CITY OF OAK HILL
MINUTES

City Council Meeting – October 9, 2023

The regular monthly meeting of the Oak Hill City Council was held on October 9, 2023, in the Council Chambers at Oak Hill City Hall at 5:30 p.m.

Call to Order
Mayor Briscoe called the meeting to order at approximately 5:35 p.m.

Roll Call
City Clerk Ronda Falk called the roll.

PRESENT
Mayor Charles Briscoe
Council-at-Large Bill Hannabass
Ward 1 Councilmembers
Diana Janney
Roger Evans
Ward 2 Councilmembers
Chris Gill
Carlos (PJ) Elder, Jr.
Charles Smallwood, Jr.

ABSENT
Ward 1 Councilmember, Christa Hodges

ALSO, PRESENT
Damita Johnson, City Manager
Bill File, Attorney
Ronda Falk, City Clerk
Chief Mike Whisman, Oak Hill Police Dept.
John Tuggle, Thrasher Group Engineer
Sam Rich, Thrasher Group Project Manager
Alison Ibarra, Director of Economic Development

Invocation
The invocation was led by Reverend Thomas Carter, LifeBridge Assembly of God.

Pledge of Allegiance
The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Chris Gill.

Reading and Approval of Minutes
Copies of the minutes from September 11, 2023 were provided to the council by ShareFile.

Motion- *Approve the minutes as being presented.*
Motion made by Councilmember Janney. Seconded by Councilmember Gill.
No Discussion.
The motion carried unanimously. 7-0.

Treasurer's Report
Copies of the revenue, expenditures, and vendor checks for the month of September, 2023 were provided to the Council by ShareFile.

Motion- *Accept the Treasurer's Report as presented.*
Motion made by Councilmember Janney. Seconded by Councilmember Gill.
No Discussion.
The motion carried unanimously. 7-0.

Correspondence
The clerk read aloud a letter received from Aleah DeMello concerning Virginia Street sidewalks and access to the park from Virginia Street.

Also a letter from previous council members David Perry and Danny Wright complimenting council on the bank survey but wanting to see it made available to all through mailings, etc.

Citizens' Comments
Aleah DeMello spoke on her concerns of the Virginia Street sidewalks project.

Terrance Leggett applauded Chief Whisman on his leadership of the Oak Hill Police Department, congratulating Mayor Biscoe as new Mayor, and spoke of his concerns regarding the homeless.

Unfinished Business

1. **Consideration to Appoint and Reappoint Individuals to Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

   Planning Commission
   The City Manager made a recommendation to reappoint Jim Ross and Don Williams whose terms expired July 1, 2023. There was some discussion on whether Don Williams wanted to serve again.
   Motion was made by Councilmember Hannabass, seconded by Councilmember Janney to reappoint Jim Ross and to appoint Chris Gill to the Planning Commission as council representative. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

   Board of Zoning Appeals
   Appointment of alternates for the Board was tabled at the September meeting. Recommendations for the alternates are Tom Burdette, Chris Harvey, and Brandy Davis.
   Motion made by Councilmember Evans to appoint these three as alternates to the Board of Zoning Appeals, seconded by Councilmember Elder. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

   Building Commission
   Wes McDonald was recommended for appointment to the Building Commission.

Motion was made by Councilmember Janney, seconded by Councilmember Evans to appoint Mr. McDonald to the Building Commission. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**
The reappointment of Don Williams for his expired term was tabled for now until further contact with Mr. Williams.

Structural Inspection Board
Councilmember Hannabass made motion to table for now, seconded by Councilmember Janney. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

Recreation Committee
Motion made by Councilmember Elder, seconded by Councilmember Evans to appoint Dave Ruth and Beth Gardner to serve on the Recreation Commission. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

Finance Committee
Tim Buskus showed an interest in serving, Councilmember Hannabass and City Treasurer Valerie Vaughn were recommended.
Motion was made by Councilmember Janney to appoint Buskus, Hannabass and Vaughn to serve on this committee, seconded by Councilmember Elder. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

Beautification Commission
Previous members did not wish to be reappointed. Motion made by Councilmember Evans to appoint Michael Gill, Gail Treadway, Austin Haynes, Cheyenne Willis, Sadie Brash, Mike Meadows and Matthew Harris, along with Council Member Janney, Mayor Briscoe, and City Manager Damita Johnson.
Motion was seconded by Councilmember Elder. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

Amphitheater Commission
Motion was made by Councilmember Evans, seconded by Councilmember Janney to appoint Michael Hicks, Robert Pauley, and Margaret Hildebrand to fill the open positions on the Amphitheater Commission. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

Veterans Memorial Commission
Councilmember Hannabass motioned to appoint Raymond Lopez, Crystal Warner, Austin Haynes and to reappoint Saundie Smith, Mark Hurt and Tom Moore. Motion seconded by Councilmember Janney. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

Spirit of Oak Hill Award Committee
Motion was made by Councilmember Janney to reappoint Debbie Bush and to appoint Saundie Smith, Nancy Harding, Angela Keffer, Sherri Kidd and Councilmember Elder. Motion seconded by Councilmember Evans. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

