

ATHENS CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF MEETING

April 16, 2024

The Athens City Council met in regular session on Tuesday, April 16, at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Sherlin presiding. The invocation was given by Council Member Witt-McMahan; and upon roll call, the following members were present:

Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Pelley, Eaton, Sherlin

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

Council Member Curtis moved, Council Member Witt-McMahan seconded to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2024, regularly scheduled meeting. Roll call vote:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Pelley, Eaton, Sherlin
NAYS: None

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COMMUNICATION AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

ATHENS CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATE

Mike Simmons gave an update on Athens City Middle School state testing, athletic fields, soccer and baseball games. He stated there is a good relationship with those playing pickleball. He invited the Council to come tour the school and see the renovations. He specifically gave a shoutout to the SRO's and the amazing job they are doing. They are appreciated.

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CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Mayor Sherlin addressed the audience and Council. He read the Civil Contract for Citizens.

Four (4) individuals addressed the Council expressing concerns about tornado sirens, maternity leave policy, library board appointee, legislature and complaints and behavior by the city.

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CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Sherlin advised the recording clerk to read the following items into the record:

- a) Approve Merit Construction contract increase from \$36,339,714.71 to \$36,990,444.41 for construction of new school.
- b) Approve HHM, CPA's for performing the audit for FY June 30, 2024.
- c) Approve report of debt obligation for \$35,000,000 USDA school debt.
- d) Reappoint Tyler Forrest to McMinn County Library Board, term expires June 30, 2027

Mayor Sherlin asked for a motion. **Vice Mayor Eaton moved, Council Member Witt-McMahan seconded, that the Consent Agenda as stated be approved.** Roll call:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Pelley, Eaton, Sherlin.

NAYS: None

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ORDINANCES

- a) Ordinance No. 1127 – Second Reading/Public Hearing –Approve Budget Amendment for the fiscal year July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

Mayor Sherlin asked for a motion. **Council member Curtis moved, Vice Mayor Eaton seconded, that Ordinance 1127 as stated be approved. Mayor Sherlin opened the public hearing. There being no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.** Roll call:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Pelley, Eaton, Sherlin.

NAYS: None

Without consent from the Council the Mayor asked that Item B be withdrawn from the New Business agenda.

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NEW BUSINESS

Approve an agreement with McMinn County for their contribution toward the fire training tower and for their use of the facility.

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Vice Mayor Eaton moved, Council Member Pelley seconded to approve the agreement with McMinn County on the fire training tower. Roll call:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Pelley, Eaton, Sherlin.
NAYS: None

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NEW BUSINESS

Approve purchase, in the amount of \$420,000, of the Patricia Parker property located next to Athens Regional Park, subject to decision by Probate Court to approve the estate settlement.

Mayor Sherlin asked for a motion. Council Member Curtis moved, Council Member Witt-McMahan seconded to approve the purchase amount for Patricia Parker Property. Roll call:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Eaton, Sherlin.
NAYS: Pelley

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Motion regarding maternity leave policy

Council Member Curtis moved, Council Member Pelley seconded to approve the maternity leave policy as presented. Roll Call:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Eaton, Sherlin, Pelley
NAYS: None

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Motion to approve Juneteenth (June 19th) as an official holiday and consideration of additional holidays.

Council Member Witt-McMahan moved, Vice Mayor Eaton seconded that Juneteenth (June 19th) be added to the official holidays for the City. Roll Call:

AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Sherlin, Pelley, Eaton
NAYS: None

Motion to reappoint Frank Snyder to the Athens Utilities Board, term to expire June 30, 2028.

Vice Mayor Eaton moved, Council Member Curtis seconded that Frank Synder be reappointed to the Athens Utilities Board, term to expire June 30, 2028. Roll Call:

**AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Eaton, Sherlin
NAYS: Pelley**

Motion for full investigation of Council Member Dick Pelley.

Vice Mayor Eaton moved, Council Member Curtis seconded that the City Attorney conduct a full investigation of Dick Pelley in connection with him having work done at Veterans Park and investigate other matters in which documentation has been provided to the Human Resources office. Roll Call:

**AYES: Curtis, Witt-McMahan, Eaton, Sherlin
NAYS: Pelley**

Motion to investigate the City Attorney.

Council Member Pelley moved to have an outside review and investigation of the City Attorney that he withheld information from Council Member Pelley that was not confidential per the State Comptroller. This includes an investigation as to when or who voted to make the information confidential and investigate why the Attorney claims the information is confidential. The motion died for the lack of a second.

REPORTS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Anthony Casteel presented the Community Department Report for the quarter ending March, 31. The report was accepted as presented.

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FINANCE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Mike Keith presented the Finance Department Report for March 2024. The report was accepted as presented.

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FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Brandon Ainsworth presented the Fire Department Report for March 2024. The report was accepted as presented.

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POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Police Chief Fred Schultz presented the Police Department Report for March 2024. The report was accepted as presented.

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REPORT FROM THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Deb Wallace presented an update on various projects and programs taking place. The report was accepted as presented.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting and upon motion made and duly seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.



DEB WALLACE, City Manager



STEVEN S. SHERLIN, Mayor