

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
CITY HALL BOARD ROOM

July 6, 2021
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, ALDERMAN ROBERT DEVAULL, ALDERWOMAN LADY B. GARTH, ALDERMAN EDWARD HAYNES, ALDERWOMAN CAROLYN ODOM, ALDERMAN JOHN ALLEN, MELISSA MOORE, CITY CLERK, BARBARA VASSER, DEPUTY CITY CLERK, AND CITY ATTORNEY ROBERT H. FAULKS.

Invocation: Mayor Charles Scott.

ROLL CALL: Alderman Devaull was not present during roll call.

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to approve the proposed Minutes dated June 15, 2021. On a roll call vote, Alderman Haynes, Alderman Allen and Alderwoman Odom voted "Aye". Alderwoman Garth voted "Nay". Alderman Devaull was not present to vote.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Allen to approve the proposed Special Called Board Meeting Minutes dated June 29, 2021. On a roll call vote, Alderman Allen and Alderwoman Odom voted "Aye". Alderwoman Garth voted "Nay". Alderman Haynes "abstained". Alderman Devaull was not present to vote. Mayor Scott voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman Devaull to pay all bills submitted by proper vendors as recorded on the Docket of Claims dated July 6, 2021, with the exception of the M & J Lawn Service invoice, and a formula will be calculated for the pay. On a roll call vote, Alderwoman Odom, Alderman Allen and Alderman Devaull voted "Aye". Alderwoman Garth voted "Nay". Alderman Haynes voted "Aye", with the exception of the \$1,600.00 Mayor's Travel & Business Expenses, "Due North Media" invoice.

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman Devaull to authorize the purchase of telephone and internet equipment and services from AT&T, per quotes of \$4,184.00 and \$1,176.66. On a roll call vote, Alderman Devaull, Alderman Allen and Alderwoman Odom voted "Aye". Alderwoman Garth voted "Nay". Alderman Haynes "abstained".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Devaull to authorize City Attorney Faulks to attend the City Attorney Summer MMA Seminar / Centennial Plaza, Gulfport, MS / July 26-27, 2021, and pay all necessary travel and seminar registration expenses according to state guidelines. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Haynes to schedule a hearing date for the adjudication of the Cullum apartment building on Madison Street, and directing the Building Inspector Roy Haynes to provide the proper statutory notices of the hearing to the owner of the property. On a roll call vote, Alderman Devaull voted "to pass"; and Alderwoman Garth, Alderman Haynes, Alderwoman Odom and Alderman Allen voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to authorize repairs of certain sidewalks along Vine Street in front of the school. All competitive quotes for materials and labor from private vendors must be submitted to the Mayor and Board for review. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to authorize the employment of a Mayor's Secretary, whose job description will include answering telephone calls and doing clerical work at the Mayor Office, and also keeping track of the Mayor's schedule, at an hourly wage of \$12.00 per hour. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

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A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman Devaull to retain Dustin Dabbs to serve as the Project Engineer for the General Young Park Project. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman Haynes to advertise for three weeks for competitive bids the sale of three City parcels: PPIN: 8973 / Parcel Id: 112B-03-001-003.00; PPIN: 8974 / Parcel Id: 112B-03-001-004.00; and PPIN: 6001 / Parcel Id: 107M-35-005-017.00. The City shall retain all mineral rights that it owns, together with the right of ingress and egress to remove same. The City also reserves the right to reject any and all bids. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman Haynes to authorize the purchase of two automobiles from the Monroe County Sheriff's Department in the amount of \$3,500.00. (2012 Dodge Charger #212 / VIV# 2C3DXAT5CH172595; Price: \$2,500.00 / 2008 Ford Crown Victoria #308 / VIV# 2FAHP71V28X169151; Price: \$1,500.00). There is a \$500 credit. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Haynes to retain Dustin Dabbs to develop engineering specifications and proposals and cost estimates for several City infrastructure projects. Dabbs is requested to present the specifications, proposals and cost estimates to the Mayor and Board for each project. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Allen to authorize the placement of two speed bumps on Big John Road for safety reasons. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Haynes to authorize Kathy Seymour to submit an application for a Community Heritage Grant to fund work on the City M&O Depot building. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Devaull to advertise for competitive bids to sell the scrap copper and aluminum at the City of Aberdeen Electric Department. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Devaull to approve advertisement for persons interested in being employed as a Groundsman / Lineman for the City of Aberdeen Electric Department. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderman Allen to authorize contracts for the Special Election System and Software in the amount of \$8,980.00 and ballot printing at \$0.34 each. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderman Allen to employ Collin Metcalf as a Machine Operator in the Aberdeen Public Works Department at \$12.00 per hour (a raise will be considered when Metcalf has a CDL). On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to accept the resignations of Officer Robert Sprayberry (His last date of employment was July 1, 2021), Officer Michael Lewis (His last day of employment was June 28, 2021), and Officer Tyler Lindsey (His last date of employment was May 16, 2021). On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

