

**MINUTES FOR THE THOMASVILLE CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING MEETING ON MONDAY, JULY 10, 2023 AT 4:00 PM AT 20 STADIUM DRIVE, THOMASVILLE, NC.**

Elected officials in attendance: Mayor Raleigh York, Jr.; Mayor *Pro Tempore* Jeannette Shepherd; and Council Members Ronald Bratton, Doug Hunt, Wendy Sellars, Lisa Shell, Hunter Thrift and Payton Williams.

1. Call to Order - Mayor York called the Briefing meeting of the Thomasville City Council to order. He said this meeting will also include Council Committee meeting discussions, since Committees were not held this month due to the Fourth of July holiday.
2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

City Manager Michael Brandt asked Council to add the following items to be heard on July 10, 2023:

- 2.A. Update from Tammy Joyce regarding Main Street Application
- 2.B. Update from Thomasville Police Department (TPD)
- 2.C. Update from Thomasville Fire Department (TFD)

Council Member Thrift asked that item 7.L. Closed Session for Personnel be removed.

Council Member Thrift moved to approve the agenda as amended. Council Member Hunt seconded. *Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.*

A. Update from Tammy Joyce regarding Main Street Program on July 10, 2023

Downtown Economic Development Director Tammy Joyce read a letter from the N.C. Department of Commerce, which announced that Thomasville was selected to participate in the Downtown Associate Community Program. As a result, Downtown Thomasville will receive \$30,000-\$50,000 worth of services over the next two years from the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center.

The letter said, "We look forward to working with you and your community leaders to develop a sustainable downtown organization that will position your downtown for economic growth and development. We believe that your community's participation in this program will lead to its designation as a North Carolina Main Street community in the next two years." A copy of this letter is available upon request from the City Clerk.

Ms. Joyce said this is the beginning of a 2-year process. She thanked the City Council and City Management for creating her position. She said that really helped Thomasville get selected, along with the help of PACE and all the other wonderful volunteer committees in Thomasville that do such a great job.

B. Update from Thomasville Police Department on July 10, 2023

Police Chief Dustin Carter reported the following:

Events:

- June 3 – Gun Violence Awareness Event at Doak Park;
- June 3 – Charity Softball game against Davidson County Sheriff's Office at Finch Field (TPD won!);
- June 13 – "Fun on the Run" with the Parks and Rec Department;
- TPD joined TFD, Davidson County EMS and Emergency Management for a facility assessment and emergency preparedness review at PPG Industries;
- June 17 – Members of TPD and TFD attended an community health and wellness event at Brown New Calvary Church;



- June 22 – The “Cops and Kids Coming Together” 9-week Program began with a meet and greet with day campers at Central Rec.; and
- July 11 – “Cannon Balls with Cops” pool event with local youth.

Staffing:

- July 1 – Lt. Baity retired. The Force thanks him for his many years of service and wishes him all the best in his future.
- TPD hired 10 new officers and have offered 3 more positions:
  - 7 police trainees (5 of whom have already taken the state exam and graduated from BLET on June 29. They will be receiving their law enforcement certifications soon);
  - 1 lateral officer; and
  - 2 pending offers (one trainee and one lateral officer)
- They are still looking to fill 7 vacancies.

Crime (UCR Offenses):

- Robberies and assaults were down 44% this June as compared to last June, but property crimes were up 17% for the month, or 7% for the whole year-to-date. Therefore, Violent (Part 1) Crimes were up 6% overall for the month. However, there was a 2% decrease in violent crime when compared to the 2022 year-to-date numbers at the end of June.

Chief Carter said it was important to note that an increase in auto thefts generally indicates that an increase in other crimes will follow. He said, “Often times, folks that are looking to do additional crimes, to avoid detection of law enforcement, will steal vehicles to do those crimes. So when we see an upward trend of auto thefts, sometimes that’s a barometer of what your Part 1 Crimes can look like as it relates to violent crimes.”

- June 6 – TPD patrol officers captured a fugitive who was wanted for shooting death of a 4-year-old in Nashville, TN, with the aid of TFD and High Point PD.
- June 9 – TPD officers also captured a Davidson County homicide suspect.
- There were 1,941 calls for service last month. Year-to-date, there have been 10,564 calls for service. There were only 9,353 at this time in 2022. That shows that the Department is handling more calls with fewer officers.
- Chief Carter said that last year, self-initiated calls were more than double what they are now, which he attributed to a reduction in staffing. He thanked Council for approving incentives that helped increase staff.
- July 4 – TPD officers arrested a suspect in a double stabbing of two grandparents.
- An NC Medical Journal featured the TPD for their gun violence awareness initiatives for youth.

