

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING****CITY HALL BOARD ROOM****March 2, 2021****5:00 P.M.**

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

**VICE-MAYOR LADY B. GARTH, ALDERMAN NICHOLAS HOLLIDAY, ALDERMAN EDWARD HAYNES, ALDERWOMAN CAROLYN ODOM, ALDERMAN JOHN ALLEN, CITY ATTORNEY WALTER ZINN, JR., MELISSA MOORE, CITY CLERK AND BARBARA VASSER, DEPUTY CITY CLERK.**

**Serving as Interim Mayor: Lady B. Garth**

Invocation: Alderman Haynes

**ROLL CALL**

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderman Holliday to approve minutes dated February 23, 2021. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderman Holliday to pay bills to proper vendors. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye". Alderman Allen voted "Aye" with the exception of M & J Lawn Service.

There was no need for a motion or vote to approve to refund Brenda Paine \$50.00 for the Special Election Campaign sign. Comptroller Karen Crump informed the Board this item was included in the Pay Bills to Proper Vendors and listed on the Docket of Claims.

A motion was made by Alderman Holliday, seconded by Alderman Allen to accept the resignation of Officer Toni Howard and Officer Vasquez Clark. Officer Howard last day will be March 8, 2021. Officer Howard asked if she could stay on as part-time / reserve officer. Chief Henry Randle said no part-time / reserve officers. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Holliday, seconded by Alderman Allen to approve to advertise for Certified and Uncertified Full-Time Police Officers. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

**Citizen's Input:**

Tina Robbins provided the Board with an update on the Tourism Recovery Fund. The \$87,500.00 that we were awarded, and we're at the six (6) month point. The following are a list of things that Ms. Robbins put together and presented to the Board:

- (1) Five (5) Billboards that yielded 525K Impressions across digital billboards in North MS, TN and AL.
- (2) Three (3) National Magazines they advertise in with Southern Living. Generating over five hundred (500) plus travel requests to visit Aberdeen.
- (3) Two (2) Creative Videos that yielded over 273K views. Professional videos featuring Aberdeen's Unique Shopping & Outdoor Recreation.
- (4) Advertising of the New Black History Trail in a special USA Today Edition, and they have a readership of Fifty (50) Million. We were on thirty-four (34) websites including 30 HBCU & MLK.com

During the National Pandemic this yielded \$8 Million Dollars in Restaurant & Lodging Revenue. Ms. Robbins provided the Board with copies of the USA Today. Vice-Mayor Garth commended Ms. Robbins on how nice everything was. She truly enjoyed it.

## MINUTES, BOARD OF ALDERMEN, BOOK NO. 19

DEMENT-MERIDIAN 61-2994

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Alderman Allen verified with Ford, Amory, Ms that the police cars are under the State's Contract. Alderman Allen asked that the video / live stream be turned off when we go into Executive Session. Alderman Holliday said the video was turned off at the beginning of Closed Determination. Alderman Allen said it was brought to his attention that multiple people are driving the City vehicle home. Not sure if it's true or not, just asking if multiple people besides the Fire Chief, Police Chief and Electric Department using vehicles for their personal drive back and forth. Vice-Mayor said none other than the same ones that was doing it when I came aboard, that I know of. Alderman Allen provided the Board with an inventory list of the electronic devices that were out, and where they are and who they're with. Not sure if it's a personnel matter, but asking the Board to look at it and discuss later. Alderman Allen said one item he has will be discussed in Executive Session. City ditch needs to be cleaned out on the side of West Main and Drake Avenue by what used to be Timeless Treasures by the storage buildings. Trees and debris are backing up the drains with water that needs to be cleaned out.

Alderwoman Odom asked Vice-Mayor Garth to take care of something if she doesn't mind. On Big John road there's a Mr. Bennie, he lives at 904 Big John Road. His mailbox is just about to get buried in mud. He would like a little gravel thrown around his mailbox, so the mail carrier can deliver his mail. It's washed out pretty good. Also, the street light in front of his house on the street is out. A new bulb needs to be inserted in it. His telephone number is (314) 930-1487. Alderwoman Odom didn't know what Mr. Bennie last name was. Alderman Haynes told her it was Bennie Clay.