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A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to approve advertisement for persons interested in being employed as Police Officers. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to employ Kenneth Vaxter at a rate of pay of \$15.00 per hour, and James Buchanan at a rate of pay of \$14.00 per hour, in the Aberdeen Police Department. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderman Haynes, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to employ Tashanda White as the Mayor's Secretary at a rate of pay at \$12.00 per hour. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

No motion or vote was made concerning the Sidewalk Project or the proposed \$72,287.50 bid by Hanna Contracting, Inc. Mayor Scott will present sidewalk improvements projects organized in geographical areas, and cost estimates for each for consideration by the Mayor and Board.

Mayor's Input

Mayor Scott asked Tina Robbins to share information concerning the upcoming Job Fair. The City of Aberdeen Job Fair will be held at the Aberdeen Park & Recreation Building, Aberdeen, MS on Tuesday, July 13, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Fifteen (15) invitations were extended to employers in the area and seven (7) have been confirmed. Ms. Robbins stated there will be ad in the Monroe Journal Newspaper, and local radio station will announce it, and WCBI-TV will air the event on the local news.

Mayor Scott invited Major Williams to share information concerning the AFJ/ROTC Program offered at the Aberdeen High School, Aberdeen, MS. Major Williams stated some of the programs are Aviation, Drone Program and Robotics. Major Williams stated Aberdeen High School is one of thirty (30) high schools in the country that volunteered last year to be a part of a Junior ROTC Computer Science Pilot Program and because of the training last summer two students completed the Cyber Academy. Major Williams extended an invitation to the Mayor and Board to visit and see what the program has to offer for the students.

Mayor Scott invited a representative from Monroe County Health Connect America to discuss the services they offer in their program. Ms. Melissa, Program Director for the new Monroe County Health Connect America Facility, and Mr. Tracy, Mental Health Therapist, will assist Foster Parents to become Therapeutic Foster Care Parents, and to give them the training needed to cope with foster children that have emotional and behavioral issues. Also, if anyone is interested in becoming a Therapeutic Foster Home, such persons were asked to call the number listed on the flyer, and the information and resources will be provided to you.

Mayor Scott congratulated City Clerk, Melissa Moore for being appointed by Governor Tate Reeves, to be a Notary Public of Aberdeen, Mississippi, of Monroe County, State of Mississippi, to hold office until removed or replaced in accordance with the Laws of the State, for a term of four years from the date hereof.

Aldermen/Alderwomen Input:

Alderman Devaull: Alderman Devaull stated we did get some things done before the rain came back, and a few places were mowed on the South-side of Ward One. Alderman Devaull stated we have a few potholes popping up due to the rain, and in other Wards especially Ward Three it needs some attention. It seems like things in Ward Three are lacking and not getting done. Alderman Devaull received a text message from a guy about the dredging on the Port at the river, and asked whether would it be a good time for the City to have the work done at the Port.