Council Member Williams thanked Chief Carter for his exciting plans for the Department’s future.

Council Member Sellars added, “You and the Department are doing an amazing job getting out into the community, meeting our community members and going to different events. This is the first time I’ve seen this much activity from our Police Department within our community, really, since I’ve been on Council. So, I really appreciate your hard work and your leadership and all the good work that you’re doing in our department. Because we really have great officers, and we just need our community to know that also.”



C. Update from Thomasville Fire Department on July 10, 2023

Fire Chief Jason Myers reported the following:

Training:

- Each shift has completed Confined Space Training Drills at CCI on MLK Drive;
- Each shift and administration completed a walk-through and site survey at PPG (505 County Line Road) along with TPD, Davidson County EMS and Davidson County Emergency Management;

Staffing:

Following written and physical performance assessments, they have narrowed their selection down to 9 qualified applicants to fill 3 open positions (1 from early retirement for PTSD and 2 who quit to go work at Greensboro's FD.)

Calls For Service:

There were 149 calls for service in June. Of those, there were:

- 28 medical calls (24 of which were traffic accidents);
- June 1st - residential fire at 129 Lakeview Circle;
- June 8<sup>th</sup> - vacant residential structure fire at 1002 Virginia Street; and
- an accident involving a lawnmower down a culvert at 1 N. Forrest Drive. This required a low-angle rescue.

Chief Myers also reported that TPD is still in the running for the *Assistance to Firefighters Grant* for the purchase of 16 sets of turn-out gear.

Chief Myers was proud to announce that the TPD received an improvement in their insurance rating from a Class 3 to a high Class 2 rating from the North Carolina Department of Insurance! They were able to use tankers wherever a fire hydrant was not within 1,000 feet of a structure. A copy of the announcement is available upon request to the City Clerk. He explained that beginning October 1, 2023 some businesses will see a reduction in their insurance premiums as a result of this improvement. They are working on even more improvements, and Chief Myers believes the Department can achieve a Class 1 rating at the next inspection in 5 years with some additional staffing and a continued upgrade of equipment.

Mayor York said, "We are proud of our police and fire departments, very much, and the hard work they do to protect our citizens."

3. Recognitions and Presentations to be presented on July 17, 2023

A. Proclamation – Parks and Recreation Month (July)

B. Declaration of Support – United Way of Davidson County Month (August)

4. Public Forum – A public forum will be held at the Council Meeting on July 17, 2023. A two-minute time limit will be enforced.

5. Public Hearing – to be held on July 17, 2023

City Manager Brandt explained that this public hearing would be held at the Council Meeting on July 17, 2023 to Consider Designating the T. Austin & Ernestine Lambeth Finch House as a Historic Landmark.

This comes from the Public Safety Committee for review. The historic landmark status at a local level is much more stringent than national landmarks.

Planning Director Chuck George explained that Mr. Clemmons requested that the Finch House be designated as a local landmark. The ordinance lays out the report on



the property, including the integrity of the exterior and interior of the property. Also, the paperwork discloses what will require a COA and approval from the HPC. Once the ordinance is adopted, Mr. Clemmons said he would do any necessary changes to the property. The State is in favor of this historic landmark location. Mr. George said the State said the tent did not take away from the integrity of the property, so they had no issue with it.

*The following items were put on the Consent Agenda by the Council members for consideration on July 17, 2023:*

6. Consent Agenda – for July 17, 2023. City Manager Brandt explained the following items:

- A. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Special Called Meeting (Budget Hearing) on 06/05/23
- B. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Briefing Meeting on 06/12/2023
- C. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Council Meeting on 06/20/2023
- D. Consideration of Street Road Closure Ordinance for Everybody's Night – Sept. 29, 2023
- E. Consideration of Street Road Closure Ordinance for Everybody's Day – Sept. 30, 2023
- F. Consideration of Amendment to Thomasville Code of Ordinances Chapter 82 – Utilities

*City Manager Brandt* said this came from the Public Services Committee. It would change our ordinance to put the responsibility of installing new water sewer taps on the builder/owner, instead of the City, because we were losing money on every single one of these. The \$1,250 fee was removed from our fee schedule, but the ordinance also needs to change. This would be effective October 1, 2023, in order to give developers time to plan for this cost. At that time, a water tap permit would be issued by the City for \$75.

*Council Member Hunt* asked if there was a list of contractors people could choose from if they need this done. He also asked if the City would set the price for this service.

*Utility Director Morgan Huffman* said most other cities already do taps this way. He advised that we can't refer people to any one contractor, but he does have contact information for 5 or 6 contractors that we use as a city. He said they are private businesses and can charge whatever they want. He advised that people get multiple quotes.

