



**Blakely City Council  
MINUTES  
City Hall**

**July 7, 2020**

**6:00 P.M.**

**I) Swear In New Council Member**

The Mayor, Travis Wimbush, swore in Brad Clenney as City Councilmember.

**II) Public Hearing 142 E Butler – Re-Zone From R1 To R2**

The Mayor, Travis Wimbush, opened the Public Hearing at 6:05. Rod Edmonson addressed the Council regarding a lot that he had bought several years ago. He spoke of the development of the lots around his. He stated that if the Council approved the rezoning, he would like to put a duplex on the lot. He stated that this would improve the lot and of revenue that would be gained by the City. Councilman Hutchins questioned how many families might benefit from the duplexes. Mr. Edmonson stated that they would be two-bedroom duplexes.

Ms. Tinson, 128 E. Butler, spoke in opposition due to this being too close to her house. Ms. Tinson questioned the Planning Commission meeting. The Mayor explained the process of the of rezoning.

Ms. Dawn Reed spoke of an issue with another lot that she had tried to rezone and was told that rezoning couldn't be done. Therefore, she was questioning why because they were thinking about purchasing this lot.

With no other comments the Mayor called the Public Hearing to a close at 6:14

**III) Call To Order, Roll Call, Invocation, Pledge Of Allegiance**

Let the record show that Mayor Travis Wimbush call the meeting to order. Mayor Travis Wimbush, Councilmember Margaret Zachary, Councilmember Al Hutchins, Councilmember Ray Jarrett and Councilmember Brad Clenney were all present. Also present was City Attorney Hayden Hooks and City Clerk Melinda Crook. Councilmember Al Hutchins gave the invocation. The Mayor led the Council and public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV) Recognition Of Fire Fighters**

The Mayor spoke of an incident where a delivery truck had torn down several utility poles on N. Main St. He spoke of the Police and Fire Department assistance in this matter and how they continued to answer calls as well. He then spoke of a Fire Department call where a house was engulfed by fire, and the Fire Department was made aware that there was someone inside the house. The Fireman entered the home anyway and the citizen was rescued. The Mayor read a certificate of recognition for Randy McDonald, Nate Wimberly, Robert Worlds and the citizen, John Ingram, who informed the Fire Department of the person inside the house.

## **V) Approve Minutes**

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to approve the June 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

## **VI) Citizens And Delegations**

Brenda Wade spoke to the Council, via teleconference, informing them that of the CHIP (Community Home Investment Program) Grant that had been approved for the City. She stated that the grant was for \$300,000. Ms. Wade explained the grant, then the Resolutions and Agreements which need to be approved to move forward. She also stated that the conditions needed to be met. Councilmember Zachary questioned that the paperwork shows 7 houses, yet Ms. Wade stated 6 homes. Ms. Wade stated that she would clarify with the State. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to amend the Agenda to add the CHIP Grant Resolutions and Agreements. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present. City Attorney Hayden Hooks went through the Resolutions and Agreements with the Mayor and Council. She then stated that all could be adopted at one time. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to approve the 5 CHIP Grant Resolutions and the 2 memorandums of Agreements. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

Mr. Vincent Stovall spoke of major traffic issues in Blakely Commons. He stated that the speed limit is 23mph but most come through at around 55mph. He stated that they need some assistance to help with the traffic problem. Al questioned if HUD can put speed bumps due to it being private property. The Mayor stated we have tried to increase Police presence. Mr. Stovall stated that it has helped but that he wished the Police would stay longer because as soon as they leave the problem returns.

Jerry Tiner – concern - Mr. Tiner was not present

Myrtle Shorter – mobile home

Ms. Shorter came before the Council explaining the condition of her house at 176 Jesse Johnson. She stated that she couldn't live there due to water/pipe issues. She stated that she had few options but to move a mobile home if she couldn't get the house fixed. The Mayor spoke of possible CHIP Grant assistance. He then stated that if the CHIP Grant couldn't help she would need to speak with the Building Official, Mark Hawkins, regarding possible rezoning. The Mayor stated that the City couldn't recommend a contractor due to law.

Tracy Robinson – citizen concern & public safety

Mr. Robinson spoke of speed limit on Freeman Rd. He questioned why it was 40MPH when the Ordinance states it should be 30MPH and that there are no speed limit signs on one side of the road. Mr. Robinson had a power point presentation showing pipe for the water line extension unsecured along side the road. He stated that he had asked for plans and was told that there were none available. He further spoke on the phases of this project. He spoke of the City's purchase of a house on Murdock which is an eye sore. He questioned how the City can hold citizens responsible for their properties but not hold themselves to the same standard. He also questioned the purchase of the Shriners Club. He questioned having Port-A-Johns at Washington Park. He stated that the Community Center should be opened for the youth. He stated that his point was that something needs to be done for the youth. He suggested having someone on staff at the Community Center to open it for the youth. He then spoke of the need for a sidewalk on Cedar

Springs Rd. He spoke of a lady who walks and has to walk in the road due to no sidewalk. He stated that he just wants the Council to be mindful of its use of City funds. Councilmember Zachary questioned if Mr. Robinson has a suggestion for resolutions. He stated that he did. The Mayor asked that each Councilmember take an issue that Mr. Robinson presented. Mr. Robinson stated a suggestion of selling the properties on Murdock and the Shriners Club and do something for the youth.