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Alderman Garth: Alderman Garth stated Dr. Leary called her complaining about the filth and scent coming from the apartments on Madison Street owned by Mr. Buzzy Cullum. Dr. Leary told Alderman Garth that he would hate to have to give up his home because Mr. Cullum is a "slum lord". Alderman Garth stated she has sent the Building Inspector several times to have a conversation with Mr. Cullum. Also, complaints are coming from Tremayne Calvert, Daniel Garth and Attorney Gunn about the scent from the trash. They have talked with Cullum several times. Alderman Garth stated when we first went in office a Trash Ordinance was put on the books. The first offense was \$100.00, second offense \$200.00 and third offense was \$300.00. Mr. Cullum has told the Building Inspector he would clean it up, but he hasn't. Alderman Garth stated that she would hate for Dr. Leary to leave a beautiful home because of the nastiness around him. Those apartment buildings across the street from him are filthy. Alderman Garth stated when they call her she gets in her vehicle and drives up there, and confirmed they are not lying, it's filthy.

Alderman Garth stated that she told Mr. Haynes to go ahead and give him that \$300.00 fine because we have been talking to him a for a long time. And then if not, I think what we discussed in the meeting to let the police go have a discussion with him, and see if that might help. Alderman Garth asked Attorney Faulks to go back and look in the Minutes and see what you can find, and give Inspector Haynes something he can put some teeth into. Attorney Faulks stated an Adjudication Hearing can be scheduled, and the City could go clean it up afterwards, and put the cost of that on Cullum's apartment complex. Alderman Garth stated that would definitely work for us. Attorney Faulks stated the owner has to be given fourteen (14) days notice, and maybe an Adjudication Hearing date can be set in August and have Inspector Haynes go through the regular notification procedure. Attorney Faulks stated the Board can adjudicate any property that needs to be mowed, cleaned up or is falling in.

Alderman Garth stated that Mr. Morgan's time had been changed without Board approval. It was changed to 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. I don't know who, what, when and why it was approved and his time should be placed back.

Alderman Garth stated that Tohona Larthridge and Mr. Boone were approved to attend a meeting, and they will be attending that meeting together. The Board voted for them to go, and it will remain as is. Mayor Scott asked Alderman Garth when that travel was approved. Alderman Garth stated that since you're the day-to-day operator, you have to look at the Minutes. It was approved for them to go to the meeting/workshop. Alderman Garth asked if signs can be put up again to keep the big trucks and 18-wheelers from coming down the streets and tearing them up. Mayor Scott said we will check on that and other streets that's having same similar issues. Alderman Garth asked about the No Jake Brake signs. Mr. Boone said that MDOT has to approve that because it's on the highway, and he will discuss it with MDOT.

Alderman Haynes: Alderman Haynes stated that as an Alderman I have no authority by myself to do anything. I will always need at least two members of this Board at this table to agree with me to make anything happen. Alderman Haynes stated the question asked earlier at the workshop, "Why do we have Alderman Input?" I asked that question because I was thinking our definition wasn't the same. The Alderman Input is a tool that we pass information to the day-to-day operator that will be distributed to the departments to get things done. Ward Three has been totally neglected, and I say that with emphasis. Ward Three has some very important features in this City. The first one is the school system. The areas around our schools are terrible. Sidewalks have been torn up because of repairs from a water leak that hasn't been repaired. These repairs should be done during the summer months while school is not in session, and not when school returns in the fall. Alderman Haynes stated the grass cutting has gotten out of control, and the reason it's out of control is because the employees are being pulled in other directions to do something else besides coming to Ward Three.

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I've talked about a plan to attack those roles, but that plan hasn't been implemented. It's not getting implemented because of an attack on me. I don't need the City to do anything for Edward Haynes. Edward Haynes is capable of keeping the area in front of his home clean, but taxpayers including myself pay taxes to get things done by our City Departments. The grass on the Acker Park hill has gotten so bad you couldn't see the stop sign. If you go back and look at every Board Meeting from the last three months you'll see that I brought these items up. Mrs. Johnnie Shepherd on Marshall and Columbus Street has puddles of water in her driveway, and when it rains real heavy the water is almost in her house. The reason for this is when they repaved the street, it made the street higher than her driveway. There is no gutter, curb or drainage in that area and it allows the water to slowly move to her front and side door. I would like for someone to go over and look at her driveway and see what can be done to relieve the water piled up in front of her home.

