Mayor Alford-Olive. She also asked for a Moment of Silence for Ms. Courtney Allen, former employee of the Bastrop Police Department, and Ms. Debra Boyd, former Marshal Office employee and wife of former Bastrop Fire Department employee, Mr. Bubba Boyd. Mr. D. Green led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Chastity Kennedy, 9147 Redwood Drive, inquired about the qualifications required for former employees receiving funds from the American Rescue Plan and asked for an explanation of the guidelines in writing. Mr. Henry Doaty, 746 Ludlum Avenue, asked if there is a document which lists who got paid during COVID. Mr. Doaty asked if the public could be informed what items are on the agenda before the meeting. Mr. Colonel Evans, 1107 Sharp Street, requested the Council place the Parks sports programs back into the City budget. Attorney Devin Jones advised public funds cannot be used to pay employees to coach sports programs or for travel, food, and lodging for sports competitions.

The Rules of Order were suspended and the meeting expanded to discuss amending the budget to fund City Sports Programs on a motion by Ms. Tappin, seconded by Mr. D. Green, followed by a unanimous vote.

Ms. Cindy Hendrix, 10056 Lynch Lane, explained how funds are raised for the Baseball and Softball programs.

The Council discussed the need to find volunteers to coach City sports programs. A resolution to amend the budget to include City sports will be considered in the next meeting on a motion by Ms. Tappin, seconded by Mr. Loche, followed by a unanimous vote.

Mr. J. Green left the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Mr. Henry Doaty asked the Mayor, Council and City Officials to keep the public informed when major incidents involving law enforcement occur. During the discussion, Mr. J. Green returned to the meeting at 7:26 p.m. Mr. J. Green was introduced back to the meeting on a motion by Mr. D. Green, seconded by Mr. Bradford, followed by a unanimous vote.

The Mayor announced the Morehouse Parish Police Jury granted control of the abandoned cemetery, Whispering Pines, to Mr. Ronnie Edwards and his wife and Mr. Melvin Mayo. The non-profit group invited the public to a kickoff event 1:00-4:00 p.m. Monday, January 20, 2025 as part of a day of service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Edwards asked the community for its support. Mr. Hercules Anthony, 5105 Naff Avenue, commented the potholes on Martin Luther King South needs repair. The Mayor announced St. John Baptist Church will celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King January 19, 2025. She also recognized Mr. Jesse Ware, Jr., on his 100th birthday, January 15, 2025. The Mayor announced the City is looking for grants to address blighted properties. The Mayor also announced the City is applying for a grant from the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF). Ms. Tappin reminded people to stay home if exhibiting symptoms of cold or flu.

Mr. Bradford asked the Minutes reflect there was discussion in December 2024 about the \$600,000 received by the City. The Mayor asked for the record to reflect that the City has not received that money; it is working through a process as mandated by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (GOHSEP). Minutes of the Special Meeting November 6, 2024, and the Regular Meeting November 14, 2024, Regular Meeting December 12, 2024 and Special Meetings December 18, 2024 and December 30, 2024 were accepted with corrections on a motion by Ms. Tappin, seconded by Mr. Bradford, followed by a unanimous vote.

The Finance Committee Report—Bills and Claims for December 2024 was rejected on a motion by Mr. J. Green, seconded by Ms. Tappin. The Council discussed payment to Bastrop Feed & Seed, the City Attorney and Key Marketing Solutions. The Mayor asked that the record reflect that the \$2,500 paid to Key Marketing Solutions was the final payment for rebuilding the entire City website. During discussion, Mr. Bradford left the meeting at 8:04 p.m. and returned at 8:05 p.m.

The Planning and Zoning Committee Report was given by Commission Chair Ms. Debbie Rogers. During the discussion, Ms. Tappin left the meeting at 8:23 p.m. and returned at 8:26 p.m.

The Taxpayer Status Report for the month of December 2024 was given by Tax Collector, Ms. Charissa Holmes.

Code Enforcement Officer Mr. Bubba McDuffie reported 62 properties had been cited for cleanup. Mr. Loche asked that a list of delapidated houses be provided to the Council.

The Council began a discussion about Ordinance 24-4280, requiring monthly financial statements and other financial information to be provided to the Bastrop City Council.

The Council discussed whether volunteers should be allowed in the Clerk's office. During discussion, the Mayor left the meeting at 8:46 p.m. and returned at 8:49 p.m. The Mayor stated, for the record, that she will not participate in a conversation of a person that has not been given 24-hour notice that he/she will be discussed publicly in an open meeting. The Mayor stated that now the Council wants to legislate the Mayor's Office. Mr. J. Green stated the Mayor's office will be legislated in March.

The Rules of Order were suspended to consider a request for a special-event liquor permit for Quails Forever.

A request for a Special Event Permit to serve alcohol at an event sponsored by Quails Forever on February 7, 2025 was granted on a motion by Mr. J. Green, seconded by Ms. Tappin and Mr. D. Green, followed by a unanimous vote.

Mr. J. Green apologized for earlier statements regarding upcoming elections in March 2025. He is not endorsing any candidate. The Mayor stated she is accessible to anyone who wants to call.

Ordinance 24-4280, requiring monthly financial statements and other financial information to be provided to the Bastrop City Council, was adopted with changes that people liable for not providing information to be held in contempt, on a motion by Ms. Tappin, seconded by Mr. J. Green, followed by a unanimous vote.

The Council discussed the ARPA funding that was washed and will be divided between each City Council District (A, B, C, D, E). The Council considered whether funds could be used to tear down dilapidated housing. The Mayor asked the Council for a list of properties to begin the process. The Mayor informed the Council the City had received a \$25,000 grant from Representative Francis Thompson to use for cleanup efforts.

Mr. Green left the meeting at 9:21 p.m.

The Council discussed directing the City Attorney Devin Jones, to file an administrative writ of mandamus, asking the court to order the City of Bastrop Administration, Mayor Betty Alford-Olive to turn over all financial statements and records from January 2024 to January 2025 and beyond to the City Council members.

The Council discussed requiring the City Administration, Mayor or Attorney have a forensic audit on financial statements, grants, and statements on all financial matters. Ms. Joann Bradford, 1320 South Washington, commented a

forensic audit follows all of the money to the City. During discussion, Mr. D. Green returned at 9:41 p.m. A resolution requesting the Inspector General to inspect the City financials will be drafted on a motion by Mr. Bradford, seconded by Ms. Tappin, followed by a unanimous vote.

In closing, the Mayor stated most cities have findings in audit reports; but that it does not mean a death sentence.

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m. on a motion by Mr. D. Green, seconded by Mr. Loche and Ms. Tappin, followed by a unanimous vote.