

May 16, 2024 Council Meeting

A Council Meeting was held at 5:00 pm on May 16, 2024, in Council Chambers. Mayor Jones, Vice Mayor Rawls, Council Member Lawson, Council Member Pearson, Council Member Mitchell, City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides, Chief Operating Officer Edena Reese-Atmore, Clerk of Council Karen Roberts, Assistant Finance Director Crystal Ferguson, Community Development Director Keith Holland, Public Works Director Greg Maggard, and Water Resources Director Mandy Muse. Attorney Stephen Durbin participated by phone.

Proclamation for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Day – Mayor Jones read the proclamation which was presented to the City Manager and Alpha Kappa member Aretha Ferrell-Benavides and other members in attendance.



VML Policy Committee Appointments – Council nominated the following for the VML 2024 Policy Committee: Community and Economic Development – Tammy Pearson, Finance – Aretha Ferrell-Benavides with Alternate Edena Reese-Atmore, General Laws – Lawrence Mitchell, Human Development and Education – LC Jones, and Infrastructure – Kathy Lawson. Vice Mayor Rawls made the motion to nominate those listed above; Council Member Lawson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Appointments to Boards and Commissions to include Anchor Group and Children's Services

May 16, 2024 Council Meeting

Act – Council Member Lawson made a motion to appoint Mack Evans to the Anchor Group Home Commission; Council Member Pearson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor. Vice Mayor Rawls made a motion to appoint Cindy Frank to the Children’s Services Act; Pearson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

ARPA Additional Request Workforce Program – City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides explained the need for the requested increase additional \$350,000 from ARPA. Council Member Lawson made a motion to approve the program. Vice Mayor Rawls stated that \$400,000 was the original maximum agreed on, it was decided to award them \$200,000 so the additional \$350,000 is significant. \$200,000 was total originally allocated. Vice Mayor Rawls amended the motion to approve the allocation of \$280,000 for the upcoming fiscal year; Council Member Pearson seconded the amended motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Application for Excavation/Construction/Street Closure in City Right-of-Way – Public Works Director Greg Maggard explained that historically there was not a mechanism in place to control construction activities in a right of way. This application would require details from the contractors prior to the construction beginning and ensure that the contractors have insurance and the opportunity to examine their traffic control plans. This policy would be effective immediately. This agreement would affect only work being done on the ground and not the use of utility poles. The fee schedule would be \$100 to capture costs. Vice Mayor Rawls made the motion to approve the application; Council Member Lawson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor

Mayor Jones said he had a request from FAHI to request a \$5,000 sponsorship for their upcoming Juneteenth event. City Manager Aretha Ferrell-Benavides said it had been discussed to fund FAHI going forward like the City does for other outside agencies. Vice Mayor Rawls would like to see the money earmarked for specific expenses going forward with outside agencies. The FAHI Director briefly shared information on the Juneteenth event and anticipates this event to be the largest so far with a celebrity guest, food, activities, etc. Council Member Pearson made a motion to provide a \$5,000 sponsorship for the Juneteenth event, Council Member Lawson seconded the motion with all Council Members voting in favor.

Approval of FY24-25 Budget Ordinance on second reading – City Manager Ferrell-Benavides summarized the proposed budget which was approved May 9 on first reading. Council Member Lawson made a motion to increase the Virginia Coop Extension to \$13,000; Council Member Mitchell seconded the motion. Ferrell-Benavides recommended final decisions be made at the May 28 Council meeting after the contracts have been reviewed. Mayor Jones suggested Council pick a date to discuss rather than stretching it out in numerous meetings. All Council Members voted in favor with a roll call vote: Vice Mayor Rawls made a motion to approve the budget ordinance on second reading; Council Member Lawson seconded the motion with the following roll call vote: Council Member Pearson, aye; Council Member Mitchell, aye; Council Member

May 16, 2024 Council Meeting

Lawson, aye; Mayor Jones, aye; and Vice Mayor Rawls, aye.

Discussion on BB&T building – Ferrell-Benavides summarized the plans and grant details for the BB&T building. The developer has made a request on the structure of the loan, a response letter was put together by the attorney. Rawls questioned the interest in the agreement; Lawson stated that the contract could be amended at a later date. Rawls questioned the possible transfer of ownership, the City had discussed making that 10 years instead of 5 years. Rawls would like more than a financial ability clause. Ferrell-Benavides recommended 10 years approval of Council. Council discussed legal clauses within the proposed contract. Attorney Stephen Durbin recommended that some requests be considered during a closed session discussion.

Adjournment – Council Member Lawson made a motion to adjourn at 6:15pm.

Karen Roberts, Clerk of Council

LC Jones, Mayor