

MINUTES OF MEETING, ATHENS CITY COUNCIL, OCTOBER 17, 2017

The Athens City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, October 17, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Burris presiding. The invocation was given by Council Member Raper; and upon roll call, the following members were present:

Coker, Perkinson, Raper, Pelley, Burris

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 September 19, 2017 were submitted and approved by unanimous consent.

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COMMUNICATIONS

MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

Mayor Burris congratulated the Athens Fire Department on receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from the Tennessee Fire Service and Codes Enforcement Academy for their commitment and dedication to firefighter training and safety. The department accumulated a total of 1,039 student contact hours for FY16-17. Sandy Moore, Executive Director of Keep McMinn Beautiful, was recognized for receiving the 2017 Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) / Keep Tennessee Beautiful (KTnB) Award of Excellence. Ms. Moore was honored with the Martin L. Kennedy Award for Outstanding Keep America Beautiful Affiliate Coordinator at the 2017 TDOT/KTnB Biennial Conference on September 19th in Nashville. As a result of Ms. Moore's award, Keep McMinn Beautiful received a grant check in the amount \$1,000.

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PETITIONS AND REQUESTS

AUDIENCE

Mayor Burris opened the meeting for petitions and requests from the audience. Kevin Winters, 1113 Woodward Avenue, is a 1st grade teacher at Ingleside School. He expressed his thanks to the Athens Fire and Police departments for the wonderful job they were doing at the schools. He thanked the City for the sidewalk around the school. Linda Long, 302 Kilgore Street, thanked the City Council and staff for the lighting in the pavilion and the designated handicapped parking spaces in the parking lot at Cook Park. She stressed there was still work to be done at the park with regard to the drainage, rotten wood removal, painting, and installation of a flag pole with light.

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REPORTS

MCMINN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPDATE

Ms. Kathy Price, Executive Director of McMinn County Economic Development Authority, presented the City Council with her quarterly update. Ms. Price stated that the recent job fair was very successful. There were 33 employers and 295 job seekers. Many people commented that this was the best job fair to date. The quality of applicants was also much better this year. The interactive Career Expo held at the McMinn County High School was also very successful. The City's Redfern property has had a lot of activity this year and was the most submitted site to potential industries.

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FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mr. Michael Keith, Finance Director, presented the Finance Department Report for the month of September 2017. The report was accepted as presented.

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POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Cliff Couch presented the Police Department Report for the month of September 2017. The report was accepted as presented.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Jim Dyer presented the Fire Department Report for the month of September 2017. The report was accepted as presented.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY REPORT

Mr. Anthony Casteel, Community Development Director, presented the Building Permit Quarterly Report for the City of Athens. The report was accepted as presented.

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CONSENT AGENDA

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

- a.) Appoint Lisa Dotson to fill vacancy on the Historic Preservation Commission, term expires October 1, 2022
- b.) Accept bid as submitted by Evans-Ailey Construction of Clinton, for replacement of windows and doors at the Municipal Building as detailed in memorandum from Mike Keith dated October 4, 2017
- c.) Approve Resolution No. 2017-23 authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contractual agreement with Retail Strategies for professional retail development consultant services
- d.) Approve Resolution No. 2017-24 authorizing the City to participate in the TML Risk Management Pool James L. Richardson "Driver Safety" Grant Program

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Pelley, seconded by Council Member Perkinson, to vote on item c.) of the Consent Agenda separately. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Coker, Perkinson, Raper, Pelley, Burris
NAYS: None

