

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
CITY HALL BOARD ROOM**

January 17, 2023
5:00 P.M.

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN/ALDERWOMEN MET IN THE ABERDEEN CITY HALL BOARD ROOM WITH THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS PRESENT:

MAYOR CHARLES SCOTT, ALDERWOMAN LADY B. GARTH, ALDERMAN EDWARD HAYNES, ALDERWOMAN CAROLYN ODOM, MELISSA MOORE, CITY CLERK, AND ROBERT FAULK, CITY ATTORNEY.

Invocation: Pastor James Cook.

Roll Call: Absent - Alderman Robert Devaull and Alderman John Allen.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom to approve the proposed Minutes dated January 3, 2023. There was no second and the Motion failed.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to “table” approval of the proposed Board Meeting Minutes dated January 3, 2023. On a roll call vote, Alderwoman Garth and Alderman Haynes voted “Aye”. Alderwoman Odom voted “Nay”.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Haynes to pay all bills submitted by proper vendors as recorded on the Docket of Claims dated January 17, 2023. On a roll call vote, Alderman Haynes and Alderwoman Odom voted “Aye”. Alderwoman Garth voted “Nay”.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to authorize a Final Installment payment to Cook Construction Company in the amount of \$161,041.80, regarding site improvements work at the Aberdeen Public Utilities building on Meridian Street. Payment was recommended by Project Engineer Dabbs. On a roll call vote, all present voted “Aye”.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to authorize a contract for the City Drainage Repairs Project - Hillcrest Drive and Wasson Boulevard and Pullen Drive to K-N-K, Inc., Houston, MS 38851, which submitted the lowest quote in the amount of \$22,000.00. Payments for this Project will be paid from the City Sewer Repair Fund. On a roll call vote, all present voted “Aye”.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to adopt a policy whereby Funeral Homes will be required to employ their own private gravediggers or burial ground custodians to dig graves at the City Oddfellow’s Rest and Oaklawn Cemeteries. The private gravediggers or burial ground custodians shall comply with all City Ordinances, Rules or Regulations; and the Funeral Homes shall be legally responsible for any noncompliance by the private gravediggers. On a roll call vote, all present voted “Aye”.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve and authorize travel and to pay all necessary expenses according to state guidelines for Deputy Clerk Devonshae Young to attend the Certified Municipal Clerks Program Session, Oxford, MS / April 12-14, 2023 / Registration Cost: \$200.00. On a roll call vote, all present voted “Aye”.

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A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve and authorize travel and to pay all necessary expenses according to state guidelines for City Clerk Melissa Moore to attend the Certified Municipal Clerks Program Session, Ridgeland, MS / February 15-17, 2023 / Registration Cost: \$200.00. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve and authorize travel and to pay all necessary expenses according to state guidelines for Calvin Parker, Marcus Collins, Devonshae Young and LaMarcus Thompson to attend the Water Certification Class, Richland, MS / February 6-9, 2023. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve and authorize travel and to pay all necessary expenses according to state guidelines for Aberdeen Park and Recreation Department Director Fernando Davis to attend the 2023 Summer Food Service Program, Jackson, MS. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve and authorize travel and to pay all necessary expenses according to state guidelines for Tashanda White, Tamanda Garth and LaMarcus Thompson to attend the Mid-Winter Mayor Youth Statewide Leadership Summit, Oxford, MS / February 24-25, 2023. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to authorize the deposit of Mayor's Youth Council donation funds in the amount of \$2,000.00 to the Mayor's Youth Council Funds account. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to post and advertise for competitive quotes from contractors interested in providing janitorial cleaning services to clean the City Hall and the Aberdeen Public Utilities building. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to authorize \$100.00 funds to the Aberdeen Park and Recreation Department to be used for the concession stands during sports events. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to authorize a rental deposit refund in the amount of \$100.00 to Lindsey Cook previously paid for the use of the Aberdeen Park and Recreation Department gymnasium. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve and authorize travel and to pay all necessary expenses according to state guidelines for Charles Scott, Lady B. Garth, Edward Haynes, Carolyn Odom, John Allen, Melissa Moore and Janel Davidson to attend the MML 92nd Annual Conference, Biloxi, MS / June 26-28, 2023. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

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A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve the reimbursement of travel meal expenses at \$46.00 per day. The meal voucher may be given to the City employee or official in advance of the authorized travel, and all receipts and unused monies must be promptly returned to the City Clerk's Office. (Mayor Scott added that this policy must be confirmed with the Department of Audit). On a roll call vote, Alderwoman Garth and Alderman Haynes voted "Aye". Alderwoman Odom voted "Nay".