He said once they are inspected and accepted by the City, then we will accept maintenance from then on. If we have to come back in and do something to it, that's on us.

G. Consideration of Resolution accepting offer of dedication of Valley Drive in the City of Thomasville

This came from the Transportation Committee.

Planning Director George asked for Council's acceptance of a section of Valley Drive, a new section of road that was developed a couple of years ago. The Street Department inspected the curb and gutter, and we have Engineering letters showing it meets the City specs, which are the same as the State's specifications.

H. Consideration of Resolution of Support of NC Governor's Highway Safety Program Grant Year 2



Police Chief Carter explained that this is a resolution for the second year of the grant for the total funding in the amount of \$70,413. This will defray the cost of the project described in the contract application.

He added that the government body will pay a cash contribution of \$12,425 as required by the project contract. He said, "That's what costs we will incur for the second year of the Task Force position."

I. Consideration of Amendment to Thomasville Personnel Policy, Article XVIII, Sections 14 & 15

This came from the Personnel/Finance Committee.

City Manager Brandt said this would extend the following temporary retention and recruitment policies to December 31, 2023:

Section 14. This is the employee incentive program that gave city employees \$500 for referring new hires and gave new hires \$500, both after the new hire stayed 6 months. This has only been utilized a few times so far, but it did spark some interest in our employees to look for referrals.

Section 15. This is a police officer lateral transfer incentive, which provides for a \$3,000 bonus if you transferred to TPD. To date, the City has paid one of these bonuses, and another one is in the works.

*The following items were put on the Regular Agenda by the Council members for consideration on July 17, 2023:*

7. Regular Agenda – for July 17, 2023. City Manager Brandt explained the following items:

A. Consideration of 90-Day Moratorium on Enforcement of Noise Ordinance in the Downtown C-4 District of Thomasville

Downtown Economic Development Director Joyce shared what other downtowns are doing with regard to noise ordinances. She asked Council to consider making changes to the City's noise ordinance – at least by adding time restrictions on noise (most popular in other cities) and/or by investing in noise measuring devices. (3M Sound Examiner is popular.) She hasn't received a cost estimate for that yet, but she believes it will be \$1,700-\$2,000 per meter, and we may need 4 of them. She spoke with an officer in Greensboro who said they only have one device that they calibrate once a year, but he said it's a hassle to have to go get it whenever there's a noise call. These devices can record regular noise (like traffic) or bass. Most cities take 4 readings 30 feet from the property line now.

Council Member Hunt asked if the officers have to get certified on the device. Ms. Joyce said they're just trained.

Council Member Thrift agreed that there needs to be a change. He recommended issuing a moratorium while Council investigates costs and changes to the ordinance.

Council Member Hunt agreed that a change needs to happen, but he didn't want to use the meter to go around and tell businesses they can't do something. He felt there would be discrepancies among officers.

Council Member Williams said the discrepancies are happening now, because there are no meters, and it's just up to officers' opinions currently.

Council Member Bratton said they did this years ago, and the courts threw out these readings, because they weren't taken by certified professionals. He preferred setting an 11:00 PM noise rule. He said that worked for 25-30 years. Ms. Joyce said that is not in the City's current noise ordinance. That would be an improvement.



City Attorney Misti Whitman said these devices aren't necessarily to enforce penalties, but they might help officers provide a standard to people who are particularly sensitive to noise.

Ms. Joyce said the first call would get a warning. The second call would be a stiff (~\$200) fine. It would be a tool to measure noise and issue citations, even if it wouldn't stand in court. She knows of three potential incoming businesses that would hold outdoor events, so this ordinance change would not just be for one business. She recommending adding exceptions to the time limit, such as New Year's Eve and Fourth of July, etc. Council Member Sellars suggested Cinco de Mayo and Juneteenth, as well.

Council Member Thrift said other cities also extend time limits to 1:00 AM for St. Patrick's Day, Halloween and Labor Day Weekend. He said Council will need to look into it if we expect to grow our Downtown and have more outdoor events. He said the moratorium would give Council time to get it right.

City Attorney Whitman said the proposed moratorium was just for the C-4 (Downtown Commercial) District. It would halt enforcement of the current noise ordinance there for up to 90 days to allow Council time to decide what changes they wanted to make to the noise ordinance. Council would have to choose if they wanted to do a moratorium or add an 11:00 time limit now. They agreed to just do the moratorium for now.

City Manager Brandt recommended that the Public Safety Committee (Council Members Bratton, Hunt and Shell) meet with City Attorney Whitman and Police Chief Carter to review other cities' noise ordinances and to take a summary of the information and proposed changes to the rest of the Board.

Council Member Thrift wanted to be included in the process, to at least let them know what he's wanting to change. The committee said they would get input from the rest of Council before the meeting.

