

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR & ALDERMEN
CITY OF NEWPORT, TENNESSEE
REGULAR SESSION
OCTOBER 14, 2014**

October 14, 2014

The City of Newport Board of Mayor and Aldermen met in the Newport City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 5:45 p.m. in Regular Session.

Rev. Alvin Watts led the invocation. Chief of Police Maurice Shults led the Pledge to the Flag.

The following officials were present: Mayor Connie Ball, Vice Mayor Bill Costner, Alderman John Bugg, Alderman Freddie Gregg, Alderman Kenny Morgan, City Attorney Terry Hurst, and City Administrator James Finchum.

Mayor Ball declared a Quorum.

Minutes

September 9, 2014 Regular Session

Motion by Alderman Morgan and second by Alderman Bugg for minutes of the September 9, 2014 Regular Session to be approved as submitted.

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

Proclamations and or Recognition of Citizens by the Mayor

Street Superintendent Ben Hicks presented Eddie Woods with the employee of the month for the month of October with a plaque and \$50.00. Mr. Hicks told of how Mr. Woods helped a citizen as he drove by.

Communications from the City Administrator

City Administrator James Finchum reported the E911 contract was approved for three years.

Mr. Finchum reported to the Board the November Regular Session meeting is on Veterans Day, November 11th. The City of Newport employees are off on Veterans Day. Mr. Finchum asked the Board if they would like to reschedule November's Regular Session meeting to a later date. The Board agreed to have the November Regular Session meeting on November 13th.

Mr. Finchum gave a State of the City Address. Mr. Finchum spoke of rumors based on misinformation that he wanted to clear up for the record. Mr. Finchum stated he was tired of "being lied on, about, words put in my mouth, and tired of City Hall staff accused of not doing their jobs."

Last month the Board agreed to give Mr. Finchum an annual raise of \$7,000. Mr. Finchum stated he did not ask for this raise but was thankful for it. There was a lie spread that Mr. Finchum received a \$27,000 raise. He was considered a Department Director because he was not only the Deputy Chief of Police but also the Risk Management Director for the City of Newport. Mr. Finchum stated he never received double pay when Maurice Shults took leave time off to run for sheriff. He has only received one check a week for the job he has done. April Clevenger reported to the comptroller that Mr. Finchum had received two checks. Mr. Finchum stated, "I have never received two paychecks. April claims she has worked for the comptroller. I called the comptroller office & she has never worked for the comptroller like she claims. They (Comptroller) have never heard of her." Mr. Finchum stated, "I did not ask for nor did I get a penny more for doing both jobs."

Mr. Finchum stated when the Board asked him to take this job, he told them he did not live in the City. The City Administrator is the only employee that has to live in the City. Mr. Finchum stated he has never asked not one person on this Board to change the Charter. Mr. Finchum stated the deal breaker for him was he was not going to move back to the City after he & his wife had built the home they have saved for all their lives. Mr. Finchum has lived in the City for 26 years and currently lives one mile outside the city limits. Only 25% of employees that work for the City of Newport live in the City of Newport.

The budget was in the red for only \$4,000 & Mr. Finchum took the blame for that. He stated Finance Director Tina Matthews tried to find the money in the revenue but Mr. Finchum said no. And after speaking to the auditors Mr. Finchum reported there would be only 5 – 7 finds in this upcoming audit unlike the others in the past. The auditors reported they had a much easier time collecting information for this audit. Mr. Finchum praised Ms. Matthews for her hard work in the finance department.

Fiscal Transparency. The only thing the comptroller's office said the City needs to do is lower the tax anticipation note over the years. There has been no tax increase since 2001. The only advice I've told the candidates is not to promise no tax increase because over the years all of the Boards prior and present has kept their word with no tax increase.

The rumor about Mr. Finchum wanting to close the Grammar School to the county is a lie. There was a rumor of a building program for the school. Mr. Finchum did say the City could not afford this program. Mr. Finchum called the Grammar School to ask for numbers. Only 54% of the students at Newport Grammar School live in the City. He then heard of the candidate forum scheduled. Mr. Finchum stated, "in my opinion the decision of giving the Grammar School to the county shouldn't be put on this Board. Let the citizens decide. It should be on a referendum to decide." Mr. Finchum stated the candidates have listened to the lies that have been told because he heard a lot of April Clevenger's statements from social media stated at the forum.

In closing, Mr. Finchum stated he hoped this would lay the lies to rest. But in April Clevenger's defense people use her. If you tell her something she will run with it.

Mayor Ball stated for the record his cell phone has been paid for by the City because he does City business on it. This was cleared by the City Administrator and the auditors. The City does not pay for his family bill. Mayor Ball stated, "I will not stand back to say I'm stealing from the City because I have never."

Joan Lambert stated she had gone to the candidate forum. She was shocked to hear the number of candidates stating they had never seen a budget. Come to the workshops & meetings if you want to learn.

Appointment of Boards, Commissions, and Committees

Reports from Committees, Members of Council, & Other Officers

Roland Dykes III on the Tanner Preservation Alliance reported of progress.

Old Business

New Business

Resolution #2014-12 Adopting the 2014 Home Grant Policies & Procedures for the City of Newport

Consideration of approval of Resolution #2014-12 adopting the 2014 Home Grant polices & procedures for the City of Newport.

Motion was made by Alderman Bugg and second by Alderman Gregg to approve Resolution #2014-12 adopting the 2014 Home Grant polices & procedures for the City of Newport.

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

Allowing Cocke County to use the Transfer Station

Consideration of allowing Cocke County to use the Transfer Station for a trial run of 30 days. Mayor Ball went to a meeting with the County and Waste Management along with Street Superintendent Ben Hicks. After much discussion the Board asked Mr. Finchum to meet with the County and Waste Management for more information on this subject.

Bids, Purchases, and Expenses

Street Department Roof

Consideration of bids for the roof on the City garage for the Street Department. Bids received are as follows: Stoner Construction, \$11,541; Brockwell Construction, \$18,210; Roofing Services Co., Inc. \$21,604 and \$20,109. The Board asked if Stoner Construction was licensed and insured. Mr. Hicks replied that was required for the bids. Alderman Morgan stated Brockwell Construction is higher, but we know their work.

Motion was made by Alderman Morgan and second by Alderman Bugg to accept the bid from Brockwell Construction for the amount of \$18,210 for the roof on the Street Department garage.

Roll Call

Alderman Bugg	AYE
Alderman Morgan	AYE
Alderman Gregg	AYE
Vice Mayor Costner	AYE

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

Citizens Comments

Frankie Mumm questioned Mayor Ball about a testimony for a former employee. David Verdial spoke of complaints of the littering behind Food City.

Kathy Holt asked Mr. Finchum, “you said you’re the only employee that has to live in the City.” Mr. Finchum said, “correct, employee.” Ms. Holt stated, “so the Aldermen are employees. Last month I was illegally deseated from my seat by this Board. If you want to change the Charter change it so property owners can sit on the Board. Because I bet, I pay more taxes than all of you combine. You all did wrong last month.”

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board of Mayor & Alderman, **a motion was made by Alderman Bugg and second by Alderman Gregg** to adjourn.

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

Mayor Connie Ball

James Finchum, City Administrator

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