

MINUTES OF MEETING, ATHENS CITY COUNCIL, SEPTEMBER 17, 2013

The Athens City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, September 17, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Buttram presiding. The invocation was given by Council Member Pelley; and upon roll call, the following members were present:

Burris, Pelley, Perkinson, Davis, Buttram

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

- 1 -
MINUTES

The Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of August 20, 2013 was submitted and approved by unanimous consent.

- 2 -
COMMUNICATIONS

PRESENTATION OF VIVID AWARD

Vice Mayor Davis presented the Very Important Volunteer Individual Award for September 2013 to Tim Hughes for his outstanding support of this community. Mr. Hughes thanked the Council and credited Meredith Willson, Austin Fesmire and Serena Doughty for all their work in making the "Sounds of Summer" concert series a success.

- 3 -

PRESENTATION OF SOAP BOX DERBY PROCLAMATIONS

Council Member Burris presented a proclamation honoring Haley Webb (Local Stock Car Champion), Council Member Pelley presented a proclamation honoring Tia Vincent (Local Super Stock Car Champion), and Council Member Perkinson presented a proclamation honoring Robert Dennis (Super Kids Champion) for their participation in the 2013 All-American World Championship Soap Box Derby in Akron, Ohio. Austin Fesmire, Director of Parks and Recreation, his staff, and the sponsors were commended for their involvement with the Soap Box Derby for the past nineteen (19) years.

- 4 -
PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

AUDIENCE

Mayor Buttram opened the meeting for petitions and requests from the audience. Missy Ford, 609 Nocatula Place, on behalf of the Downtown Business Association, requested funding for downtown lighting. Ms. Ford stated the Downtown Business Association purchased the lights over 17 years ago. There are 29 poles and 29 snowflakes are needed. Based on an estimate the Association received from Temple Lighting, it will cost \$300 for each snowflake for a total of \$8,700. The Association has decided that due to the condition of the existing lights, there will be no Christmas lights downtown this year unless new lights are purchased. Mayor Buttram asked that this item be placed on the October Work Session agenda and asked Ms. Ford to provide the City with a copy of the estimate from Temple Lighting.

Charlie Senn, 427 Forrest Park Circle, spoke in support of a sales tax increase for the schools.

Mayor Buttram recognized Council Member Perkinson for a point of personal privilege. Council Member Perkinson stated that the City Council has a responsibility to listen and respond to comments made by individuals under Petitions and Requests. He noted that at last month's City Council meeting several statements were made that he wanted to comment on and, in some cases, provide correct information based on a report they had received at Work Session. A statement was

