

June 23, 2020

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Fairmont was held at 7:00 p.m. on the 23rd day of June, 2020, at the Public Safety Building located at 500 Quincy Street in Fairmont, West Virginia.

Mayor Merrifield called the meeting to order.

Councilmembers present were:

First District	Joshua D. (Josh) Rice
Second District	Frank G. Yann
Third District	Karl (David) Kennedy
Fourth District	Kenneth (Brad) Merrifield
Fifth District	Barry H. Bledsoe
Sixth District	Dora Kay Grubb
Seventh District	Philip R. (Phil) Mason
Eighth District	Thomas (Tom) Mainella
Ninth District	Donna M. Blood

Also present were:

City Manager	Valerie Means
City Attorney	Kevin Sansalone
City Clerk	Janet L. Keller
Fire Chief	Ed Simmons

IN RE: OPENING CEREMONIES

Rev. Wesley Dobbs gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Councilmember Yann.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Merrifield noted that each member of Council had received a copy of the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on June 10, 2020.

Councilmember Blood moved to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yann.

The Mayor declared the minutes approved as submitted by voice vote of Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were no public hearings scheduled for this meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN RE: WATER DEPARTMENT CREW COMMENDED

Councilmember Rice commended Water Supervisor Gary Moore and his crew for assisting a resident in his district with an issue and noted how quickly they got things done for this person.

IN RE: MURAL AT PALATINE PARK

Councilmember Rice commented on the mural that is being painted at Palatine Park. He said that he drives by every couple days to see the progress of the painting.

Councilmember Blood also stated that everything is looking fabulous with the mural painting.

The Mayor said that we will be talking more about the mural later in the meeting. He said that he has asked Joel Dugan to attend this meeting and give Council an update on the mural. He noted that this was a collaborative effort between the City of Fairmont, the Marion County Commission, and FSU. He mentioned that a lot of things that have come up, it is so nice to have these entities working together and getting something done. He noted that it is amazing how much easier things work when we all just work together.

IN RE: EVENTS AT PALATINE PARK

Councilmember Rice reminded everyone about the upcoming events at Palatine Park. He said they have been having some good events and he encouraged everyone to attend.

IN RE: CORNERSTONE LAYING SCHEDULED JUNE 27, 2020

Councilmember Yann reported that they have a cornerstone laying this weekend for the new East Side Fire Station. He said that a few years back a neighbor of his up the street was digging his own ditch and it collapsed on him and he was covered up to his neck. They called the East Fairmont Fire Department and two firemen had responded. He said that there were no shovels on the truck and they dug him out with their hands and applied CPR.

At that time, the rescue squad was not as convenient as it is now and these two firemen gave him CPR and saved his life. They received the highest award in life saving from the Red Cross. One fireman was John Kendrick, who is now deceased, and the other was his neighbor, retired fireman Joseph Amoroso.

IN RE: FAIRMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT

Councilmember Blood mentioned what a wonderful job our Fairmont Police Department is doing and they have been under a lot of stress and a lot of pressure over all of the protests that have been happening. She wanted to make sure they get the credit that they deserve for handling themselves so professionally and she wanted to thank Chief Shine and the whole department.

Councilmember Bledsoe also mentioned the Police Department. He said there are police officers across this country that are resigning in massive amounts so police departments are losing people right and left. He said that he can't blame them. Their profession is hard enough as it is but when they lose the support of the public and the support of their Mayors and in some cases their City Managers and they fear being arrested just doing their job, he did not blame them. He said that he is thankful that we have a City Manager and a City Council and City Administration and a Police Chief that supports our good police department. We have a good police department and they are not deserving of the things that have been said about them, to them and he wanted to say he was glad they are here and he supports them.

IN RE: ATTENDED PASTORS GROUP MEETING

Mayor Merrifield reported that he had a good meeting with the Pastors group two weeks ago at Mt. Zion Church. He felt it was a great exchange of understanding both ways. He noted that he was surprised at the number of things that were put out on the table and the meeting really helped. He mentioned that they will have another meeting this Thursday and will continue to communicate and to work together and not lose any ground on the work that has been done over the last 30-40 years in this town and in this county.

