

ATHENS CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF MEETING

November 16, 2021

The Athens City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Perkinson presiding. The invocation was given by Council Member Pelley; and upon roll call, the following members were present:

Curtis, Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller, Perkinson

The following decisions were made and ordered made a part of the records of the Athens City Council.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the October 19, 2021 regularly scheduled meeting were submitted and approved by unanimous consent.

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COMMUNICATIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

ATHENS CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE

Mike Simmons, Principal at Athens City Middle School, provided an update on the school. Currently they have 500 students enrolled. Athens City Middle School (formerly Athens Junior High School) was established in 1966 and they have had a part-time band instructor since that time until this year. They now have a full-time band instructor. The Middle School now has the following full-time positions: PE, Media Specialist, Music and Theatre, Art, Band, Enrichment, and Computer Coding. Mr. Simmons stated the school is fully opened including extra-curricular events. He noted the improvements that have been made at the school including painting of the lockers with new combination locks installed, carpet removed and replaced with tile, parking lot and drive repaved, new boiler and cooling tower, new hot water system, water filling stations, touchless faucets, and flush valves. Currently they are in the process of having the entire HVAC system replaced. They are having the Christmas Showcase with band and chorus on Thursday, December 16th at 6:00 pm and a Musical "Matilda Junior" that will have an opening night on Thursday, March 10th. The school now has a student media team that is live streaming all public events. The team of 8th graders is being trained by a local professional videographer.

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PRESENTATION OF VIVID AWARD

Council Members Witt-McMahan and Curtis presented the Very Important Volunteer Individual (VIVID) Award for the month of November 2021 to Meredith Willson in recognition of her continued dedication and commitment to Athens.

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PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION – NEYLAND PICKEL

Council Member Curtis stated that he had spoken with Neyland Pickel's dad, Jason Pickel, earlier in the day and they were unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Pickel asked that they hold the proclamation until the December meeting. Council Member Curtis asked everyone to keep Neyland and his family in their prayers and asked everyone to share a moment of silence for the Pickel family.

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TENNESSEE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

City Manager Sumner read a Resolution of Appreciation from the Tennessee Wesleyan University Board of Trustees recognizing the City of Athens for its generous support. This resolution is in appreciation of the City of Athens' \$5,000 sponsorship of the new Leadership Academy that has been started at Tennessee Wesleyan University.

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Pelley made a motion to suspend the rules in order to make a motion to offer to the City Manager an opportunity to resign or be fired. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mayor Perkinson advised that the following items were discussed during the recent study session and are presented as part of the Consent Agenda. The recording clerk read the following items into the record:

- a.) Approve Resolution No. 2021-38 authorizing entry into contracts for engineering services for Athens City Schools (ACS) Campus and Downtown Traffic Enhancements.
- b.) Approve Resolution No. 2021-39 authorizing the City Manager and Mayor to negotiate an agreement for the sale of city-owned land located at 2115 Redfern Drive.
- c.) Approve recommendation to provide bonuses to employees.

Mayor Perkinson asked for a motion. **Council Member Curtis moved, seconded by Vice Mayor Lockmiller, to approve the Consent Agenda as stated.** Council Member Pelley stated that he wanted to discuss items b.) and c.) of the Consent Agenda. He stated he did not want to vote on the Consent Agenda in total. Vice Mayor Lockmiller inquired about the bonuses to employees. Mayor Perkinson, referring to the City Manager’s recommendation on page 12 of the agenda packet, stated the proposal was to provide full-time employees with a \$500 bonus and to provide a \$250 bonus to part-time employees. City Manager Sumner noted this item was brought by a member of the City Council. There was a specific amount of \$500 for all employees. As was done last year, a \$250 bonus to part-time employees was added. The employees did receive a pay increase this year but in the wake of a 5.4% inflation, the highest rate in nearly 30 years, it was the Council Member’s intention to help employees with that inflationary growth. The City does have growth in sales tax revenue to cover the expenditure. City Manager Sumner stated that he did reach out to each Council Member for their thoughts and the memo was drafted based on a consensus of the Council. Vice Mayor Lockmiller stated he would like to exclude the City Council and City Manager. Mayor Perkinson noted that the City Council does not receive the bonus. Council Member Pelley stated he would like to exclude the City Manager and Department Heads and see the hourly employees receive \$1,000/month. **Vice Mayor Lockmiller moved to change item c.) to provide a \$500 bonus to all full-time hourly employees, \$250 to all part-time employees, excluding the City Manager and Department Heads, Council Member Pelley seconded.** City Manager Sumner asked Vice Mayor Lockmiller if he would consider only removing him from the bonus and not exclude the Department Heads. The City of Athens has never treated one of its public servants any differently than another. Vice Mayor Lockmiller agreed to change his motion to only exclude the City Manager. **Council Member Pelley withdrew his second. Council Member Witt-McMahan seconded the motion.** Roll call vote:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller, Perkinson
NAYS: Pelley

