



CITY OF CHARLESTON

City Council Meeting

November 14, 2023

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Jackie Whiteside at 6:30 PM. Councilman Rick Toon, Councilman Philip Halter, Councilwoman Monica Goodin, City Manager Greg Luehmann, City Attorney Tabatha Graham, City Clerk Ali Morris, and the Chief of the Department of Public Safety, Robert Hearn Jr. were present. Councilman Clark Dugan was absent.

Consideration of Prior Meeting Minutes: Councilman Halter made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2023, meeting. Councilman Toon seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Report of City Business: At this time, City Manager, Greg Luehmann held up a giant check from the James L. Byrd Endowment Fund, showing the donation that was made into the perpetual fund on the city's behalf. The fund has officially been set up and the city will be receiving interest on the donation within a year.

Mr. Luehmann announced that two new streetlights were installed at Rolwing Park and that we have already had a lot of positive feedback and comments on the additional lighting. He also mentioned that more lighting may be added to Charles Williams Park as well.

Mr. Luehmann then mentioned that a flyer was mailed out along with the water bills to all residents, notifying them of the individuals who have begun the lead inventory project. Councilwoman Goodin noted that they had already visited her house and they were very nice and efficient. Councilman Halter asked if they would be reporting status updates to the city. Mr. Luehmann said yes.

The walking trail from Virginia Street to Hillhouse Park was completed in October and it is beautiful. Work at Hequembourg Pond was also completed. Mr. Luehmann said we started with a small portion of white rock then decided to go ahead and have it placed all the way around the pond. This also helped raise the level of the pond and there is a possibility of adding additional fish at some point.

Councilman Halter asked what the next step is in the park project. Mr. Luehmann said they hope to get the concrete poured for the playground equipment in Plainview. They also hope to get the concrete poured at Hillhouse Park before the end of the year.

A house in Bertrand caught fire in the early hours of October 23rd which our fire department assisted with. Another house then caught fire in Charleston a few hours later. Part-time firefighters assisted and we are hoping to find some volunteers to help in these situations as the police officers put in some very long hours during these types of incidents.

Mr. Luehmann then stated that a meeting was held with Phillip Smith about the potential dog kennel improvements. This architect has experience designing these types of structures and has provided some preliminary plans. This will be an investment and we are still looking at the possibility of grant funding to help aid in the project.

Councilman Halter said that he believes it is the consensus of the council to move forward with the process.

The city manager said he would go over the costs with the council as they get more details.

The city has purchased a dart gun to help in capturing the loose dogs, but we are still awaiting darts.

At this time, Mr. Luehmann stated that the city has begun their audit. He said he could safely say that it should be completed within the first quarter of next year and everything is going well so far.

We had an applicant for the Department of Public Safety and have accepted his application. He will start as a part-time employee and Councilman Halter asked if the city would pay for him to attend the academy with a three-year contract. Mr. Luehmann said yes, that was the plan.

Mr. Luehmann then stated that he attended the Bootheel Regional Annual Meeting in Dexter, and that grant opportunities were discussed.

Speaking of grants, we were awarded the grant we applied for regarding the sidewalk repairs needed on Hunter Street. Councilman Halter said that one issue that will potentially arise is that there are a lot of large trees on that street that are affecting the sidewalks. These trees and their roots will most likely need to be removed so that the sidewalk repairs can take place and stay intact. With this issue, we will need to seek public approval for the removal and figure out how to pay for it.

The monthly budget report was referred to at this time and the city manager said we were right on target.

Old Business: Consideration of **Bill NO. 3946/Ordinance NO. 3087- An Ordinance Repealing Chapter 415 of the City of Charleston Code of Ordinances and Enacting in Lieu Thereof a New Chapter 415 Entitled "Floodplain Management Regulations" including administrative procedures.** Mr. Luehmann explained that this was part of four things that needed to be done in order to be in compliance. As a reminder, the only part of Charleston that falls within the floodplain is within Whipple Park. Councilman Halter made a motion to approve

Bill NO. 3946/Ordinance NO. 3087. Councilwoman Goodin seconded the motion. All were in favor, none were opposed. The floodplain ordinance and administrative procedures were approved.

New Business: Lester Gillespie and other members of the Gun Violence Steering Committee were present to discuss the committee and its purpose. Gillespie explained that trauma affects us all in some form or fashion and that is why they have partnered with a foundation. Gun violence is clearly a problem, and it is everyone's problem. He then stated that during interviews with family members who have lost loved ones due to gun violence, it has been mentioned that retaliation is a big concern. He said we need to find a way to combat that. They hosted a gun violence walk-a-thon at the Bowden Center where thousands showed up. Gillespie then invited everyone to attend a "dear remembrance" balloon release ceremony at the Bowden Center on Wednesday, November 15th. Gillespie went on to explain that during the interviews with those who have lost loved ones due to gun violence, they have often said "our voices have never been heard", and they need to feel supported and know that they are not alone. Gillespie mentioned there have been some shootings recently and it is time to take care of this. He then said gun violence and trauma go hand in hand and the trauma will be released one way or another. We need to make the schools and community aware. He said our families are getting killed and we need to take some type of action. Gillespie said it is not just up to one individual, the police department, or city council-it is everyone. He said we all need to be able to grow from this. At this time, Gillespie and the other members in attendance with the committee took a photo with Mayor, Jackie Whiteside signing the gun violence proclamation. Gillespie said they will continue to celebrate every year on November 15th.