made that the City paid \$500,000 for an earth-sheltered building. The City had actually spent about \$70,000. This was a part of an overall grant of \$500,000. Most of that money was spent on the solar array out at Public Works. Council Member Perkinson urged anyone interested in learning more about the project to contact Shawn Lindsey, Public Works Director, and go out to Public Works to see the solar array. Another item mentioned at that meeting was that the City had spent approximately \$1,000,000 on the Market Park Pavilion. The overall price for the property was \$937,000 which included buying the property and demolition. There was approximately \$350,000 spent on the pavilion. If you consider allotting a portion of cost of the acreage purchased, which was approximately 3%, the City spent \$385,000 total on the pavilion not \$1,000,000. It had been indicated that the City had spent \$300,000 on the Rails to Trails project. This is the total purchase price of the property of which there is a \$240,000 grant. There are \$30,000 increments of local matching funds (\$30,000 City/\$30,000 County) to make up the difference of \$60,000 which is the difference between the \$240,000 and the \$300,000. Council Member Perkinson stated they had a responsibility to provide their citizens with accurate information. Mayor Buttram remarked that they recognize that grants are taxpayer dollars but those taxpayer dollars come from citizens across the country. He promised that, especially in the case of federal grants, those dollars are going to go to some community and we say, "why not ours?" The way the City can bring some of those state and federal tax dollars back to the City is through applying for and receiving grants. Vice Mayor Davis commented that a meeting was held earlier in the day at the earth-sheltered building. Three people from other states attended the meeting to talk to state representatives in attendance from TDEC and the environmental agency and to see what the City had built since it was the first project of its type in the United States. These individuals were going to go back and report their findings as their states were interested in building similar projects. Council Member Burris stated that as council members they had to be very careful when they state figures publicly. It was their responsibility to let the citizens know about grants. He commented that at Work Session they discussed ways they could better inform the citizens of Athens about grants. For example, the Fire Department received a grant for approximately \$67,000 for equipment to equip a fire truck. The City's match was approximately \$3,000. Vice Mayor Davis commented that people are curious about why the Council does what it does. For example, why was the Council getting grants to develop Market Park or why were they looking into Rails to Trails. Those individuals who attended the two day Athens Alive 2035 event may remember that citizens were asked to come and provide feedback on where they wanted the city to be by the year 2035. The number one item on that list once everything was compiled was to add new recreation facilities. Vice Mayor Davis commented that if you drove around downtown Athens and imagined taking away everything that was paid for with grant dollars, she would hate to see what downtown would look like. She suggested broadening that to include places like Regional Park that would not exist without grant funds. Grant funds also help the police and fire departments. She read a quote from the President of the Tennessee Municipal League Bond Fund as he described Athens as "one of the top fiscally sound cities in Tennessee using grant monies wisely to continue to build a city that will be desirable to both industry and families." Vice Mayor Davis stated that tourism in the state had reached a new high of \$15 billion dollars last year. The Regional Park generates several million dollars each year. The Tennessee Department of Economic Development states that quality of life projects and recreational opportunities are what make a city more attractive to industry. Industries that are looking at relocating their families want and expect good schools, good cultural and recreational opportunities in addition to the other things they want to see for an industrial site. The City does not apply for grants just because they are out there; they apply for grants because that is what the citizens have told them they want them to do. Council Member Perkinson clarified what he had said earlier that the purchase of the Athens Supply property included a grant of \$734,000 for a total cost of \$937,000. The pavilion was a total cost of \$357,000 of which local funds were \$207,000 and grant funds were \$150,000. When you look at the \$500,000 grant for the solar array and the earth-sheltered building, a grant of about \$250,000 made it possible. These were wise investments and there were many grants they did not look at because they did not improve the quality of life for the citizens of the city of Athens.

- 5 -

REPORTS

FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Michael Keith, Finance Director, presented the Finance Department Report for the month of August 2013. The report was accepted as presented.

- 6 -

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Chuck Ziegler presented the Police Department Report for the month of August 2013. The report was accepted as presented.

- 7 -

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Jim Dyer presented the Fire Department Report for the month of August 2013. The report was accepted as presented.

- 8 -

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- a.) Approve staff's recommendation to declare scoreboards and controls as surplus property and authorize donation to Athens City School System as detailed in memorandum from Matthew Marshall, Director of Purchasing dated September 10, 2013;
- b.) Approve extension of contractual agreement with Rogers Group for asphalt for one year expiring September 30, 2014;
- c.) Approve extension of contractual agreement with Jonathon Matthew Grinding for debris disposal for one year expiring September 30, 2014;
- d.) Approve extension of contractual agreement with Hunter Oil Co., Inc. for fluids and lubricants for one year expiring September 30, 2014;
- e.) Approve Resolution No. 2013-35 to authorize execution of contract with Wilson Construction Group, LLC for Overlook Road at Athens Regional Park;
- f.) Accept bid (Bid No. 1593 dated August 23, 2013) as submitted by Dooley Tractor for ATV Utility Vehicle;
- g.) Accept bid (Bid No. 1594 dated September 3, 2013) as submitted by Thorworks Industries for a Spray Squeegee Machine.