IN RE: PROCLAMATION PRESENTED

The Mayor presented a proclamation to Joe Hall and Retired US Army Sergeant David Tucker dedicating Thursday, June 25, 2020 as the 70th anniversary of the Korean War Conflict.

CITIZENS PETITIONS

IN RE: CODE COMPLAINT REGARDING 518 BENONI AVENUE

BOB HENDRICKS, a resident of 610 – 5th Street, addressed Council regarding the following items:

- He came in support of the Police Department.
- He wanted to recognize the efforts of the City to recognize the Korean War Veterans.
- He thanked the City of Fairmont and specifically the previous City Manager for finally getting the old Butcher School demolished.
- He noted that the City still has a lot of vacant houses and buildings in Fairmont and they are being broken into by the vagrants. He reported that the Police Department has been to one abandoned house in his neighborhood at least five times. This house is located at 518 Benoni Avenue. Every time the Police flushes these people out, they just break back in. He then said that some of these structures need to be condemned and the Police cannot do a lot of things until the buildings are condemned. He then said that Council needs to take action to close those buildings off to these people.

IN RE: STEALING ITEMS OFF PORCHES

Councilmember Grubb said that she received a call about a group going around the 6th and 7th Districts stealing items off the porches and in the yards. She noted that this is a very serious thing and they come every night after 12:00 midnight taking items from people's houses.

IN RE: MURAL PAINTING UPDATE

JOEL DUGAN, 913 Sylvan Avenue, extended an open invitation to Council to come over and see the mural in progress since they only have about another week left before they wrap the mural up. He said that people are showing up at the wall telling stories and communicating with each other. He mentioned that they are planning to have a formal release coming up soon where they are going to invite back all of the icons that they currently have as elders. He noted that the wall is going fast and they have already received great suggestions from the community. He said that they have opportunities with the paint that is left over to make some other additional

public art interactions.

Councilmember Bledsoe thanked Mr. Dugan and the artists for what they are doing. He said that he is excited to see it completed.

IN RE: MAIN STREET FAIRMONT PRESENTATION

TIM LIEBRECHT, Executive Director, addressed Council regarding ideas on how to drive people into downtown Fairmont. He updated Council on several ideas from the Main Street Board:

- Drive for \$25 Campaign – He said that a donor gave Main Street Fairmont a \$1,000.00 donation and said that it was to be spent on the downtown businesses so the Board came up with the idea to create a program to drive more people into the downtown area. He said they bought \$25 gift certificates at a variety of the businesses in downtown and for ten weeks they are doing scavenger hunt style programs where we are encouraging people of social media to come downtown and find novelty items or certain buildings or do some research and utilize downtown and then they draw a name every week for a winner and that winner wins one of those \$25 gift certificates.
- Foot traffic is much lower than it has been in the past. The Board has come up with Home Town Saturdays. He said that in the months of July and August, the idea is to supplement the restaurants that are downtown right now and bring in some additional food trucks in the downtown area on those Saturdays. This will create a hub and a walkable space where people will come into the downtown for the additional food trucks and restaurants and for the different things that are downtown. He noted this will encourage people to walk that stretch of Adams Street and walk down to Palatine Park and engage with all of the things that are around in this area. This is a good way to bring people downtown but again not to have a large event where we have to deal with the social distancing issues, etc.
- The Main Street Board wants to help incorporate FSU into the downtown. They are suggesting that the two miles stretch of the rail trail be completed into the downtown area. He said Main Street would be willing to work with the City to add a section that would incorporate both FSU coming across Third Street and into the downtown area. This would give the students the ability to get from FSU to downtown without having to get in a car.

- The Board has suggested to clean up the downtown area by painting on the facades of the buildings, power washing, cleaning windows, and picking up trash. They already have volunteers ready to help with this project. He noted that some of the students from FSU has offered to help as well.

