

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING

DATE: February 14, 2017
TIME: 6:30 P.M.
PLACE: Oxford City Hall
PRESENT: Mayor Alton Craft
Mr. Chris Spurlin, Council President
Mr. Steven Waits, Council President Pro Tempore
Mrs. Charlotte Hubbard, Council Member
Mr. Phil Gardner, Council Member
Mr. Mike Henderson, Council Member

The meeting was called to order by Council President Chris Spurlin and Shirley Henson, City Clerk of the City, served as the Clerk of the meeting.

Greg Turner of First Baptist Church of Oxford gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Spurlin stated tonight we have Zella Rayner. Zella is a 2nd grader at Oxford Elementary School. Her parents are Jason and Christie Rayner. Zella enjoys soccer, reading and basketball. At school she is involved in music, drama, and sports. Her favorite subject is Math and her favorite teacher is Mrs. Walker. When Zella grows up she wants to be a Veterinarian.

That is great and it takes special people to do that. We are so proud of you and we appreciate you being a great student. We appreciate you being here to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Zella Rayner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Spurlin stated thank you Zella and I apologize. I forgot to announce that she would be signing for us tonight. It takes a bunch of talent and at such a young age for doing that.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Spurlin stated each member of the Council had previously received a copy of the minutes of the January 24, 2017 meeting. Mr. Henderson made a motion that the minutes be approved as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gardner.

Mr. Spurlin called for any comments or questions; there being none, on roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard "Yea", Mr. Gardner "Yea", Mr. Waits "Yea", Mr. Henderson "Yea" and Mr. Spurlin "Yea". The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance No. 2017-05 – Ordinance for illicit discharge detection and elimination for the stormwater system.

Mr. Waits made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2017-05. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gardner.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance No. 2017-06 – Ordinance repealing Chapter 28 – Parks and Recreation, Section 28-2.

Mr. Gardner made a motion to suspend the rules for immediate consideration permitting Ordinance No. 2017-06 to be adopted at this meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubbard.

On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2017-06. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubbard.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 2017-07 – Ordinance repealing Ordinance 231 (1969) requiring sanitary sewer connections to structures.

Mr. Waits made a motion to suspend the rules for immediate consideration permitting Ordinance No. 2017-07 to be adopted at this meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gardner.

On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Hubbard made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 2017-07. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderson.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2017-09 – Resolution naming a street Larry Gardner Drive.

Mr. Waits made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2017-09. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderson.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions.

Mr. Waits stated for those who do not know, Larry Gardner was an employee for the City of Oxford. He was the Assistant Street Superintendent for many years. He was an exceptional employee for the City and he loved the City of Oxford. He passed away a couple of years ago and this is a great opportunity to recognize him and his service to his City. A good name for a street that runs through a new development for the City.

Mr. Henderson stated that the owner of the development requested that it be named for Larry because they thought so much of Larry.

Mr. Spurlin stated I am not sure how many years he served the City. He was well thought of, well liked and did an excellent job. We appreciate the work and couldn't think of anything more appropriate to do.

On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard "Yea", Mr. Gardner "Yea", Mr. Waits "Yea", Mr. Henderson "Yea" and Mr. Spurlin "Yea". The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2017-10 – Resolution declaring items as surplus property for the City Garage.

Mr. Spurlin stated this is miscellaneous vehicles, tools and other items our City Garage Supervisor has asked us to declare surplus.

Mr. Gardner made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2017-10. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubbard.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard "Yea", Mr. Gardner "Yea", Mr. Waits "Yea", Mr. Henderson "Yea" and Mr. Spurlin "Yea". The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2017-11 – Resolution awarding the bid for Medical Services/Athletic Trainers for Park and Recreation.

Mr. Spurlin stated this contract will be in the amount of \$34,000.00 a year. ATI Physical Therapy was the lowest bidder.

Mrs. Hubbard made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2017-11. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderson.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard "Yea", Mr. Gardner "Yea", Mr. Waits "Abstain", Mr. Henderson "Yea" and Mr. Spurlin "Yea". The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2017-12 – Resolution deeding an easement to the residents on Briarwood Avenue.

