

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF AUSTELL
CITY HALL BUILDING
MONDAY, AUGUST 1, 2022**

Present:

Mayor Ollie Clemons
Valerie Anderson
Melanie Elder
Devon Myrick
Sandra Leverette
Meredith Adams
Marlin Lamar

Also, present: Denise Lowe, Finance Director; Bo Garrison, Public Works Director; Brandon Merritt, Fire Chief; Natalie Poulk, Police Chief (I), Darrell Weaver, Community Affairs Director, Elizabeth Young, City Clerk and Scott Kimbrough, Attorney

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Clemons called the meeting to order. Pastor Bailey gave the invocation & Mayor Clemons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Clemons asked if anyone had items to add to the agenda. Mayor Clemons added to item 6A, Alvin Poole, to the agenda.

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to add to item 6A, Alvin Poole. Seconded by Mrs. Leverette. Motion passed. (6-0)

Mayor Clemons presented a retirement plaque & pin to Robert Woodard & congratulated him for his 39 years of service with the city.

2. CONSENT AGENDA – INFORMATION AND UPDATE

(No Action Required by Council – See Specific Department Director before a Meeting.)

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Bills
- B. Approve Legal Bills - \$1,245.00
- C. Approve Minutes of Regular Council Meeting July 11, 2022

Mrs. Leverette moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Mr. Myrick. Motion passed. (6-0)

Mayor Clemons stated they need to go into Executive Session.

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to go into executive session. Seconded by Mr. Myrick. Motion passed. (6-0)

Mayor Clemons stated there were no votes made/taken.

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to go back into regular session. Seconded by Mr. Lamar. Motion passed. (6-0)

4. EXCEPTION TO CONSENT AGENDA

5. CITIZENS REPORT

Mr. Stan Copeland stated that he had been doing an investigation on the mold issue at the Police Department & had done several open records requests with City Clerk, Mrs. Young. All the requests have been fulfilled in a timely manner & a fair price by Mrs. Young. He stated had concerns regarding an open records request for Mayor Clemons emails. He stated the quote for the ORR for Mayor Clemons emails was unrealistic & he wanted Mayor & Council to come up with a realistic price.

Mr. Wesley Starrett & Mrs. Judy Starrett came forward. Mr. Starrett is representing Mrs. Starrett. Mrs. Starrett wrote a letter & read it to Mayor & Council:

I am requesting that this letter be read at the August 1, 2022 Regular Council Meeting for the City of Austell under the Citizens Report.

My name is Judy Starrett and I have been an appointed member of the Austell Gas Board for the last two years. I was appointed by Mayor Jerkins to represent Douglas County. Since my appointment, I have faithfully attended the meetings and provided input and representation for the citizens and businesses of Douglas County.

I wanted to make you all aware that I recently received a voicemail from Mayor Clemons stating, he was not going to reappoint me for my position on the Austell Gas Board.

I wish I could say that this was a complete surprise, but unfortunately it is not. My husband served as Chief of Police for Austell for the past 27 years. While he was serving as Chief of Police, Mayor Clemons called my husband into his office and demanded that my husband come home and make me resign my position at the Austell Gas Board.

It is appalling how many steps backwards we have come recently with regard to women's rights. Apparently, Mayor Clemons thought that my husband should control my every decision and force me to resign. Thankfully, my husband has always been very supportive of me and would never even ask me to resign much less force me to.

These actions are direct retaliation against my husband and my family. Ever since my husband started trying to rectify the working conditions of his employees by addressing the serious health issues in their building, Mayor Clemons has taken

retaliatory action against him and now me.

I am not familiar with any board member who has not been reappointed in the past, unless they had a change of address or asked to be taken off the board for other reasons. It saddens me to know that today, we are still facing challenges and roadblocks as women and especially women who have disabilities.

It is my understanding that the decision to reappoint was tabled at the last council meeting. It is my sincere hope that Mayor Clemons chooses to do the right thing and reappoint me to the Gas Board. However, I have no control over this decision. My only recourse is to explore what legal actions might be available to redress this course of action.

I do feel that one person having complete and unchecked control over appointments such as this one leads to an abuse of power. It is worth considering a change in this policy if we are to ensure that these decisions are made ethically and fairly and not based on favor or anger and discrimination.

I have really enjoyed working with the Austell Gas System and other member of the Gas Board during my appointment time. I hope that you will consider this moving forward and I wish the Austell Gas Board members the best should I fail to be reappointed.

Sincerely,

Judy Starrett

Ms. Monica Delancey gave an update on Riverside Parkway.

Ms. Pat Labert stated she lives on Westside Road & wants to thank the Public Works Department for keeping the grass cut.

Ms. Natasha stated that she would like the city to check into a “pay as you throw” system for sanitation & that if we are interested, she would be happy to assist us.

Mr. Reggie thanked the Mayor & Council for their service. He asked if Mayor & Council would consider doing a salary study for the betterment of the employees to be paid what they deserve.