2. Consideration to Approve the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Resolution
Sam Rich, Thrasher Group Project Manager, discussed changes that were needed. Presented handicap accessible equipment for the park, general accessibility for the park, budget was also presented. Construction budget at this point is $321,600. With contractors, equipment, etc., this puts us at $385,920. Recommendation to Council is to authorize a $200,000 match as opposed to the

$150,000 match. A motion was made by Councilmember Gill, seconded by Councilmember Hannabass to authorize the $200,000 match. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

3. **Consideration to Amend Ordinance 2.02.08 Council and Mayor Annual Salary – 2nd Reading**
Motion made by Councilmember Janney to accept this as second reading to amend Ordinance 2.02.08 (removing the section that says pay the mayor and council members $100 per meeting to attend appointed meetings). Motion seconded by Councilmember Hannabass. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

4. **Consideration to Repeal Oak Hill Municipal Code 2.20.070 White Oak Rail Trail Committee – 2nd Reading**
Councilmember Hannabass moved to accept this as the second reading on the dismissal of the White Oak Hill Rail Trail Committee from the ordinance. Councilmember Evans seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

New Business

5. **Request for Soft Cost Commitment for Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant**
John Tuggle, Executive Director, of Region IV Development Council spoke at length about the grant. Councilmember Hannabass made the motion to contribute the $50,000 for soft cost in exchange for the $294,000 pledged by the County Commission. Council member Gill seconded motion.
Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.

6. **Request to Abandon Right-of-Way on State Street**
Councilmember Elder moved to accept this as the first reading to abandon the right-of-way at State Street / Ridge Road, seconded by Councilmember Janney. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

City Clerk, Ronda Falk read a Resolution to abandon said right-of-way. Councilmember Hannabass motioned to adopt a resolution, seconded by Councilmember Evans. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

7. **Consideration for Funding to Repair Roof at Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS) Located at 140 School Street**
John David came before Council requesting funding of $10,000 to go toward the roof repair at the SALS building. After looking at photos and much discussion on the previous and current condition of the property a motion was made by Councilmember Gill made motion not to approve funding of $10,000 for roof repair, seconded by Councilmember Hannabass.
Motion carried. 3-3
Voting against funding: Councilmember Gill, Councilmember Hannabass, Councilmember Elder
Voting for funding: Councilmember Janney, Councilmember Evans, Councilmember Smallwood with Mayor Briscoe breaking tie, voting against.

8. **General Budget Revision**
The City Manager presented the revision. Money, $200,000, needs to be taken from the ARPA fund

and put in the General, dedicating it to Land Water Conservation Fund Grant. Councilmember Hannabass made the motion to approve the revision, seconded by Councilmember Gill. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-1.**

9. **Consideration to Amend Oak Hill Municipal Code 15.06.20 Zoning Enforcement Officer – 1st Reading**

Consideration to amend the current wording of the code to give the city manager authority to appoint the zoning officer. Councilmember Janney made motion to change the wording of the code, seconded by Councilmember Hannabass. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

Motion to accept this as first reading was made by Councilmember Gill, seconded by Councilmember Evans. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

10. **Consideration to end the Rail Trail Memorial Bench Program**

Motion was made by Councilmember Hannabass, seconded by Councilmember Janney for the consideration to end the Rail Trail Program be referred over to the Beautification Commission. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

11. **Consideration to Amend Oak Hill Municipal Code 2.02.010 Meeting Procedure**

This specifically addresses the time of meeting for council to change from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. A motion was made by Councilmember Janney to accept this as the first reading to change the meeting time of council from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Motion seconded by Councilmember Evans. **Motion carried unanimously. 7-0.**

12. **Review Results of the Bank Survey**

Tyler Bragg presented the results of the survey. There was a total response of 836. 648 were Oak Hill citizens, remaining were outside of Oak Hill. There were 484 votes to repurpose, 248 to sell, 104 to demolish. Some of suggestions for repurposing were to use as a veteran's memorial, an art gallery, office space rental. Tyler explained how percentages were obtained. This survey was put out through social media.

Department Reports

There were no questions regarding the submitted department reports.

Police Report
Fire Dept. Report
City Manager Report – City Manager read the public hand out that was provided on MS4 and spoke on Virginia Street sidewalk.
Code Enforcement Report
Director of Economic Development – Alison Ibarra distributed handouts of report. Spoke on Collins Property Restoration and roadblocks that were encountered. Alternative plans have been put together to reach the end goal of having Collins Middle School buildings repurposed. Alison also spoke on the Business Owners Association planning their first annual meeting in February. There will be a workshop for business owners among other things, along with a reception. They have five members and are looking for a fifth.

Motion – Accept the department reports.
Motion made by Councilmember Janney. Seconded by Councilmember Hannabass.
No Discussion.
The motion carried unanimously. 7-0.

Council and Mayor Comments

The mayor polled the council members, and the following items were discussed.

- Virginia Street Sidewalks
- Land agreement with Ace
- Playgrounds
- Historical Marker for Marian McQuade
- Training Session for Council on budget

Future Agenda Items

Virginia Street Sidewalk Project Update
Consideration of Access Ramp for Persons with Disabilities and Crosswalk
City Park Project Update

Announcements

None

There was no further business. The mayor adjourned the meeting.

Valerie Vaughn

Charles Briscoe, Mayor

Note: Ronda Resigned
Could not sign.