Mr. Waits made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2017-12. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderson.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2017-13 – Resolution hiring Bruce Rice of Rice, Rice and Smith as closing attorney on the purchase of the James property.

Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2017-13. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubbard.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions.

Mr. Henderson stated for those who do not know this property is adjacent to the sports complex on the right side. At one time there was some discussion about someone placing some HUD Housing on this property. The City felt like it was in the best interest to purchase this property. People were asking me about it as it is right behind my house. I know we are talking about hiring Bruce Rice. If you didn’t know which property it was, we will now control that property.

Mr. Spurlin stated we previously approved the resolution purchasing this property. Like Mr. Henderson stated this is a resolution hiring Bruce Rice to close on the property.

On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2017-14 – Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with the Dixie Youth World Series.

Mr. Spurlin stated the teams will be coming the first week in August. Fire Chief Gary Sparks is on the committee and he told us in the work session that there will be 36 teams from 11 different states for the Dixie Youth World Series. We are excited about that.

Mr. Gardner made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2017-14. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Hubbard.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard “Yea”, Mr. Gardner “Yea”, Mr. Waits “Yea”, Mr. Henderson “Yea” and Mr. Spurlin “Yea”. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2017-15 – Resolution authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with the Daniel Group.

Mr. Spurlin stated he has been working with the Mayor and presented a proposal a couple of weeks ago. A little over a year ago we hired R360 as a group who would do an analysis on our City where we have citizens going to other areas to shop, of what stores we need here in Oxford. They performed that analysis and the Daniel Group will aggressively pursue those businesses and try to draw them to our City.

Mr. Waits made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2017-15. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gardner.

Mr. Spurlin called for comments or questions. On roll call the votes of the Council were as follows: Mrs. Hubbard "Yea", Mr. Gardner "Yea", Mr. Waits "Yea", Mr. Henderson "Yea" and Mr. Spurlin "Yea". The motion carried unanimously.

COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMENTS

Mr. Spurlin called for Council Comments.

Mrs. Hubbard stated that she was in a meeting at the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce for the Mayor because he couldn't attend. It was Leadership Calhoun County. One of the questions from the people in that class of business professionals was what can people do to support the work that you do as Mayors and Council members and support the City. In the work session we were talking about board appointments. As we are looking at several board appointments there is an avenue for people to be appointed to boards here in our City. On our City website you can put in an application. We are looking for people who are interested in getting involved in our City. So if you or someone you know are interested please go through that path on the City's website. Hopefully, we will get some people coming into our City who are new volunteers that are ready to work.

Mr. Spurlin thanked Mrs. Hubbard for bringing that up. We do have several expired positions and that would be a great way to serve and support your City.

Mr. Spurlin stated we would like to congratulate the Oxford High School Wrestling Team at the first ever 6A Duels State Tournament that was held this year. Oxford won the 6A Duels. Last weekend they won the 6A South Sectionals and this weekend they will be going to the State Tournament. We are hoping to make that three in a row. They have done exceptionally well this year and we would like to congratulate them and wish them the best of luck.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Spurlin asked Mayor Craft if he had any comments.

Mayor Craft stated 42nd Street – The Broadway Musical was such a good show that spontaneous clapping broke out as well as a standing ovation. Last year John Longshore, Oxford Performing Arts Director was telling me that the Performing Arts Center brought in people from 28 different states. After our last Council meeting and the incident we had near Starbucks I wanted you to know that I want all of our employees to work together really well. The timing and all of these things going down. You have to understand the Police Chief and his Captain were trying to get back. At the time you had lieutenants handling this. It went like clockwork. Our nursing home was safe. Our school was safe. The Fire Department got there and blocked off Highway 21. As

soon as the incident happened the Street Department and Fire Department were putting out cones. It all went like clockwork.

