

**SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING  
CITY HALL BOARD ROOM  
JANUARY 23, 2024  
4:00 P.M.**

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

**MAYOR CHARLES SCOTT, ALDERMAN EDWARD HAYNES, ALDERWOMAN CAROLYN ODOM, ALDERMAN JOHN CAIN, AND MELISSA MOORE, CITY CLERK.**

**Absent: Alderman Nicholas Holliday and Alderwoman Lady B. Garth**

**Invocation: Mayor Scott**

**Roll Call**

Mayor Scott stated to the Board Members that he's getting E3 Environmental on the line. Alderman Cain asked Mayor Scott if he arranged for this to be an Emergency Special Called Meeting, and under the impression it had to be a 24-hour notice to the public. Mayor Scott said yes. Alderman Cain stated, "Let's state for the record this is an Emergency Called Meeting for the Aberdeen Board of Aldermen?"

Mayor Scott shared with the Board that the City was contacted by several residents they smelled a strong scent of gas fumes in the air that may have come from a gas leak. Mayor Scott stated that Atmos Energy and Aberdeen Fire Department went to the site where the gas scent was coming from to investigate and determine the cause of the smell. Mayor Scott stated that someone had gone to a site on City of Aberdeen property and stolen a tank that provided the chemical smell that connects to gas and this caused a part of the ground to be contaminated. Mayor Scott contacted 911 Director, Donna Sanderson along with MDEQ to inform us what next steps to take in this matter. MDEQ suggested to Mayor Scott that the City of Aberdeen contact a professional company to handle this matter, and E3 was the company referred by MDEQ.

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Mayor Scott invited E3 Environmental to attend the Special Called Board Meeting by telephone to explain what their findings were and the steps the City needs to take to control the chemical leak on the grounds. The E3 Environmental staff members included Mr. John Haskins, Mr. Brian Chatman and Mr. Chris Watkins. Mr. Watkins shared with the Board that a monitor was used to detect different types of chemical air releases, and small samples were detected and immediately their guys had to suit up in protective gear and scratch around on the dirt. A dangerous level was picked up that wasn't safe for his crew and everyone in the City of Aberdeen. Mr. Watkins called Mr. Chatman and Mr. Haskins to carry this in another way and get everyone on the same page and know where to move for the safety of his crew and everyone involved in the City of Aberdeen.

Mr. John Haskins with E3 Environmental shared with the Board about the spill and the depth of contamination, and move forward with Core samples. E3 Environmental will have to drill into the ground to pull samples out on order to know the depths and spread of contamination, and then send the samples to a Lab to be analyzed and deciding what next steps to take in moving forward. Mr. Haskins stated the biggest thing is to determine the depths and spread of contamination. Mr. Haskins stated there are two different options: cost and treatment option. E3 Environmental is using AOS Labs, Baton Rouge, LA.

Mr. Haskins stated they would need a PO to start off with \$50,000.00. It's no guarantee that the \$50,000.00 will be used, but they will stay in contact with the City as the amount increases. Mr. Haskins suggested to the Board to contact MDEQ for assistance from the Federal Government to assist in the clean-up.

Alderman Haynes asked Mayor Scott if any security was looked at to find out the Who, What and Why? Mayor Scott stated a request will be done to get potential videos of who may have been in that area.

Alderman Cain asked Mr. Haskins, Mr. Watkins, and Mr. Chatman how quick can they start with this effort? They stated as soon as the Board gives them the approval.

A motion was made by Alderman Cain, seconded by Alderman Haynes to approve and retain the services of E3 Environmental and not to exceed \$50,000.00 at this time and clean up this emergency situation at the Port of Aberdeen. On a roll call vote, all present voted "Aye".

Mayor Scott provided some background information on what happened at the Port Site. Mayor Scott stated someone took the transformer that was there, and in order to get the transformer they had to move the tank. During the process of moving the tank, the seal was broken. Alderwoman

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Odom asked Mayor Scott, "Who did it?" Mayor Scott stated we don't know who did it. Alderman Cain made a statement to Aberdeen Public Utilities General Manager LaMarcus Thompson that two transformers were stolen. Mr. Thompson said yes. Alderwoman Odom asked the question, "How did they enter in?" Mayor Scott stated they entered on the back side of the property. Alderman Cain stated he spoke with Chief Shumpert regarding this matter, and Chief Shumpert discussed it with Mr. Thompson. Alderman Cain stated he received a call from the insurance company wanting to know if the City plans on filing a claim with the insurance company. Alderman Cain stated that the City will pursue it and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law if the City finds out who is involved, and there's over \$100,000.00 of loss and it should be noted to the public.

Mayor Scott stated two demos companies looked at the property site and quote a price on how much it would cost to take down and remove everything, and the amount given was over \$50,000.00. Alderwoman Odom asked Mayor Scott where is the buildings with the scrap iron. Mayor Scott stated it's in the same area. Alderman Cain asked Mayor Scott if the City Port Partners were interested in pertaining any of the buildings. Mayor Scott said no. Mayor Scott stated he contacted Mr. Strawn and Mr. Crescenzo to ask if they were interested in any of the buildings on the Port Site, and they told Mayor Scott no.

Alderman Cain stated at some point and time should the Board of Aldermen had to declare this surplus inventory, advertise and taken bids in some other way other than this. Mayor Scott stated that the City has been doing business with GovDeals since 2016. Alderman Cain stated, "Its standard operating procedures that the Board of Aldermen doesn't have to declare it surplus, that it can be sold at any time". Mayor Scott said no, and it has to be identified as surplus and it was discussed with the Board a few weeks back. Alderman Cain stated to Mayor Scott that he (Mayor Scott) talked with the Board and he (Alderman Cain) specifically stating that WATCO should have first choice at the property on the Port Site. Alderman Cain said to Mayor Scott that he doesn't remember another conversation where Mayor Scott described to the Board that WATCO wasn't interested and the City was going into a Bid Phase.

Alderman Cain stated that he wanted to make sure everyone in the community that wishes to bid on things of this nature has the proper notice to do so. Mayor Scott stated that people in this community did bid on the items. Alderman Cain asked Mayor Scott if the community was given notice privately and individually, or did the City put a notice out somewhere that he wasn't aware of. Mayor Scott stated it was put on the GovDeals website. Alderman Haynes stated for clarity that the Board never declared anything surplus as of yet to be sold. Alderman Cain stated that he doesn't understand how we can be transparent and advertise buildings and equipment without some kind of publication, and I have a problem with it.

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Alderman Haynes stated no publication is needed if it's declared surplus. The City never declared it surplus, and that's the first step that has to take place. Alderman Haynes stated it has to be declared surplus and noted in the minutes the same way. Alderman Cain stated he cannot support this without the full confidence of the Board being present, and he will not be supporting this.

No motion or vote was taken to approve the Sale of Buildings on the Port Site.

A motion was made by Alderman Cain, seconded by Alderman Haynes to adjourn until the February 6, 2024 Board Meeting. On a roll call vote, Alderman Haynes, Alderwoman Odom and Alderman Cain voted "Aye".



Charles Scott, Mayor

Attest:



Melissa Moore, City Clerk