Mr. Tim Adams thanked Chief Natalie Poulk for her time & dedication while serving as Interim Police Chief over the last 8 months. He asked Mayor & Council to consider keeping Chief Poulk’s salary as is & not decreasing it.

6. GAS SYSTEM REPRESENTATIVE

OLLIE CLEMONS, MAYOR

Mr. Kimbrough stated it has been a good year so far.

A. Austell Gas System Board Appointments

Below are the new appointments recommended for the Austell Gas System:

Sayward Masselter - appointment will expire 8/1/2024

Ray Thomas – appointment will expire 8/1/2023

It is the recommendation that Council approve the new appointments of the Austell Gas Board members.

Below is the reappointment recommended for the Austell Gas System:
Alvin Poole – appointment will expire 7/31/2024

It is the recommendation that Council approve the reappointment of the Austell Gas Board member.

*Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Gas Board appointments. Seconded by Mrs. Leverette. Motion passed.
(4 yes & 2 abstain)*

7. FINANCE DEPARTMENT
VALERIE ANDERSON, CHAIRPERSON
Denise Lowe, Finance Director

A. Financial Report

8. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
MELANIE ELDER, CHAIRPERSON
Elizabeth Young, Director

A. No Report

9. POLICE DEPARTMENT
DEVON MYRICK, CHAIRPERSON
Natalie Poulk, Police Chief (I)

A. Police Report

10. FIRE DEPARTMENT
MARLIN LAMAR, CHAIRPERSON
Brandon Merritt, Fire Chief

A. Fire Report

Mr. Myrick asked the status of the new ladder truck. Chief Merritt stated it should be delivered early October as of right now.

11. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
SANDRA LEVERETTE, CHAIRPERSON

Bo Garrison, Director

- A. Scott Drive Sanitary Sewer Improvements Recommendation for Award
It is the recommendation of the Public Works Department to accept and approve the bidding of RDJE, Inc., as the lowest bidder in the amount of \$1,816,390.00 for the construction of Scott Drive Sanitary Sewer Improvements project.
Funds will come from 2019-Infrastructure account number: 505-4350-54-1400.

Quotes received:

Bidder	Amount
RDJE, Inc. 679 Highway 29 South, Suite A Newnan, GA 30263	\$1,816,390.00
The Corbett Group, LLC 13201 Veterans Memorial Highway Douglasville, GA 30134	\$2,258,270.00
Site Engineering, Inc. 7025 best Friend Road Atlanta, GA 30340	\$2,497,350.00

Mrs. Leverette moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Scott Drive Sanitary Sewer Improvements. Seconded by Mr. Lamar. Motion passed. (6-0)

12. PARKS DEPARTMENT
MEREDITH ADAMS, CHAIRPERSON
Darrell Weaver, Director

- A. No Report

13. COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
VALERIE ANDERSON, CHAIRPERSON
Darrell Weaver, Director

- A. Code Enforcement Report
- B. Alcohol Sales & Consumption

The Community Affairs Department is requesting approval of alcohol sales and consumption, sold by licensed vendors, for an event on Jefferson Street from Spring Street to Mulberry Street on September 3, 2022 as shown on the attached aerial. The alcohol may only be purchased and consumed within the area mentioned above and must be in a clear plastic cup. Vendors will be required to ID check and apply wristbands for verification of age.

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Alcohol Sales & Consumption. Seconded by Ms. Elder. Motion passed. (6-0)

14. ATTORNEY, DUPREE & KIMBROUGH

A. No Report

15. MAYOR'S REPORT

A. CMA Meeting

August 9, 2022 @ 6:30 pm
Hosted by City of Smyrna
Atkins Park Tavern
2840 Atlanta Road
Smyrna, GA 30080

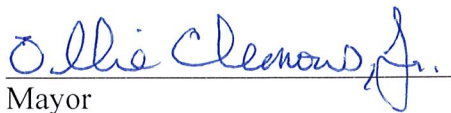
B. Police Chief Appointment

Mayor Clemons stated Mr. Scott Hamilton has been appointed as our new Police Chief. Chief Hamilton joined the meeting via zoom & thanked everyone for the opportunity to be a part of the Austell family.

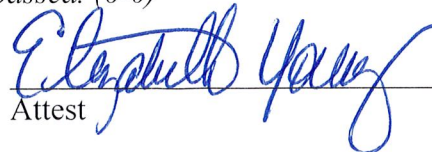
Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to appoint Mr. Scott Hamilton as the new Police Chief. Seconded by Mrs. Leverette. Motion passed. (4 yes & 2 abstain)

16. ADJOURN

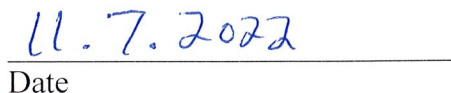
Mr. Myrick moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mrs. Adams. Motion passed. (6-0)



Mayor



Attest



Date