Mr. Spurlin stated the Mayor called him after the incident and said we really have a terrific Police Department, Fire Department, and department heads. It is a testimony for your department when your leaders are out of town and it still runs like it is supposed to. It is a great testament to you. Thank you.

Mr. Spurlin stated you know Aimee Birchfield, Finance Director you have gotten the short end of the deal. You know when Mayor Craft was there as Finance Director we knew that you were doing all the work. Now that you are in that position we forget to recognize you but we still know you are doing a fantastic job. We are blessed with a wonderful group of employees and I think things like this show the training and the leadership that we have is something to be proud of.

Visitors

Mr. Spurlin called for any comments or questions from anyone present.

Danny Shears off Friendship Road stated on behalf of the Advisory Board of the Oxford Performing Arts Center I texted John Longshore about 10:30 p.m. Friday night and said I am going to predict that the show tonight will be the highest rated post event surveyed in the history. Sure enough it was at like 84 percent of those who responded to the survey gave it the highest rating. What I would like to talk about is the price of concessions. I am a volunteer and I enjoy being a part of something that is moving forward and I think Choccolocco Park is a prime example of that. With all the accolades for Choccolocco Park and everything that is going on this spring and summer. I volunteered last year for the OVC Softball Tournament and I have signed up again. As a matter of fact I have been speaking with Denny Bailey and helping him organize it. I have a daughter that works for the Park and Recreation Department keeping score at the basketball games and running the clock. One thing you may have addressed it already but if you have I apologize. I want to talk about the price of concessions. I think with everything we have going for Oxford we charge \$1.75 for a 1.16 ounce pack of M&M's. I think that is a little bit high. We are asking people to come, 36 teams from 11 states and that is not counting the OVC teams, traveling softball, traveling soccer and traveling baseball. They eat here and they stay in hotels here. I don't want it to look like we are charging more than what is fair for concessions. Last year at the AAA State Tournament at Oxford Lake a friend of mine from Alexandria went to watch his son play. First thing he says when I sit down is what is up with these concession prices. I asked what he was talking about and he started telling me. I told him I apologize. Last Saturday at the Friendship Community Center I have a ten year old who plays PARD basketball. At half time I go to the concession stand and in front of me is two parents from Clay County who got a couple of drinks and some candy. When they told them the price they said no thank you. That's two in a row. Two dollars and seventy five cents for a twenty ounce Coke to me is a little high. If we are already getting these people into our community they are going to Target or Dick's Sporting Goods. I think we need to look into renegotiating and I know it is under contract with a company. I get that. I don't know how long it was contracted for and I don't know if there is anything we can do. I know they have to pay employees and I know Kae Bailey does a wonderful job. I do know that the people who work the concession stands make \$2.00 an hour more than the other PARD workers. That money has to come from somewhere. I am a business owner and I understand that. I just want to be fair to these people

who come from out of town or out of state. If you are at an all weekend or an all-day softball tournament and you have little kids and they want M&M's, they want a snow cone or they want a ring pop that is \$1.50 compared to \$.50. I just think it is a little bit high. I know it costs money at the same time we have a captive audience because they are here. I think we need to look at offering what is fair.

Mr. Spurlin stated I appreciate you bringing that to our attention. Like you said earlier it is contracted out. We actually don't set those prices. It is something that I think is on a one year basis.

Mr. Gardner stated the price of the products has been discussed. We are aware that it is high. Our hands are tied because we did sign a contract but that doesn't mean we can't go back and negotiate.

Mr. Henderson stated that is true Mr. Gardner. I spoke with Don Hudson, Park and Recreation Director and he told me that they are talking to them and trying to get the prices lowered. Everyone including Mr. Hudson are aware that the prices are too high and we are hoping to renegotiate.

Mr. Spurlin stated really we are at their discretion right now as to if they will renegotiate. We did sign a contract with them and they have these prices set. However, if they refuse to work with us when that contract expires we can do something else.

Mr. Shears stated that may be a lesson for everybody. Things are going so well for the City of Oxford with tourism whether it be at the Oxford Performing Arts Center, Choccolocco Park or even friends coming up from Clay County to play at the Friendship Community Center. We don't want them to leave with a negative. It is a great City and thank you for letting me be a part of it.

