

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR & ALDERMEN
REGULAR SESSION
FEBRUARY 13, 2024**

February 13, 2024

The City of Newport Board of Mayor and Aldermen met in the Newport City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in Regular Session.

Alderman Randy Ragan led the invocation. Vice Mayor Connie Ball led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

The following officials were present: Mayor Roland Dykes, III, Vice Mayor Connie Ball, Alderwoman Louanna Ottinger, Alderman Randy Ragan, Alderman Steve Smith, and City Administrator James Finchum.

The following officials were not present: Alderman Mike Hansel and City Attorney Terry Hurst.

Mayor Dykes declared a Quorum.

Minutes

January 9, 2024 Regular Session

Motion by Alderwoman Ottinger and second by Alderman Smith, for minutes of the January 9, 2024 Regular Session to be approved as submitted.

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

Communications from the City Administrator

City Administrator James Finchum stated City Attorney Terry Hurst has had surgery and Alderman Mike Hansel is in training. City Attorney Hurst has asked to have the charter change that is on the agenda moved to a called meeting. Alderman Mike Hansel has also asked to move the salary increase to a called meeting. Alderman Hansel would like to be at the meeting to vote in support of both departments. Mr. Finchum asked Mayor Dykes for a date for a special called meeting for these items. Mr. Finchum stated this would also serve as a public notice. Mayor Dykes set the special called meeting for Wednesday, February 21st at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Finchum announced an annexation request packet has been given to the Board by Attorney John Bell for Tammy and Jabo Francis. This request will go before the Planning Commission for review.

Mr. Finchum reported on the winter weather and the storm response from city departments. The Street Department kept the street clear. Parks & Recreation opened the community center for a warming center. The warming center turned into a shelter after Feed My Sheep closed. There wasn't anywhere for the homeless to go for food and shelter. Parks & Recreation staff fed the people out of their own pockets over the first few days. Other organizations started to help in the end. Mayor Dykes added that Newport Utilities had played a big part in the storm as well. Alderwoman Ottinger echoed what Mr. Finchum said and stated it makes you proud of department heads and leaders of the city.

New Business

Resolution #2024-02 Charter Change

This item is moved to the special called meeting February 21, 2024.

Newport Police Department Salaries

This item is moved to the special called meeting February 21, 2024.

Newport Police Department Part-Time Positions

Chief of Police Scott Lamb is asking for four (4) part-time patrol positions for the Police Department due to understaffing issues and lack of ability to fill full-time positions. These part-time positions will have no benefits.

Motion by Vice Mayor Ball and second by Alderman Smith, to hire four part-time patrol positions for the Newport Police Department.

Roll Call

Alderwoman Ottinger AYE
Alderman Ragan AYE
Alderman Smith AYE
Vice Mayor Ball AYE

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

Newport Fire Department Salaries

This item is moved to the special called meeting February 21, 2024.

Newport Fire Department Part-Time Positions

Fire Chief Jeremy Shelton is asking for six (6) part-time firefighter positions at base salaries and no benefits. These positions will help maintain the required minimum staffing at the Fire Department due to difficulties in hiring and retaining employees. This will also help reduce overtime and comp-time for full-time employees.

Motion by Alderwoman Ottinger and second by Alderman Smith, to hire six part-time patrol positions for the Newport Fire Department.

Roll Call

Alderwoman Ottinger AYE
Alderman Ragan AYE
Alderman Smith AYE
Vice Mayor Ball AYE

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

Resolution #2024-03 to Close and Abandon Oliver Cromwell Drive

Consideration of Resolution #2024-03 to Close and Abandon Oliver Cromwell Drive. This resolution will eliminate Oliver Cromwell Drive and give it to Ole Smokey in exchange for the newly constructed street. This has been approved by the Planning Commission.

Motion by Alderman Ragan and second by Alderman Smith, to approve Resolution #2024-03 to Close and Abandon Oliver Cromwell Drive.

Roll Call

Alderwoman Ottinger AYE
Alderman Ragan AYE
Alderman Smith AYE
Vice Mayor Ball AYE

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

Resolution #2024-04 to Accept and Name a Newly Adopted Street

Consideration of Resolution #2024-04 to Accept and Name a Newly Adopted Street. This resolution is to accept the newly constructed street in the industrial park built by Ole Smokey as a Newport city street and name it Heat Street. This was approved by the Planning Commission.

Motion by Alderwoman Ottinger and second by Alderman Ragan, to approve Resolution #2024-04 to Accept and Name a Newly Adopted Street and Name the new Street Heat Street.

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

Resolution #2024-05 Authorizing Equipment Price Increase for a Grant for the Fire Department

Consideration of Resolution #2024-05 Authorizing Equipment Price Increase for a Grant for the Fire Department. This resolution is for a price increase for swift water rescue equipment for a rescue truck at an increase rate of \$45,951.40 through the state contract Wilson Co. Motors.

Motion by Alderman Ragan and second by Alderwoman Ottinger, to approve Resolution #2024-05 Authorizing Equipment Price Increase for a Grant for the Fire Department for a rescue truck at an increase rate of \$45,951.40 through the state contract Wilson Co. Motors.

Roll Call

Alderwoman Ottinger AYE
Alderman Ragan AYE
Alderman Smith AYE
Vice Mayor Ball AYE

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

Returning Industrial Park Property to County

Consideration of Returning Industrial Park Property to County. This is transferring an acre of property in the industrial park back to Cocke County, who donated the property for the construction of an animal control facility. The property that the city received was not the property the city thought we were getting. Ole Smokey had bought the property that the city wanted for the new animal control facility. If this is approved, Attorney Jeff Greene will file the paperwork to give the property back to Cocke County.

Motion by Alderman Smith and second by Alderwoman Ottinger, to transfer an acre of property in the industrial park back to Cocke County, who donated the property for the construction of an animal control facility.

Roll Call

Alderwoman Ottinger AYE
Alderman Ragan AYE
Alderman Smith AYE
Vice Mayor Ball AYE

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

Authorizing the Police Department to Apply for Tennessee Highway Safety Office High Visibility Grant

Consideration of Authorization for the Police Department to Apply for Tennessee Highway Safety Office High Visibility Grant. This is an annual grant received from the Tennessee Highway Safety Office to purchase equipment associated with traffic safety enforcement as well as paying overtime for an enforcement campaign aimed at traffic safety violations. This is a \$5,000 non-matchable grant.

Motion by Alderman Ragan and second by Alderwoman Ottinger, to approve the Newport Police Department to apply for the Tennessee Highway Safety Office High Visibility Grant.

Roll Call

Alderwoman Ottinger AYE
Alderman Ragan AYE
Alderman Smith AYE
Vice Mayor Ball AYE

All Ayes- Mayor Dykes declared the motion passed and approved.

2024 CCHS Prom Behind City Hall

Clay Blazer asked the board to consider the possibilities of hosting the CCHS prom behind the city hall. The high school is under construction, and the high school is looking for a place for the prom. Mr. Blazer stated he would like to see the prom stay local for the kids that couldn't afford to go to Gatlinburg. Mr. Blazed stated he has been speaking to downtown businesses and working with the chamber for the kids to have more to do. This is something that will be brought back to the board if they get everything worked out.

After much discussion, Mayor Dykes stated the high school has the City Council's permission.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board of Mayor & Alderman, **motion was made by Alderwoman Ottinger and second by Vice Mayor Ball** adjourned the meeting.

Mayor Roland Dykes, III

James Finchum, City Administrator

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