Alderman Haynes spoke with Mrs. Johnson at the Electric Department to see where we stand on paying utilities online. Mrs. Johnson can make a report to the Board by next Board meeting. Alderman Haynes would like a contact number to speak with the person in charge of Emergency Management for the City. Spring weather is approaching that brings tornadoes, rain, and floods. Alderman Haynes wants to be proactive rather than reactive. He's needing someone from Emergency Management to tell us what is the City plan, and where do we go and where do we send our citizens. Also, to talk with City employees about their emergency plan whenever a disaster happens. Alderman Haynes asked Attorney Zinn, Jr., "Where do we stand on the UDAG Loan for the Holliday's?" Attorney Zinn, Jr. said they're coming to the City Hall today. Alderman Haynes updated the Board on the conference he attended with the Chamber of Commerce. They shared information on Economic Development and the organizations that make it all come together, and the more people you get involved from the State, Local and County level plays a part in helping you come up with Economic Development.

Alderman Holliday asking the Board to start back with workshops on Monday to discuss potential City business and situations, so when everyone comes to the Board Meetings on Tuesday, everyone will have the same understanding. Also, Three Rivers still have funding to develop our Port so we can start accessing the Port and Aberdeen can start making money off the Port. Alderman Holliday would like to encourage the Board to either go in person or do a Zoom Conference about the Port.

**Vice-Mayor Report**

Vice-Mayor Lady B. Garth informed the Board that Alderman Haynes and I talked with Mr. Harper at a time when it was leisurely and we can have the proper time we needed. We asked him questions that were very important to us that we were wondering about and he wanted explained more fully. Vice-Mayor asked Alderman Haynes to do us the honors of what we need to do. Alderman Haynes told the Board the sale cannot be made until the environmental quality issues have been checked on. He was concerned on the idea that if we spend the \$14,000.00 extra to get that done, and then what possibility they would reject it, and we lose the \$14,000.00 and still have no say. Alderman Haynes said if the Board did forward with this sale and the contingent that he assure us that he can get pass the environmental quality issues, but we have to go through the process of doing this with Judge Houston. In doing so the



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responsibility of the environmental issues are taken off the City and then put into a bank and hidden for a little while, unless it comes back up again, but at the same time we releasing him and the City from the responsibility that may arrive from those environmental issues and it goes back to the original owners of the property, which would be Walker Manufacturing. Alderman Haynes said if he's going to support it he needs to know if we're going to lose. Right now we already have \$10,000.00 so-called honest money invested, and looking at \$14,000.00 more. We're not actually spending the money, he's going to actually spend the money to do so, and it would be deducted from the price of the property from my understanding. The idea of it is, if it don't work, I do not want to see the \$14,000.00 bill cone back at ne either, and that's my concern that we don't get stuck with another bill because we're trying to move forward. Vice-Mayor asked Alderman Haynes to put that in a form of a motion.

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes and seconded by Alderman Holliday that Mr. Harper bid be accepted with the contingent of getting pass the environmental check points that has left to be done, and if so Mr. Harper will deduct the money that he spends on environmental away from the price of the actual said price. On a roll call vote, Alderman Allen and Alderwoman Odom voted "Nay". Alderman Haynes told Vice-Mayor Garth he is still puzzled and would like to wait on the report from Judge Houston. Alderman Haynes asked to rescind his motion until we hear from Judge Houston as to what his take is on it before we move forward. Alderman Holliday rescinded his second vote. Motion died.

Vice-Mayor ~~Garth~~ talked with TVA, Mr. Malone is setting up a face-to-face meeting. I asked them if they would be so kind to visit with us so we can ask questions and have dialog. It will not be doing a Board Meeting. It will be set a time when we can sit here and have serious conversation, and I did tell them our attorney will be present, and therefore they are bringing their attorney. The only people that will be at this meeting are the representatives for the City of Aberdeen an attorney, and their representative an attorney. When Mr. Malone gives her a call back, she will let the Board know.

Vice-Mayor Garth reached out to Westlake Chemical and she will be having conversation with them also. She will keep the Board informed.