Mr. Spurlin stated thank you for your service, thank you for what you do and I appreciate your concern. We have gotten some concerned citizens that have expressed the same thing but our hands are sort of tied while we are under contract. We are trying to negotiate that and if they will not work with us we can do something different when that contract expires. Thank you Danny.

Mrs. Hubbard stated thank you Mr. Shears.

Bill Bunn of 2017 Cheatwood Drive stated City Council, Mayor, these comments are solely my thoughts and have not been expressed to me by any individual, group, organization, or business and I have not discussed this with any member of the Council. I would like to respond to comments made by Dr. Grinstead, Pastor at Trinity Baptist Church, Oxford, at the City Council meeting on January 24, 2017, related to Sunday Alcohol sales. Statistics is a numerical data assembled and classified so as to present significant information. The data used should be relevant and specific. Dr. Grinstead compared Oxford to a like size city in Virginia that was stated to have an increase in crime when Sunday Alcohol sales was allowed. This is a very broad piece of statistical data and does not provide a detailed analysis of the increase in crime in the city in Virginia. Statistical data should be relevant and presented in a manner that reflects directly to events affected by alcohol sales on Sunday and collected from cities surrounding Oxford, not a city in another state. For example, use cities that are within one hour driving time

from Oxford. Also, the information collected should only be during the 24 hours for Sunday. Alcohol is already sold Monday thru Saturday so it should not be included in the data for Sunday Alcohol sales.

I would suggest the City Council take the time to research and analyze information from cities in Alabama that have Sunday Alcohol sales before making a final decision to approve or disapprove Sunday Alcohol sales. Other possible questions could be types of crime, was the person intoxicated, if so was the alcohol purchased and consumed during the 24 hours of Sunday; was the alcohol consumed at home or business, what effect did business experience with Sunday Alcohol sales. I really feel the residents of Oxford should make this decision, not the Council. A few phone calls, discussions with individuals, organizations, or businesses and personnel feelings probably will not give a true consensus of the majority of voters. Information obtained from the City Clerk's office shows the number of registered voters in August 2016 as 11,392, which may be different now. The *Anniston Star* reported on January 26, 2017, information also obtained from the City Clerk's office that a referendum might cost as much as \$14,500.00. Council members Hubbard and Spurlin agreed that it was too expensive and would be a burden on tax payers. This sounds like a very weak reason not to have citizens vote on this issue, after all we only have around \$74 million in the bank and the approximate cost per voter would be a staggering \$1.27. If it would help, I am willing to pay the \$1.27 for my vote.

What any Council member thinks others feel based on comments from a few, assumptions of what will happen, and what any organization feels is moral or immoral will not necessarily reflect the desire of the majority. Taking the opportunity for each registered voter to cast their vote, the desire of the residents of Oxford will be positively known. I remember the doom and gloom predicated if Anniston voted to go "wet". The voters approved it and as it turned out, it was just another day and life continued. There was one individual that took advantage of the new law in Anniston to start a beer package store and a lounge in south Anniston, and later went on to be a respected elected official. In closing, just something to think about what was the common drink every day at meals and at feast in the Bible? Please do not make a hasty decision on this issue. Thank you.

Mr. Spurlin stated thank you Mr. Bunn. The statistics that you are in reference to is only what Dr. Grinstead brought here. This is not an official statistics from the City of Oxford. That was just his opinion just like what you are giving. Thank you for your opinion and your input.

Jerry Till of H. J. Bentley Parkway addressed the Council regarding Sunday Alcohol sales and Rinehart 100 for hunters and fishermen.

Mr. Spurlin stated thank you. That is the first time I have heard of Rinehart 100. That is something we would certainly look at. If you could contact Don Hudson with the Park and Recreation Department and he would be the one you would work with on that.

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mr. Henderson made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gardner.

Shirley Henson, City Clerk

Chris Spurlin, Council President