Council Member Pelley moved to approve the Consent Agenda as stated above with the exception of Item e.), seconded by Council Member Burris. The motion passed by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Burris, Pelley, Buttram
NAYS: Perkinson, Davis

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Davis, seconded by Council Member Perkinson to approve Item e.). Council Member Pelley rose in opposition to this item. He stated grants have a place but you have to need them not want them. There is a citizen tax base of roughly 13,500 that is going to have to maintain that road. The City has trouble maintaining what it has and part of the reason is because the City does go after grants. He commented people want to use the bathrooms and pavilion at Market Park because they are there. When you talk to the citizens, not just the minority that was at Athens Alive 2035, there are more people that don't support Market Park. If they did not have Regional Park, they would have some wonderful local parks like Heritage Park and Knox Park. The point is that the parks and streets are in disrepair. The City has some wonderful grants that assist the policemen, firemen and public works. Not all

grants are bad but when you build something you have to maintain it. Council Member Pelley agreed with Council Member Burris' comments that the loop road would be a wonderful addition but they do not need it. Council Member Perkinson stated he felt anything that you build trying to be progressive requires maintenance. Many of projects in the city have been built in phases such as at Regional Park. They had to be careful not to grow larger than they could manage and didn't feel they had. Council Member Perkinson stated he would like to see the city grow and felt you needed to make these types of investments in order to make Athens attractive and appealing to industry and other people. He felt they had to be careful about further investments and needed to continue being selective. They had waited ten years on this particular grant and needed to follow through on accepting it. Mayor Buttram commented this was an 80/20 grant which means 80% comes from federal funds and 20% is from local funds. Council Member Pelley stated the parks are widely used but he did not see a lot of people moving into the city because of its parks. He felt if you did a survey you would find that the vast majority of citizens probably don't use the parks. The staff in Parks & Recreation is awesome but they cannot keep up with demand for maintenance of these facilities. Vice Mayor Davis stated one of the most common things she has heard since she has been in office is why can't they be like Cleveland, look what Cleveland is doing. Cleveland is growing because of the growth rings coming out of Chattanooga; however, they were ready to grow when those growth rings expanded to them. She had spoken to a gentleman from Cleveland who was very involved in Cleveland's growth. He said he was glad to see Athens doing the things they did in Cleveland to grow their city. He told her not to let anybody dissuade you from the agenda you are taking with developing parks, developing recreation, and improving schools and libraries. They took the whole picture into consideration when they started moving Cleveland forward. He said it was hard for people to understand it takes it all, you can't just take one thing or another thing and expect people to come. It is a whole picture that you have to draw for your citizens and help them understand. They had a lot of criticism over the greenway and several other things but they have proved to be beneficial and look at what is happening now. Council Member Burris stated he did not know if the Regional Park made the revenue Vice Mayor Davis had stated it did but he knew the Regional Park had the potential to make it. He felt the overlook road would be a boost for the park. Council Member Pelley responding to Vice Mayor Davis' comments said when people ask why we don't move ahead like Cleveland he believed he would say to them, "If you like Cleveland then move to Cleveland." He felt the holistic approach that she addressed was realistic. The one thing you have in Cleveland that you don't have in Athens is the numbers. They keep putting things on the citizens of Athens that have to be maintained and he did not think that was right. Upon roll call, the motion was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Burris, Perkinson, Davis, Buttram
NAYS: Pelley

- 9 -

NEW BUSINESS

ACCEPTANCE OF AN INDUSTRIAL HIGHWAY EASEMENT FROM HEIL TRAILER INTERNATIONAL, CO.

RESOLUTION NO. 2013-36

A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT FROM HEIL TRAILER INTERNATIONAL, CO., A DELAWARE CORPORATION, AN EASEMENT FOR AN INDUSTRIAL HIGHWAY.

The caption of Resolution No. 2013-36 was read by the recording clerk. **Motion was made by Council Member Perkinson, seconded by Vice Mayor Davis, to approve Resolution No. 2013-36.** Upon roll call, the resolution was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Burris, Pelley, Perkinson, Davis, Buttram
NAYS: None

- 10 -


MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Moore presented the Manager's Report. He reviewed the progress of current city projects/meetings scheduled during the months of September and October. The report was accepted as presented.

- 11 -

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting and upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



MITCHELL B. MOORE, City Manager



R. HAL BUTTRAM, Mayor