City Manager Brandt said the moratorium could move forward at the council meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup>, and he would coordinate a special called meeting of the Committee in the next two weeks.

Council confirmed that they wanted the moratorium to go on the regular agenda at the Council meeting.

Council Member Hunt asked Ms. Joyce how long the noise measuring devices last. She said she would find out that information. She said she did know they had to get calibrated every year.

**B. Consideration of Amendment to Thomasville Code of Ordinances Section 54.2 Possession or Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages, Intoxication on City Property**

City Manager Brandt advised that Tourism Director Cameron Marsden asked that the consumption of alcoholic beverages be allowed "on the public right-of-way on East Main Street in the clock tower parking lot" during the Everybody's Night event.

This amendment would add Everybody's Night as an exception, similar to PACE Park, the Farmers Market, the Golf Course and Finch Field. This item was sent to the regular agenda for consideration at the Council meeting.

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City Manager Brandt advised that this issue brought up another issue. He said it is our current policy to only allow non-profits with ALE permits to serve malt beverages and unfortified wine, and not a third party such as a brewery, winery or caterer with an ALE permit. This creates an issue because many times non-profits don't have the staff or experience with serving alcohol, but their third-party does.

He explained that this is not referenced in an ordinance, but it is a written policy that was created to give the non-profits control of the activity at their events.



Council Member Williams agreed that non-profits should not be the only ones serving the alcohol. It isn't what they do, and they often don't want the liability.

Council directed Mr. Brandt to create a policy change to remedy this issue.

C. Consideration of Resolution of the Thomasville City Council to Conduct a Public Hearing for the Purpose of Considering a Resolution for the Closure of a Portion of Kahler Street

Planning Director George advised that this property is near 710 Salem Street, adjacent to the billboards. New property owners are requesting to close an unopened portion of Kahler Street. They are going to subdivide the property into three parcels. They want to cut off the house from that parcel and create two other building lots and build houses where the unopened road is. The setback requirements is why they're asking for the closure of the unopened road.

He said, "There's no way for anybody to connect to it, anyway, because we have closed the portion on the city side."

D. Consideration of Amendment to Thomasville Personnel Policy, Article III, Section 3

This came from the Personnel/Finance Committee. City Manager Brandt said this is a follow-up to previous discussions regarding PD and FD career ladder exemptions that waive educational requirements for certain employees who were "grandfathered" in.

Due to complications that would arise in the Fire Department if this allowance were just removed, this amendment allows for a gradual sunset of the exemptions instead. It would allow employees to have until July 1, 2027 to get an Associates (2-year) Degree or July 1, 2029 to get a Bachelor's Degree to get a promotion. (They will not have to get degrees to keep a current position.)

This would also apply to any future career ladders.

8. Committee Reports and Appointments, Mayor's Report and Appointments, City Manager's Report, City Attorney's Report on July 17, 2023

9. Additional Items – Discussion about Chain of Command and Standard Operating Procedure for the City of Thomasville

This is from the Personnel Finance Committee and was requested by Council Member Hunt.

Council Member Hunt said he is clear about the chain of command for PD and Fire, because they have a career ladder. But he asked for further clarification about the City Administration's chain of command. He asked who he should call if the Mayor, City Manager and Assistant City Manager are all out of the office?

Mayor York said he is not in charge of operations, so do not call on him. Call the City Manager, unless, the City Manager has designated (by letter to the City Clerk per State statute) that someone else will take his place while he is away from the office.

City Manager Brandt explained, "Unless I have transferred my authority to someone else, I am the contact person... I always have my phone on. If I'm not available, you can always contact Eddie (Bowling), the Assistant City Manager, and he can act in my stead for any of those things, because that's the chain of command."

That being said, the PD or FD Chief will take lead during an emergency event, depending on the emergency. They will directly call in whatever resources they need. (For example, if they need barricades, they will contact the Public Works Director directly, rather than going through the City Manager.)

He said City Council Members never need to instruct employees what to do. The City Manager will be the contact person. However, Council can contact department heads



directly, if they cannot reach the City Manager or the Assistant City Manager and they need an update on an emergency situation.

He said if he were going out of the country or wouldn't be able to perform his duties, he would designate someone. But if he were going somewhere that he could stay in contact, even while on vacation, it's okay for Council to contact him, if the Assistant City Manager isn't available.

Council asked for a list of phone numbers for department heads.

10. Adjournment – Council Member Sellars moved to adjourn. Council Member Williams seconded. *Motion unanimously approved 7 – 0.*



Raleigh York, Jr.  
Raleigh York, Jr., Mayor

Wendy S. Martin  
Wendy S. Martin, City Clerk