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Pelley to table item c.) of the Consent Agenda until the November Study Session. Vice Mayor Pelley stated that after the discussion at the October Study Session and after being asked what they could do differently, he felt he had several good ideas that would not cost the City \$50,000 and wanted to continue discussion on this item until their next meeting. The motion died for a lack of a second. Council Member Perkinson spoke in favor of this item c.) but felt they needed an evaluation on a quarterly basis to see the progress that was being made. Vice Mayor Pelley disagreed with Council Member Perkinson. He felt they did not need to spend \$50,000 when they have the talent in local retailers who are willing to serve and know the community and retail business. He had interviewed several well-trained, well-educated retailers, men and women who would be willing to serve on a

committee that would provide them with the same answers only based on local information. Vice Mayor Pelley stated that all he was asking for was an opportunity to put together a group. It was his opinion that they did not need to spend the \$50,000 and asked the Council to give him six months working with a working committee dedicated to improving retail in Athens. Council Member Coker questioned why these retailers waited until the City Council decided to hire a consultant to do something. If we could have done something ourselves then why haven't we. Council Member Coker commented that he wanted to see the City move forward, wanted his children and grandchildren to stay here and that kind of thinking was not going to get the job done. The citizens did not want their children to leave and wanted to see the town grow. He felt the town has been held back for years and that the people have spoken. They want change. Upon conclusion of the discussion, **a motion was made by Council Member Perkinson, seconded by Council Member Raper, to approve item c.) of the Consent Agenda.** The motion was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Coker, Perkinson, Raper, Burris
NAYS: Pelley

On motion by Council Member Perkinson, seconded by Council Member Raper, the Consent Agenda, Items a.), b.) and d.), as stated above was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Coker, Perkinson, Raper, Pelley, Burris
NAYS: None

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NEW BUSINESS

PROJECT ZEUS PILOT AGREEMENT

Kathy Price explained that Project Zeus is a local manufacturer that has been operating in Athens for over 50 years and wants to expand. Athens is competing with two of their sister plants in different states. PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Tax) is an acronym for a tax abatement policy. There are PILOT policies and procedures that were adopted by the City Council. Under the program parameters, they are only able to offer two years of declining tax abatements to the company, which is not enough to win the project for this community. The communities in the other states have submitted a stronger proposal. Ms. Price stated that she has put on the table, subject to approval of the City Council, County Commission and Industrial Development Board, five years of declining property tax abatements. This is an \$18,000,000 investment with close to 75 jobs that would be added to their employment base. The tax abatement will only be on the 12.2 million dollars in personal property. There will be a brick and mortar expansion but they will not be abating that property tax. The declining tax abatement would be 80% in year one, 60% in year two, 40% in year three, and 20% in years four and five. Ms. Price estimated the City would be receiving approximately \$78,000 on personal property tax from the expansion. If approved, they hope to announce the project in the next few weeks. Ms. Price advised the City Council that the County Commission had approved the Project Zeus Pilot Agreement at their Commission meeting yesterday. The Industrial Development Board will be meeting on November 3rd. This is a good company that has been expanding over the last five years. They have been adding close to \$5,000,000 in investment every year. Ms. Price felt this offer would be a sign of good will and also put this community on a competitive basis for this expansion. If successful, they hope to make an announcement by the first of the year. **A motion was made by Vice Mayor Pelley, seconded by Council Member Coker, to accept the proposal for the five-year declining tax abatement for Project Zeus.** The motion was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Coker, Perkinson, Raper, Pelley, Burris
NAYS: None

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MANAGER'S REPORT

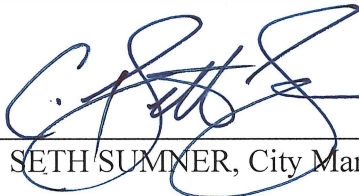
City Manager Sumner welcomed the new Police Chief Cliff Couch and Public Works Director Ben Burchfield. A new Codes Enforcement Officer will be joining Team Athens next week. The Job Fair last week was a wonderful success. He noted that most of our industries are

expanding and hiring and so there was a lot of opportunities for unemployed or underemployed to find gainful or better employment. Currently we have 4.1% unemployment which is lower than the United States and is something to be proud of in Athens. City Manager Sumner reviewed the various Parks and Recreation and Public Works projects and activities going on throughout the city as presented in his monthly report.

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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 7:05 p.m.



C. SETH SUMNER, City Manager



CHARLES T. BURRIS, II, Mayor