Vice-Mayor Garth read a letter to the Board from Governor Reeves that the application submitted by Mayor Maurice Howard for funds through the small Municipalities and Limited Population Counties grant was approved by the Mississippi Development Authority in the amount of \$119,996.00. This award is contingent upon the availability of grant funds to be derived from a bond sale scheduled for the Spring.

Vice-Mayor Garth informed the Board of Executive Order No. 1549 signed by Governor Reeves to remove Monroe County, Mississippi from the Mask Order. This will go into effect at 5:00 p.m. on March 3, 2021 and stay in effect until March 31, 2021. The Board agreed to keep the Mask Order and 10 / 50 rule for Aberdeen, Mississippi for the next to two weeks and revisit it again at the next Board Meeting on March 16, 2021.

A motion was made by Alderman Holliday, seconded by Alderman Allen to advertise and bid out for quotes on remodeling the City Judge Quarters. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

Alderman Haynes informed the Board that Public Works and Electric Department Warehouse roof is leaking, and the equipment is being leaked upon. The reason the Electric Department Warehouse is leaking is because they have a flat roof, and it's retaining water. If we don't do anything else before the year is over, we're going to regret doing nothing at all. One of the quick fix is to put a false roof with a pitch. Alderwoman Odom told the Board she asked about this when it came up quite a while (last term), and we talked about having an elevated roof. Alderwoman Odom said we could really think about moving them. Alderman Haynes mentioned about the building that was available for sale, but he believes the building has been sold.



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Vice-Mayor Garth said a young lady by the name of Ms. Hannon came this afternoon after she had talked with Mrs. Johnson at the Electric Department. Ms. Hannon has a police report, bills, and other things. Her next step is a lawsuit. Attorney Zinn, Jr. told Vice-Mayor Garth to discuss this matter in Executive Session.

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to enter into Closed Determination. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Holliday, seconded by Alderman Haynes to come out of Closed Determination. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Holliday, seconded by Alderman Allen to enter into Executive Session to discuss issues with the Electric and Police Department. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

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

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderman Holliday to accept Chief Henry Randle recommendation in making Mr. Dobbins a temporary acting Assistant Chief in his capacity of his illness. This shall be revisited if his condition changes. On a roll call vote, Alderman Allen, Alderman Haynes and Alderman Holliday voted "Aye". Alderwoman Odom voted "Nay".

Vice-Mayor Garth made a recommendation to give Attorney Zinn, Jr. the latitude to be able to request and respond for the protection of the City of Aberdeen Legislative as well as Executive Body. She would like for someone to put that in the form of a motion please.

Alderman Haynes motioned the recommendation by saying "So be it", seconded by Alderman Holliday.

Alderman Allen and Alderwoman Odom wanted to know what they were voting on. The recommendation is for Attorney Zinn, Jr. to request documents and do research for us to know whether we're in the right or the wrong, so he can keep us pretty much on the legal path of where we need to be. Alderwoman Odom told Vice-Mayor Garth that she thought he was our lawyer, and does that automatically. Attorney Zinn, Jr., said Vice-Mayor wanted to affirm it, and it's almost something in more of Resolution it sounds like than obligation like Alderwoman Odom just said, "I'm already able to do it". Vice-Mayor said the reason I'm putting it out there is because of the tricky and nastiness of certain people in what they read into our minutes. So, I want it specifically stated that we give you the latitude. Attorney Zinn, Jr. told the Board that a vote is necessary. Alderwoman Odom said you're a lawyer, but why do I need you to vote for me to protect me. I don't see the necessity of it. Alderman Haynes said the motion isn't necessary because it's in the scope of his job.

Alderman Haynes rescinded his "So be it" motion and Alderman Holliday rescinded his seconded on giving Attorney Zinn, Jr., the latitude to be able to request and respond for the protection of the City of Aberdeen Legislative and Executive Body.


A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Allen to adjourn until the March 16, 2021 Board Meeting. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

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A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman Holliday to adjourn until the March 16, 2021 Board Meeting. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

  
Lady B. Garth, Vice- Mayor

Attest:  
  
Melissa Moore, City Clerk