Mayor Report: Mayor Scott asked Tina Robbins to update the Board concerning scheduled events and activities within the City of Aberdeen. Robbins advised the Board that the Aberdeen Visitor's Bureau has now been approved to receive American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The ARPA funds will be used for Digital Media, Print Media Travel Publications, Production Expenses, Public Relations and Tourism Development.

Mayor Scott stated that Director Fernando Davis has scheduled Aberdeen Basketball League games on Thursday, January 19, 2023 and Saturday, January 21, 2023 at the Aberdeen Park and Recreation gymnasium.

Engineer Dustin Dabbs stated there will be a final walk-through and inspection of the Aberdeen Public Utilities Building to make sure there are no items that need to be addressed with the contractors. The project was a success, and Aberdeen Electric Department personnel are very happy with the new building.

Dabbs met with Tina Robbins a few weeks ago to implement a plan for the renovations at the Magnolia's. Dabbs is having difficulty scheduling an HVAC inspection. There was an appointment scheduled that was cancelled, but a follow-up will be done. Dabbs' goal is to have a Scope of Work by the end of this month "to bid the project out". The Parkway Drainage Project has been initiated and the contractor will next shift over to Jefferson Street Project to implement that portion of the project as well, and Dabbs is hopeful that the Project should be completed by the next Board Meeting.

Mayor Scott asked Dabbs about the status on repairing the shade structure at the General Young Park. Dabbs contacted the vendor representative today at 3:00 p.m., and he had to check with the manufacturer about the hooks. Another re-assessment of the shade structure has to be done because of the extent of damage to the canopy.

Mayor Scott also asked Dabbs about the status of the City streets striping. Dabbs stated that has been scheduled twice but delayed due to weather. Dabbs stated there is only one striping company in Northeast Mississippi and if you lose your spot on the schedule ... Dabbs will continue to follow-up with the company to reschedule the striping.

Mayor Scott invited William Sanford, P.E. Project Manager with Neel-Schaffer, Inc. to update the Board on the Rail Spur Project. Sanford stated the original plan is to be in the construction phase by this summer, and we are still on track with the project. Sanford has quotes from contractors for the City Drainage repairs on Hillcrest Drive and Wasson Boulevard and on Pullen Drive. The two quotes are: K-N-K, Inc., Post Office Box 25, Houston, MS 38851 in the amount of \$22,000.00 and Jonathan S. Burns Enterprises, LLC, 1761 Vaughn Robertson Road, Steens, MS 39766 in the amount of \$26,000.00.

Mayor Scott thanked the City of Aberdeen for allowing him to attend the 2023 MML Mid-Winter Legislative Conference, from January 10-11, 2023. Mayor Scott was able to attend a Committee Meeting at the Capitol, in Jackson, MS to hear the conversation about programs for inmates that allow them to work, wear regular attire, and receive a salary for doing so. Mayor Scott shared with Commissioner King that he is interested in this program and would like to have this program in Aberdeen.

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Mayor Scott stated that the Garden Club will be hosting a Pruning Training Class for individuals that have Crepe Myrtles. More information will be provided at a later date.

Aldermen/Alderwomen Input:

Alderman Devaull: Alderman Devaull was not present at the Meeting.

Alderwoman Garth: Alderwoman Garth stated she would like to thank the citizens for affording her the opportunity to attend the 2023 MML Mid-Winter Legislative Conference. Alderwoman Garth stated that she learned so much about things we are not doing right in Aberdeen and hopefully we can get it right.

Alderman Haynes: Alderman Haynes thanked the taxpayers for giving him the opportunity to attend the 2023 MML Mid-Winter Legislative Conference. Alderman Haynes asked Mayor Scott where we stand with the picture I sent you on the gentleman's driveway. Mayor Scott stated he contacted Monroe County to address that issue. Alderman Haynes asked about the project work that was done on Woodruff and Project Streets. Mayor Scott stated he made contact with the engineer that did the original work and included the City Attorney as well. Alderman Haynes noticed a water leak on top of the hill at East Jefferson and Chestnut Streets. Alderman Haynes asked for the Water Department to take a look at it and try to locate the leak. Alderman Haynes stated that someone is stacking their trash on the corner of Locust and Commerce Streets, and Monroe County Solid Waste is not going to pick it up.