Next on the agenda was to discuss the speed limits from South Main Street toward the north end of Charleston. Mr. Luehmann said he has had some complaints about the speed limit going from 25mph to 35mph right in front of the police station, then to 15mph at the end of North Main. Mr. Luehmann deferred to Councilwoman Goodin as she lives at the end of North Main Street. Goodin said the speed limit changes do not make sense and the speed limit coming into town from the north is 45 mph and there is a sharp curve right in front of her house. Goodin said she has had a lot of requests for the speed limit to remain 25mph all the way up North Main Street, and then increase to 45mph once you get around the curve. The Chief of Police stated that he would contact MODOT to see if they could do anything about it, as they are the ones who set the speed limits. Goodin said she contacted them in the past and they mentioned repainting the lines and moving them over to try and keep vehicles from driving through her property. Mayor Whiteside said he felt that it would be a good idea, but he didn't think we have any say so. Councilman Toon asked if we could draft a letter to MODOT to make the request. The city manager said that he would. The chief of police said the curve is more of an issue than the speed limit.

Next on the agenda was **Bill NO. 3944/Ordinance NO. 3085- An Ordinance Establishing Opening and Closing Dates for Upcoming Municipal Election.** The upcoming election will be for two (2) councilmen-at-large for a three (3) year term. Councilman Halter and Councilman Dugan's terms are both expiring. Councilwoman Goodin asked how the ballot would look. Councilman Halter explained that there is no set number of people allowed to run. The top two

votes will win the available positions. Councilman Halter made a motion to approve Bill NO. 3944/Ordinance NO. 3085. Councilman Toon seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the election ordinance was approved.

The next item on the agenda was **Bill NO. 3945/Ordinance NO. 3086-An Ordinance Authorizing the Purchase of a 2024 Ford F150 for use by the Department of Public Works.** This was a budgeted item. Councilman Halter made a motion to approve Bill No. 3945/Ordinance NO. 3086. Councilman Goodin seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the ordinance approving the truck purchase was approved.

The final item under new business was the consideration of **Resolution NO. 1111- A Resolution Adopting the City of Charleston, Missouri Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.**

The city manager explained that if a natural disaster were to happen without this plan in place, we would not be able to receive any type of funding.

Councilman Toon made a motion to approve Resolution NO. 1111. Councilman Halter seconded the motion. All were in favor. None were opposed. The motion carried and the resolution was approved.

Recognition of Visitors: Ann Riggins, Sheila Shankle, Tiffany Shankle, Lester Gillespie, Sherry Austin, Catie Austin, Veronica Dunigan, Glenn Fennell, Talisha Mays, Fred Evans, and Davis Wilson were all present. Officer Babb and Officer Slipis were also present.

Sherry Austin spoke up on behalf of CHARM and said that the “Fall in Love with Charleston” weekend went very well. All activities including the chili cook off and the flashmob dance were very supported by the community. Councilwoman Goodin said it was a great event. The city manager also noted he was there, and it was very nice. Austin also said we can look forward to more changes coming soon to the pocket park on South Main Street.

Catie Austin asked if there is any place in town to go in case of a tornado. She also asked if the school was a safe enough place to go. Mayor Whiteside responded, “No, unfortunately there is not. The school should be a safe structure, but it is probably not built for that purpose either.” He also mentioned that the old courthouse used to be where everyone went to take cover in the event of a tornado, but after the old one was torn down, the new courthouse was not built the same way.

Sheila Shankle asked what the status was on the tornado sirens that used to sound off every day at noon. Chief Hearnese said they had gotten some quotes and hope to have a strategic plan within the next three years and hopefully will get some funding through a USDA grant. Hearnese said the sirens simply do not work and they were never designed for people to be able to hear them inside their homes. They were designed to warn people who were outside to take cover. There was also an issue when the sirens did work that they did not reach all parts of town. Hearnese also mentioned there are so many apps available now on cell phones that alert people of increment weather conditions.

Tiffany Shankle mentioned that people became dependent on the actual sirens after having them for so long.

Lester Gillespie said he looked forward to hearing the sirens every day and always knew when it was noon because of them. Gillespie also mentioned even though there are apps available on cell phones, a lot of elderly people in the community do not have access to those or know how to use them. He said we just need to be considerate of all citizens.

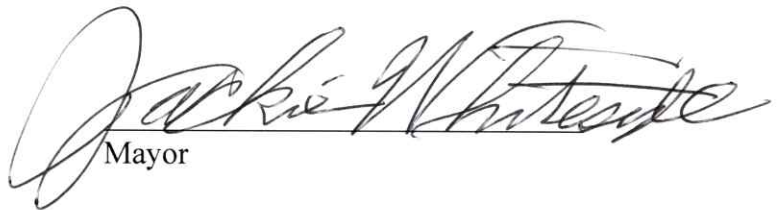
Adjourn: A motion was made by Councilman Halter to adjourn the regular session and go into closed session. Councilman Toon seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:


City Clerk


Presiding Officer


City Clerk


Mayor