## **VII) Administrative Committee**

Will Caudill – Updates

Chief Caudill addressed Mr. Robinson's concern on Freeman Rd. He stated that he would work with the Council to make changes. He then spoke of the increased Police presence in Blakely Commons. Chief Caudill questioned if Blakely Commons streets were City streets to which the City Attorney stated she would look into this and let them know. Chief Caudill then gave his monthly update for June. The Mayor stated that he had received calls about speeding on City streets but non about HWY 27. He stated that he sees too much Police presence on HWY 27 and that the Police need to refocus on City streets. Chief Caudill stated he would reiterate to his people about HWY 27.

Chief Caudill then spoke of Police Officer turnover. He stated he had lost 4 recently and that the loss was due to current pay structure. He informed the Council that that he has now taken a shift as well as Tonya Tinsley and the Investigators. He then informed the Council that he had investigated the pay levels in the surrounding cities and that Blakely was at the bottom of the scale. He gave the Council a scale of \$13.00 to start, \$14-14.50 after training and \$15-16 after two years. He stated that he believed that with these changes he could still stay within his budget due to those that had already left employment. Councilmember Hutchins questioned how many employees the Police Dept. still have to which Chief Caudill stated 7 full time, 2 Administrative, 3 part time, but they don't work much due to their full time jobs and 2 Investigators. Councilmember Hutchins how many there were in January to which Chief Caudill stated there were 11 full time. The Mayor stated that he felt the Police Dept was top heavy and needed to be reorganized. There were questions about advertising for jobs to which it was stated that job advertisements were on social media. A motion was made by Councilmember Jarrett and seconded by Councilmember Hutchins to approve the pay adjustments of \$13 if uncertified, \$14-\$14.50 after completing at the academy and \$15-16 by their second year. Councilmember Zachary questioned what of the other departments that were made promises of pay increases. The City Attorney suggested amending the motion to have the Mayor and Chief get together to come up with an appropriate recommendation for those that the Chief had thoughts on currently but Chief Caudill stated that some were current however he wants to include new hires as well.

There was more discussion between the Mayor, Council and City Attorney. A motion was made by Councilmember Jarrett and seconded by Councilmember Hutchins to withdrew Councilmember Jarrett's motion so that he and Chief Caudill could review this item. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

Mark Hawkins

Building Official Mark Hawkins spoke of the alcohol license. He stated that the background check has been completed and everything has come back good. A motion was made by Councilmember Zachary and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to approve the alcohol license for Christianna Gaudio for beer and wine only. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present.

The Mayor informed the Council that the Planning Commission recommending denying the rezoning. No motion was made on rezoning 142 E. Butler.

#### Chris McClendon – Rough Estimates To Repair Drainage At 444 North Main

The Head of the Street Department, Charlie Wade came before the Council and informed them of the storm drain issue on N. Main St. He explained how the storm drain system worked in this area. He stated that the water leaves the road, goes through a driveway pipe and then into a storm drain which goes through a customer's yard and under a corner of a house then through the back of the Catholic Church and comes out on Arlington Ave. He informed the Council that he had brought the State out to look into the issue and that they stated that once it leaves the Hwy it is no longer their issue. He stated that he needed a contractor's expertise and that he had gotten two proposals for repair. One proposal, from Blankenship Contracting was for \$75,000 and the other from Mickey Rice was for \$20,000. He stated that there would also be a \$600 to \$700 charge for an easement. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to approve the lowest bid from Mickey Rice to repair the storm drain. Councilmember Zachary stated that she had received calls about drainage and that this could open the door for other areas. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

#### Gabe Jordan Temp Employees.

Gabe spoke first on the need to replace the motor of the lawnmower at the Landfill. He informed the Council that it was \$1750 to replace the motor and \$7895 to replace the lawnmower. He stated that this would be split with the County. Councilmember Hutchins questioned the age of the mower. Gabe informed the Council that the cost would be split with the County. There was discussion if another mower could be used to which Charlie Wade stated that the one at the Treatment Plant could be used. A motion was made by Councilmember Jarrett and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to replace the motor in the lawnmower at the Landfill. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present.