Alderman Haynes stated about the deterioration of holes in my Ward, and I haven't heard a report as to where we stand with that or if we had an opportunity to look at those or not. I'm still getting those telephone calls, and they haven't stopped. I'm going to answer my phone and talk to my constituents, and tell them the reason nothing is getting done in my Ward is because someone is blocking the work from being done. There is only one day-to-day operator. These things are not getting done and it's making our City look bad. It won't be long before we lose another company that wanted to come to our City but didn't because all I needed was a soil sample. Not a single one of you got upset over the fact that the Mayor sat on the soil sample and refused to give it to the company. The company is no longer interested in coming to Aberdeen. So, don't anyone call me and ask me about Economic Development again, when you're going to allow that to run jobs away instead of attracting them to us.

Matubba Street is like a roller coaster when you ride through there. It is terrible. Parking issues on the other side of First Baptist Church. Residents' driveways are being blocked by cars parked on the side of the street. I'm still getting calls from Ward Four and Ward One. I would like to see Public Works back in the City doing the things you should be doing. Tree limbs are falling down, parks are not being mowed. Newberger Park and Pecan Orchard Park is not being mowed. Alderman Haynes is asking the Board Members to put their foot down and demand that more work is being done and handed down from this Office at City Hall to make sure things needed are getting done. Magnolia leaves blocking the drain by the Elementary School. Fire hydrants so low in the ground, that if a house caught on fire we couldn't get water out if we wanted to. Alderman Haynes wanted to know when the gym start opening on Sunday from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m., and who is managing the gym? Why is overtime so drastically high this time? Alderman Haynes wants to see more work out of the employees.

Mayor Scott stated that we're not just working on one sidewalk, but working on many sidewalks across the City. Mayor Scott will work on specifications and cost estimates on all sidewalks across the City. Alderman Devaul stated some sidewalks have more priorities than others. Alderman Haynes stated our schools should be a priority and have a presentation. Alderman Haynes stated that he would like to see the Mayor do some of the things he put on the list get done and get our City cleaned up, please. Mayor Scott asked Alderman Haynes, "Are you going to maintain your no comment or start working for Community Development with the City?". Alderman Haynes told Mayor Scott, "When I see you working to do something for Ward Three, then I will be glad to help you with what your needing help with".

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Alderwoman Odom: Alderwoman Odom stated she would like to see some negotiations continue for work on Highway 8, and get some work done out there. I also have a problem with grass and ditches in Ward Four. Around from Mr. Faulks house on Bellview Drive there are quite a few potholes that need to be repaired by packing it down with some crush and run. Alderwoman Odom asked that the County Supervisors be contacted and work out a deal about Highway 8. Mayor Scott stated he had talked with Supervisor Fulton Ware and we are working with MDOT to see what kind of support they can provide along with Three Rivers who's putting together a package for emergency road and bridge work. Alderwoman Odom stated Murphy Circle hasn't been paved in years and years and years, and the grass is growing across it.

Alderman Allen: Alderman Allen stated there is one thing we overlooked in the General Young Park Project. We need to go back since it exceeds the State maximum for having a project that requires a contract engineer. I recommend Dustin Dabbs as the Project Engineer for the General Young Park Project to be in compliance, and that is my motion. I have three pieces of property that people want to purchase. They are small parcels. Attorney Faulks asked Alderman Allen are they small unimproved lots. Alderman Allen stated one of them is. Attorney Faulks stated the normal procedure is to advertise and ask for bids. Alderman Allen stated that he would like to advertise for sale these three parcels. Two are on South Matubba Street, and one is behind Lann Hardware. Attorney Faulks stated we can identify them by address, tax parcels or the PPIN, and advertise these properties, and the City must reserve all mineral rights that the statute requires, and the City should also reserve the right to reject any and all bids.

