

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING
CITY HALL BOARD ROOM
MARCH 3, 2020
5:00 P.M.**

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

MAYOR MAURICE HOWARD, ALDERMAN ALONZO SYKES, ALDERMAN DOUG STONE, ALDERMAN DAVID EWING, ALDERWOMAN CAROLYN ODOM, AND ALDERMAN JIM BUFFINGTON; JACKIE BENSON, CITY CLERK; AND ROBERT FAULKS, CITY ATTORNEY.

Invocation: Alderman Doug Stone.

A motion was made by Alderman Sykes, seconded by Alderman Stone to approve the proposed Minutes dated February 18, 2020. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Buffington, seconded by Alderman Sykes to pay all bills submitted by proper vendors as recorded on the Docket of Claims dated March 3, 2020. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Stone to authorize the emergency repairs of the levees and roads at the Aberdeen sewer lagoons, by Hanna Contracting, Inc. which submitted the lowest and best quote in the amount of \$49,000.00. Additional quotes were received from Cullum, Inc. in the amount of \$59,721.00 and James A. Hodges Construction in the amount of \$57,000.00. The delay incident to giving opportunity for competitive bidding following newspaper publication would be detrimental to the interest of the City. The Board viewed several photographs depicting the condition of the levees and roads. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Stone, seconded by Alderman Sykes to authorize the repairs/replacement of the fencing at the Aberdeen sewer lagoons by Tombigbee Contractors, LLC in the amount of \$3,500.00; and the fencing around the Aberdeen Pump Station by Tombigbee Contractors, LLC in the amount of \$1,550.00, which were the lowest and best quotes. Additional quotes were received from Columbus Fence Company in the amount of \$4,035.00 for fencing at the Aberdeen sewer lagoons and \$1,600.00 for the fencing around the Aberdeen Pump Station. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Buffington, seconded by Alderwoman Odom, to authorize the emergency equipment repairs of the City Prairie Water Well # 2 in the amount of \$12,560.00 by Parks & Parks Water Well Service, Inc. The Board determined that an emergency exists and that the delay incident from competitive bidding would be detrimental to the interest of the City. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Stone, seconded by Alderman Buffington to declare the Aberdeen Fire Department 1992 Pierce E6956 Pumper Fire Truck to be surplus and no longer useful to the Aberdeen Fire Department in its present condition; and to also authorize the donation of the Pumper Fire Truck to the Cedar Creek Volunteer Fire Department, a non-profit entity. The Cedar Creek Volunteer Fire Department has previously agreed to respond to fire calls as requested and when needed by the City of Aberdeen Fire Department. The Board also requests that the Aberdeen Fire Department provide specific information regarding repairs required for the Pumper Fire Truck to the Cedar Creek Fire Department. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

Mayor Howard complained that Aldermen did not attend the candidate forum Howard himself scheduled in the City Courtroom on February 18, 2020, and claimed that "Aberdeen politics has been ran by people who never answer questions or talk to the public or speak to the people who are voting for them". The Board has not adopted a uniform policy for the private rental or use of the City Courtroom, as it has previously done for the City Community Center and the City Gymnasium.

Aldermen and audience members also mentioned a two-part Mayoral debate series being held March 12 and 26 at the Elkin Theatre. In addition to the six candidates running for Mayor answering questions provided by moderators, persons running for Chief of Police and Aldermen seats will be given time to speak to the public at the debate.

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Mayor Howard next questioned the allocation of Mayoral Salary in the Budget, and the reduction of Howard's specific salary. The Board commented that funding was set aside in the Budget in the event the Mayor should appear for work at least an hour or two a day and to conduct the day-to-day duties required of a Mayor. It was also commented that Mayor Howard does not even know many City employees or what was occurring in the Fire Department or the Electric Department.

Citizens appearing before the Board but not on the printed Agenda:

- North Mississippi Medical Services first responder Katherine Cunningham suggested to the Board to authorize and schedule City local responders and City officials to take the free training offered by the Center of Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama. She stated she has earned certifications for responding to hurricanes, tornadoes and diseases through the training. Alderman Ewing asked Cunningham to advise the Board regarding necessary paperwork and procedure to schedule the training.
- Chestine Clay asked whether there were funds in the City Budget for the upgrade of City Parks. Alderman Ewing commented that there were funds for the Parks in the Budget, that there were grant applications pending, and that additional funds for the Parks had been raised by the Aberdeen Park and Recreation Department.

Alderman Sykes proposed that South Matubba Street be striped for safety reasons, because some drivers may have difficulty seeing the edges and lanes of traffic down the road. There are many pedestrians who walk along the sides of Matubba Street. Alderman Sykes asked whether there were available bond issue funds to repave Lowndes Street and Evergreen Drive. Alderman Sykes again asked for an update from MDOT concerning renaming the bypass to Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Alderman Stone discussed in detail the scheduled improvements to Aberdeen City Parks, and construction to convert the Cooperwood gas station to a museum and an Aberdeen Visitor's Bureau office.

Alderman Ewing again commented regarding City Park improvements and grant applications pending. He also asked for prayers for the families who had recently lost loved ones.

Alderwoman Odom stated that she had received complaints concerning pit bull dogs running loose in the Parkview Street neighborhood.

Nick Holliday, a candidate for Alderman, stated that certain City Parks required an upgrade; and argued that these City Parks would not be in their present condition or appearance if these Parks were located on the other side of town. Holliday stated that fencing and security cameras should be installed on the park grounds.

A motion was made by Alderman Stone, seconded by Alderman Ewing to enter into a closed determination to determine whether to go into Executive Session. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Stone to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue concerning Aberdeen Street Department employee Charles Bascom and to interview a prospective Aberdeen Police Department hire Toni Howard. 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 a personnel issue concerning Aberdeen Street Department employee Charles Bascom and to interview a prospective Aberdeen Police Department hire Toni Howard.

A motion was made by Alderman Stone, seconded by Alderman Sykes to come out of Executive Session. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".


A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Sykes to instruct the Animal Control Officer Pedro Clay to investigate the citizen complaints concerning pit bull dogs running loose in the Parkview Street neighborhood. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".


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A motion was made by Alderman Stone, seconded by Alderman Sykes to employ Toni Howard as a certified patrol officer in the Aberdeen Police Department at the wage of \$14.00 per hour, as recommended by Aberdeen Police Chief Henry Randle. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Stone, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to terminate the employment of Aberdeen Street Department employee Charles Bascom due to violation of City personnel policy. On a roll call vote, Alderman Stone, Alderman Buffington and Alderwoman Odom voted "Aye"; Alderman Sykes and Alderman Ewing voted "Nay". Motion passed.

A motion was made by Alderman Sykes, seconded by Alderman Ewing to recess until the February 18, 2020 Board Meeting. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".


Maurice Howard, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Jackie Benson, City Clerk