Council Member Pelley moved to change item b.) to remove authorizing the City Manager to negotiate an agreement and replace it with authorizing the Finance Director, seconded by Council Member Witt-McMahan. Roll call vote:

AYES: Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller
NAYS: Curtis, Perkinson

The motion to approve the consent agenda as amended was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller, Perkinson
NAYS: Pelley

ORDINANCES

None

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OLD BUSINESS

ANIMAL SHELTER INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT UPDATE

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-40

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR USE OF ANIMAL SHELTER BY CITIZENS OF MCMINN COUNTY, ATHENS, ETOWAH, ENGLEWOOD, NIOTA, AND CALHOUN.

The caption of Resolution No. 2021-40 was read by the recording clerk. **Vice Mayor Lockmiller moved, Council Member Curtis seconded, to approve Resolution No. 2021-40.** The motion was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Curtis, Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller, Perkinson
NAYS: None

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NEW BUSINESS

BUILDING AND FIRE CODES UPDATE

ORDINANCE NO. 1105 – FIRST READING

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ATHENS MUNICIPAL CODE, TITLE 7 ENTITLED “FIRE PROTECTION AND FIREWORKS” AND TITLE 12 ENTITLED “BUILDING, UTILITY, ETC. CODE” TO ADOPT THE 2018 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL, BUILDING, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, FUEL GAS, FIRE, AND ENERGY CONSERVATION CODES; AND THE 2017 EDITION OF THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE.

The caption of the above-described Ordinance was read by the recording clerk. Mayor Perkinson asked for a motion. **Vice Mayor Lockmiller moved, Council Member Curtis seconded, to approve Ordinance No. 1104 on First Reading.** The motion was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Curtis, Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller, Perkinson
NAYS: None

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REPORTS

FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Mike Keith, Finance Director, presented the Finance Department Report for the month of October 2021. The report was accepted as presented.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Brandon Ainsworth presented the Fire Department Report for the month of October 2021. The report was accepted as presented.

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POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Interim Police Chief Fred Schultz presented the Police Department Report for the month of October 2021. The report was accepted as presented.

Vice Mayor Lockmiller made a motion to suspend the rules, seconded by Council Member Pelley. Mayor Perkinson stated a motion to suspend the rules requires a 2/3 vote of the City Council. Upon roll call, the motion failed by the following vote:

AYES: Pelley, Witt-McMahan, Lockmiller
NAYS: Curtis, Perkinson

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REQUESTS FROM CITIZENS

Andrew McCay, 2236 Breckenridge Street, requested the City continue to investigate adding a pedestrian walkway along Hammerhill Road. Lisa Blos-Johnson, 1112 Springfield Drive, stated that it is very difficult for the audience to follow along when the City Manager and three department heads are presenting facts and figures in their monthly reports. She suggested they prepare one or two slide presentations so that the audience can follow along. Ms. Blos-Johnson asked for an explanation on the police presence at the meetings. Her last request was regarding the second called meeting. She stated that the City Manager was asked under oath the name of the individual that gave him the authority to go ahead and fire the Police Chief. She asked for the Council to provide her with the name of that individual or go ahead and release the name to the public. Glen Whiting, 237 County Road 655, asked that the Council remove Mayor Perkinson from his position for misconduct and that they appoint someone that will deal with the problems. He expressed his opinions but did not make any other requests. Stephen Dick, 610 Greenwood Drive, spoke in support of the City Manager, City Attorney, and most of the City Council. He did not make any request.

Mayor Perkinson stated the City Council is dealing with the evaluation process dealing with and establishing the objectives for City Manager Sumner. The objectives were reviewed at the recent Study Session at which one of the members of Council was unable to attend. Those objectives will be discussed again at the December Study Session.

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REPORT FROM THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Sumner reviewed the monthly report including the various Parks and Recreation and Public Works projects and activities going on throughout the city. A pictorial slide presentation of a day in the life of the City departments was shared with the Council and public.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting and upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.



C. SETH SUMNER, City Manager



WILLIAM BO PERKINSON, Mayor