



City of Bowie

15901 Excalibur Road
Bowie, Maryland 20716

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the Bowie City Council was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, virtually. Mayor Pro Tem Boafo called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Pro Tem Boafo led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

QUORUM:

In attendance were Mayor Adams (joined at 8:04 p.m.), Councilmembers Boafo, Esteve, Harrison, Ndebumadu, and Woolfley, City Manager Lott, Assistant City Manager Mears, City Attorney Levan, City Clerk Hernandez, and Staff.

PRESENTATIONS:

Ms. Tisha Hillman with the City Diversity Committee read an excerpt on Black History Month.

CITY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

Councilmember Woolfley motioned to appoint Ms. Adedayo Fashanu to the Community Outreach Committee for a two-year term. Councilmember Harrison seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. Mayor Adams swore-in Ms. Fashanu.

COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Harrison gave an update on the vaccine effort provided by the County and the issues they had with the registration website.

CITY MANAGERS REPORT:

City Manager Lott reported that staff has done its initial review of the budget with all departments and will finalize for presentation to Council in April.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilmember Woolfley made a motion to approve items A) Approval of January 4 Regular Meeting Minutes; B) Approval of January 19 Regular Meeting Minutes; C) Adoption of Proclamation P-2-21 Proclaiming the First Monday in March as COVID-19 Memorial Day; D) Approval for Youth Services Bureau Request to Redirect Appropriated Funds for Tutoring. Mayor Pro Tem Boafo seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. City Development Review Policies - Mr. Joe Meinert, Planning Director for the City, reported that staff has made the changes requested by Council from the meetings had as well as including some recommendations received from residents during the Public Hearings. This is a final draft and the policies will be finalized and presented to Council for adoption at the March 1st Council meeting.

Council thanked Mr. Meinert for his efforts in updating these policies. Councilmember Harrison motioned to accept the City Development Review Policies as presented. Councilmember Esteve seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

B. Proposed Communications Policy Regarding Virtual Meetings - Ms. Una Cooper, Communications Manager for the City, summarized the staff report. This policy was drafted at Council's direction to address how virtual meetings would be handled during the pandemic. Since the onset of this health emergency, the City has hosted City Council meetings, committee meetings, and more than 50 other virtual community meetings and town hall sessions. The requests for these meetings have come from staff, City Councilmembers, and from the community at large and have involved staff from several departments. This policy seeks to define an equitable and efficient process for approving future virtual meetings and managing all the City resources that are involved in hosting such events and it will become Annex #3 to the Cities adopted Communications Policy. A copy of the policy is on file in the City Clerk's office.

Councilmember Ndebumadu stated that she has a concern with the limit of just four meetings a year for Councilmembers, she would like to abolish that number specific for Councilmembers.

Councilmember Harrison asked what the costs are involved in these meetings. Ms. Cooper responded that it is about \$500 per meeting, and it is not just the dollar cost, but it is also preventing staff from doing their regular jobs when they have to be managing these meetings.

Councilmember Esteve commented that he does not see a scenario where they will need more than four meetings a year.

Councilmember Woolfley also stated that he believes four meetings is enough but if a need should arise for more, he will be willing to accommodate for that. He also suggested that maybe we can do a trial period of 6 months to see if in need that number should be removed or raised.

Councilmember Ndebumadu believes that having to wait until a next scheduled Council meeting to get approval if an additional meeting is needed might be too long, could this be approved via a Council Poll instead.

Councilmember Esteve asked City Counsel Levan if the City would be violating any Open Meetings law by taking this action via a Council Poll and not at a regular Council Meeting. Ms. Levan replied that this action pertains to Administrative Policies and those actions can be taken in this matter without violating any laws pertaining to the Open Meetings Act.

Councilmember Ndebumadu motioned to approve the policy with the addition to Scenario #3 - Meetings Requested by Individual Councilmember, to remain at 4 meetings on a 6 month trial basis and if a Councilmember needs additional meetings than their allotted four, it can be approved via a Council Poll instead of a Council Meeting. Councilmember Harrison seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Urban Centrixity, Inc. – Mr. John Seard and Ms. Carla Hayes briefed Council on the services they can provide City residents promoting sustainable homeownership through educational classes, training programs and business support services.

Councilmember Harrison asked Mr. Seard what other municipalities they are working with on this program. Mr. Seard responded they are just starting out in this process and Bowie would be the first.

Mayor Pro Tem Boafo commented that he is impressed with what they are doing and thanked them for their presentation. He encourages them to speak with Mr. Jesse Buggs, City Grants Administrator and work with him on the programs. Mr. Seard replied that he will reach out to Mr. Buggs and continue the discussion with him.

B. Update on Environmental Initiatives – Mr. Stephen Wehrenberg, Chair of the Bowie Environmental Advisory committee presented the 2021 Environmental Priorities for the City. These priorities include creating a new City staff position to promote Climate Action and Sustainability, aligning development and environmental goals and promoting a Sustainable Master Plan. The Committee is also working on actions plans for the year which include improving communication and citizen engagement, advocating for staff and Council action relating to sustainability actions, review and comment on development proposals and continue to research any sustainable possibilities.

Council thanked Mr. Wehrenberg for his presentation.

C. Police Department Update - Chief Nesky updated Council on department stats from the last four months. Thefts are down 39% as well as moving violations, but there is a slight increase on speed camera violations. The department has a closure rate of 45% on criminal investigation cases. Community Outreach events have been a success even through the pandemic, all safety measures were taken during these events.

Council thanked Chief Nesky on his report and the entire department for the great work they are doing in the community through these trying times.

D. Mid-Year Budget Report - City Manager Lott reported that the City's General Fund revenues surpassed the revenues generated as of the mid-year point of FY 2020 by over 2 million. General Fund revenues are at \$40,592,859 representing 60.9% of total budgeted revenues for FY 2021. Expenditures in the amount of \$27.4 million were 5.3% higher than FY 2020 mid-year expenditures.

Council thanked City Manager Lott for the report.

E. Resolution R-8-21 Addressing Smart Technology Solutions and the Digital Divide – Councilmember Ndebumadu read the Resolution and encourages that the City continue the progress of becoming a Smart City and continue to stride for sustainability. Ms. JoAnn Marshall-Hobbs, representing the City's Information Technology Committee, stated that the Committee supports this resolution.

Councilmember Harrison motioned to adopt Resolution R-8-21. Councilmember Esteve seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0.

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ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Bofo motioned to adjourn the Regular City Council meeting. Councilmember Esteve seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Awilda Hernandez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A".

Awilda Hernandez, MMC
City Clerk