Gabe Jordan then spoke to the Council of the Temp employees that work on the back of the garbage trucks and at the Landfill. He proposed increasing the pay and allowing benefits for 3 Sanitation and 1 Landfill worker. Gabe gave the Council a brief history of these employees. A motion was made by Councilmember Zachary to approve hiring the 3 Sanitation Temp employees and 1 Landfill Temp employee full time. The motion died due to lack of second.

### **VIII) City Attorney's Report**

#### Resolution Naming MEAG Voting Delegates

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to appoint City Clerk, Melinda Crook as voting delegate and Councilmember Brad Clenney as alternate. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present.

#### MGAG First Reading Of Ordinance And Contracts

The City Attorney, Hayden Hooks, spoke of the MGAG contracts and of how MGAG had bonds that were up for renewal. Ms Hooks stated that the contracts were for 10yrs. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to approve the Ordinance and contracts and dispense with the second reading of the Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

The City Attorney, Hayden Hooks, updated the Council on the REDLEG project.

The City Attorney, Hayden Hooks informed the Council that the SGRITA deal was still being worked on. Ms. Hooks then spoke of the agreement between the City and Diverse Power. A motion was made by Councilmember Jarrett and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to extend the agreement 30 days. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

**IX) City Clerk's Report**

The City Clerk, Melinda Crook, gave the financial report to the Mayor, Council and public. She then informed the Council of the bond payment that was due at the end of July. She also informed the Council that the audit was to begin in the next week or two.

**X) New Items Proposed By Mayor And City Council**

**Travel Policy**

The Mayor presented a revised travel policy to change the per diem to the Federal limit and exclude City payment for spouse and children. The Mayor presented a letter from the City Auditor with his recommendation to change the per diem to the Federal limits. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins to leave the current travel policy in place. The motion died due to lack of second. A motion was made by Councilmember Clenney and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to approve the revised travel policy with the per diem amounts at the Federal limits for Councilmembers and employees. The motion carried with Councilmember Zachary, Councilmember Jarrett and Councilmember Clenney voting "YEH" and Councilmember Hutchins voting "NAY."

**Bids For Floors At Civic Center**

Building Maintenance, Lane Davis, presented three quotes to the Council regarding replacement of the floor at the Civic Center. He presented McCord Flooring for \$16,000, stating that the tiles had already been paid from this quote which would drop the balance to \$11,000, Billy Snell Flooring for \$18,000 and Mulkey Contractor for \$17,500. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to approve the quote from McCord Flooring. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present. Lane Davis stated he would get a schedule from McCord regarding installation.

**Alternate Hours Due To Heat**

Councilmember Hutchins stated that he would like to give the outside employees the opportunity to work from 7:00-4:00 due to the weather. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to approve the seasonal hours change for those departments that chose to do so. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

Councilmember Hutchins questioned a work session for the Council to address the pay for the Police Dept. and the Temp employees for Sanitation and Landfill Depts. A motion was made by Councilmember Zachary and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to approve a work session for Tuesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

**XI) Public Comments**

Mr. Tracey Robinson questioned which departments would be working the alternate hours. He also questioned the spending of funds on the Civic Center floor, to a building

only worth \$5,000 and that the Police Dept increases were not approved. He also questioned ways to keep employees with these increase to which Chief Caudill spoke of a contract.

Another citizen spoke regarding loud parties and disturbances on Jesse Johnson St., also issues with stray dogs. It was stated that citizens keep their dogs inside through the week but let them out on the weekends to just roam.

Ms. Anna Sewell spoke with the Council regarding her new home. She stated that she appreciated receiving the home through the grant funds but no gutters were put on the house and that problems are being created when it rains due to having no gutters.

The Mayor informed the Council that the City could receive CARES Act funds not to exceed \$239,208.31.

The Mayor asked of ways to promote the 2020 Census due to only 31% reporting. He reminded the Council of how important the Census is to funding of projects.

The Mayor informed the Council of the 5yr update to the Comprehensive Plan which is due by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022.

The Mayor informed the Council and public that Primary Care now has a 15-minute virus test.

The Mayor informed the Council of the attorney fees for the Pioneer lawsuit in the amount of \$13,810

A motion was made by Councilmember Jarrett and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to return business to usual on the 10% late fee and convenience fee of \$3.50. The motion carried

The Mayor questioned the Council regarding the re-opening of the Civic Center with the CDC guidelines. Councilmember Clenney questioned sanitation after functions. The City Attorney also stated that they had a waiver as an amendment to the regular agreement regarding the virus. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to re-open the Civic Center under CDC guidelines. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present.

The Mayor informed the Council that COVID-19 cases were increasing and that GMA had recommended taking protective measures.

## **XII) Adjournment**

A motion was made by Councilmember Zachary and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to adjourn the July 7th City Council Meeting. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

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Travis Wimbush, Mayor