Alderman Allen discussed the drainage on High Extension where we did the water line replacement. We met with the contractor and he executed grades on that property to make sure he put it back like it was, as it turns out we just need to lower that ditch. However, before we lower that ditch, he said to be careful because there are things we need to locate first. It's on the High Extended West of Thayer Street repairs on East and West Parkway, and I have some pictures of holes with barrels sitting in them and now the barrel is falling in the hole, and the street is caving in. The drive that goes to my house and three other houses that turns off West Commerce Street, there is a pothole I have to dodge every time I travel through there that needs to be repaired.

Some weeks ago we talked about getting somebody to set up a Live Stream, it took forever because everybody has a different way they like to do it. The bids were all over the place, and I was finally able to get down to four different bids. The lowest and best quote was slightly below \$5,000.00.

Attorney Faulks stated the street situation sounds like a problem all over town, and mentioned that Dustin Dabbs had done a survey of all the streets. Attorney Faulks stated the only thing he can think of are those garbage trucks may be creating the pot holes on the streets. Attorney Faulks asked Mr. Boone if he had enough man power in the City of Aberdeen with everything else you're doing to fix all the streets and get the material needed for the repairs. Mayor Scott stated it's a mixture of problems with equipment and shortage of personnel. Attorney Faulks stated the City could consider another Bond issue for street repairs.

Alderman Allen invited Dustin Dabbs to talk about drainage update on the survey done not long ago. Dustin Dabbs stated he had a video crew to come and look at the issues to identify where the pipes led, and to see the condition they were in. Mr. Dabbs stated from the combination of the study that was done he needs to put together some individual packages. Hickory, Matubba, Vine and Columbus, and North Thayer are some streets that Mr. Dabbs named that need to be done. With the information that I have at hand, I can go ahead and put those packages together to have contractors give quotes.

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Citizen's Input:

Ms. Kathy Seymour came before the Board to ask permission of the City to submit an application for a Community Heritage Grant. The deadline date is October 1, 2021. The architect will need everything by September 15, 2021.

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderman Devaull 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 Garth, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues regarding employees Gregory Blanchard and William Daniels, Chaz Thompson and Bobby Smith. 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 employees Gregory Blanchard and William Daniels, Chaz Thompson and Bobby Smith.

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

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to terminate Gregory Blanchard and William Daniels' employment with the City of Aberdeen. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Odom, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to approve the Court Secretary, Akela McNairy, to attend the Mississippi Municipal Court Clerk's Association Annual Summer Conference, Biloxi, MS / July 26-28, 2021, and pay all necessary travel and seminar registration expenses according to state guidelines. On a roll call vote, Alderwoman Garth, Alderwoman Odom and Alderman Allen voted "Aye". Alderman Devaull voted "to pass". Alderman Haynes "recused".

A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderwoman Garth to suspend Police Officer Chaz Thompson for two weeks with one week suspension already served. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderman Allen to advertise for two weeks for CDL Drivers interested in being employed in the City Public Works Department. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

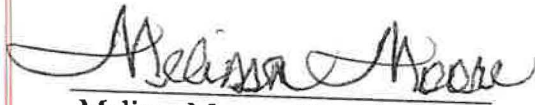
A motion was made by Alderman Allen, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to suspend Bobby Smith without pay pending resolution of his court case. On a roll call vote, Alderman Devaull, Alderwoman Garth, Alderwoman Odom and Alderman Allen voted "Aye". Alderman Haynes "recused".

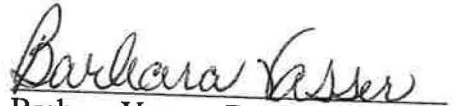
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A motion was made by Alderwoman Garth, seconded by Alderwoman Odom to adjourn until the July 20, 2021 Board Meeting. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".


Charles Scott, Mayor

Attest:


Melissa Moore, City Clerk


Barbara Vasser, Deputy City Clerk