Mr. Liebrecht closed by saying that Main Street Fairmont wants to be part of the solution and they are willing to help the City in any way they can.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

IN RE: MURAL AT PALATINE PARK

Ms. Means thanked Mr. Dugan and his students for the painting of the mural. She noted that it looks wonderful and she encouraged folks to take a look at it. She said that maybe we can do some future ones.

IN RE: DEEDS FOR PROPERTY PURCHASED

The City Manager stated that the City is starting to receive the deeds for property purchased at the last State tax sale. She said that once we get them, we will put the group out for demolition.

IN RE: CORNERSTONE FOR NEW EAST SIDE FIRE STATION

The Manager reminded Council of the laying of the Cornerstone for the new East Side Fire Station at the corner of Vermont and Morgantown Avenue. She noted that it will take place on Saturday, June 27th at 1:00 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

IN RE: INTRODUCTION, FIRST READING, SET PUBLIC HEARING, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF FAIRMONT'S 2019-2020 ANNUAL BUDGET: COAL SEVERANCE

Mayor Merrifield entertained a motion and second for the introduction of an ordinance providing for a Coal Severance Budget Revision.

Motion:

Councilmember Kennedy moved for the introduction of the proposed ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Bledsoe.

The Clerk read the proposed ordinance by synopsis for the first time.

The Mayor declared the public hearing set for July 14, 2020.

IN RE: ADOPTION, SUPPLEMENTAL RESOLUTION APPROVING CERTAIN TERMS OF THE RENEWAL OF THAT CERTAIN LETTER OF CREDIT, NO 2001-525 TO BE ISSUED BY WESBANCO BANK TO THE CITY OF FAIRMONT AUTHORIZED BY ORDINANCE NO. 1852, DULY ADOPTED MAY 26, 2020, AND MORE PARTICULARLY ESTABLISHING THE AMOUNT OF SAID LETTER OF CREDIT UPON RENEWAL UPON ITS MATURITY ON JUNE 30, 2020 AT \$500,000.00.

Mayor Merrifield entertained a motion for the adoption of the proposed supplemental resolution approving the terms of the Letter of Credit issued by Wesbanco Bank for Workers Compensation in the amount of \$500,000.00.

Motion:

Councilmember Rice moved for the adoption of the proposed ordinance and Councilmember Blood seconded the motion.

The Clerk read the proposed resolution by synopsis for the first time.

Roll call was taken by the Clerk.

Mayor Merrifield declared the resolution adopted by unanimous vote of Council.

IN RE: ADOPTION, A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAIRMONT, WEST VIRGINIA, SUPPORTING THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ABANDONED MINE LANDS AND RECLAMATION (AML) PILOT PROGRAM FOR A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,402,000.00 TO FUND THE CROSS TOWN CONNECTOR SECTION A-1 AS OUTLINED IN THE CROSS TOWN TRAIL CONNECTOR MASTER PLAN DATED FEBRUARY 2020, AND IF SUCH GRANT IS AWARDED, FURTHER AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE THEREOF, AND PROVIDING THE CITY MANAGER WITH AUTHORITY TO DO ALL THINGS REASONABLE AND NECESSARY IN CONNECTION THEREWITH

Mayor Merrifield entertained a motion for the adoption of the proposed resolution supporting the submission of a grant application to the WV Department of Environmental Protection abandoned Mine Lands to fund the Cross Town Connector of the Rail Trail Project.

Motion:

Councilmember Yann moved for the adoption of the proposed ordinance and Councilmember Kennedy seconded the motion.

The Clerk read the proposed resolution by synopsis for the first time.

Roll call was taken by the Clerk.

Mayor Merrifield declared the resolution adopted by unanimous vote of Council.

ADJOURNMENT

The Mayor entertained a motion for adjournment.

Motion:

Councilmember Mason moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Rice.

The Mayor declared the meeting adjourned by voice vote of Council at 7:53 p.m.