Alderman Haynes stated limbs were trimmed at the Newberger Park that need to be picked up by the Street Department. There are some orange bags with leaves and limbs on Matubba Street that need to be picked up. Congratulations to Aberdeen Public Utilities on the move into their new facility. Alderman Haynes suggested that Chief Shumpert consider relocating the Aberdeen Police Department to the old Aberdeen Public Utilities building for more space and a better working environment for the employees. Mayor Scott stated that Chief Shumpert has looked at the old Public Utilities Building several times, but is waiting for everything to be moved from that building before going back, and to discuss with an engineer the things that need to be done for Police Department use of the building, and to bring that information before the Board. Mayor Scott stated the City will use and continue to use that facility. Alderman Haynes asked citizens to please stop putting trash bags and boxes beside their trash cans because the Monroe County Solid Waste employees will not pick it up.

Alderwoman Odom: Alderwoman Odom suggested that the City hire a consultant or contract with someone that has knowledge of the City Cemeteries, and supervise the digging of graves. Alderwoman Odom stated that people are being buried in other people plots, and it has upset families. Alderwoman Odom stated that Mr. White was a supervisor for cemeteries a long time ago and he might consider helping out. Alderwoman Odom stated she does not think we have enough knowledge on our own to get everything straight. Mayor Scott stated he had a talk with Mr. White's wife, and she has already offered his services to assist with the cemeteries. Mayor Scott added there was a detailed meeting this morning with all the appropriate "legacy people" on how we are going to move forward with the cemeteries.

Alderman Allen: Alderman Allen was not present at the Meeting.

Citizen's Input:

Cecil Belle and Chuck Moffett came before the Board to discuss some issues with the digging of graves at both cemeteries. Belle stated that when they are make funeral arrangements with families about the services they provide, it's being told to them by the family that the money for digging the grave has already been paid to the City of Aberdeen. Belle stated the grave diggers need to be on-time and make sure the grave is dug correctly. Mayor Scott stated that it was discussed in the meeting that the City would be getting out of the grave digging business based on the Opinions from the Attorney General's Office. The current Ordinance will be updated within 30 days to reflect and address the concerns of the cemeteries.

Chuck Moffett commented that Cleveland Moffett Funeral Home had scheduled funeral services for an individual, but could not get the casket to fit properly in the grave due to the City digging the grave not long enough and too narrow. Moffett said the size of a grave should be 3 feet wide, 8 feet long and 54 inches deep. Alderwoman Garth asked Moffett "when individuals are grieving they are told the City of Aberdeen has to dig their grave?" Mr. Moffett replied, "Absolutely". Moffett would like for Mike Edgeworth to dig all their graves.

Lee Johnson asked the Board for clarity if family members can request who they would prefer to dig their loved ones' grave. Alderman Haynes stated it should be the preference of the family.

Belle asked the Board to please address the issues concerning the East Side of Oddfellow's Rest Cemetery. Belle commended Mrs. Young for being in a tough spot and said she had taken a lot of grief about the cemetery plots and grave digging due to not being properly trained.

An unnamed citizen came before the Board wanting to know how to prevent someone from being buried in plots that has already been purchased by another individual. Mayor Scott stated that legacy individuals will be checking the plots and annotating the information on documents that are filed at the City Hall Clerk's Office and the Chancery Clerk's Office if a family desires to file their deed.

Heather Barnes complained that someone sold her mom's plot without their consent to another family, and Barnes wants to know what will be done about it. Mayor Scott stated this has been addressed and steps are being taken to keep this from happening again.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth to enter into a closed determination to determine whether to go into Executive Session.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues regarding Court Clerk Janel Davidson. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

The Mayor and Board announced to the public that the Board was entering into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues regarding Court Clerk Janel Davidson.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to come out of Executive Session. On a roll call vote, Alderwoman Garth and Alderwoman Odom voted "Aye". Alderman Haynes voted "Nay".

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A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to authorize a pay raise in the amount of \$2.00 per hour to Court Clerk Janel Davidson Court Clerk. On a roll call vote, Alderwoman Garth and Alderman Haynes voted "Aye". Alderwoman Odom voted "Nay".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to adjourn until the February 7, 2023 Regular Board Meeting. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".



Charles Scott, Mayor

Attest:



Melissa Moore, City Clerk