

North Augusta



South Carolina's Riverfront

MINUTES OF MAY 4, 2020

Robert A. Pettit, Mayor

*J. Robert Brooks, Councilmember
Pat C. Carpenter, Councilmember
Fletcher L. Dickert, Councilmember
David W. McGhee, Councilmember
Eric H. Presnell, Councilmember
Kevin W. Toole, Councilmember*

ORDER OF BUSINESS

VIRTUAL STUDY SESSION

The virtual study session for the City Council meeting of the City of North Augusta of May 4, 2020, having been duly publicized, was called to order by Mayor Pettit at 6:00 p.m. using GoToMeeting online conferencing software and streamed online for public viewing at the City Facebook page: "City of North Augusta – Public Information" and City YouTube page: "City of North Augusta Public Information" and adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Per Section 30-4-80(e) notice of the meetings was sent out by email to the current maintained "Agenda Mailout" list consisting of news media outlets and individuals or companies requesting notification. Notice of the meetings was also posted on the outside doors of the Municipal Center, the main bulletin board of the Municipal Center located on the first floor, and the City of North Augusta website.

Members present were Mayor Pettit, Councilmembers Brooks, Carpenter, Dickert, McGhee, Presnell, and Toole.

Also in attendance were Rachelle Moody, Interim City Administrator; Kelly F. Zier, City Attorney; Cammie T. Hayes, Director of Finance and General Services; Thomas C. Zeaser, Director of Engineering and Public Works; Richard Meyer, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism; Ricky Jones, Manager of Information Technology and Sharon Lamar, City Clerk. The members of the public and the media were provided access to the meeting via live-streaming video.

ITEM 1. CITY COUNCIL AGENDA: Items on the May 4, 2020 Council Agenda- Council Discussion

Interim City Administrator, Rachele Moody, led Council's discussion of the May 4, 2020 meeting agenda. Tom Zeaser, Director of Engineering and Public Works, answered questions about Item 6, the request to abandon a right of way in Hammond's Ferry in section A4. After much discussion, Mayor Pettit suggested Council should table consideration of the ordinance at tonight's Council Meeting to allow Kelly Zier, City Attorney, to review the property's original purchase agreement. Ms. Moody reminded Council of the parking agreement requested by Riverside HF, LLC previously discussed at the March 16, 2020 meeting. At that meeting, Council suggested revisions to the agreement. Item 7's ordinance to authorize entering into a lease agreement includes the revisions. Ms. Moody and Mr. Zeaser also answered general questions of Council concerning agenda Item 8 to grant easement to Dominion Energy South Carolina, Inc. to provide service to new and existing development in Hammond's Ferry.

ITEM 2. CITY OPERATIONS: Council Discussion

Rachele Moody, Interim City Administrator, shared an update of current city operations. In the midst of the COVID-19 situation, the City has continued to serve citizens through public safety and services.

- The only department that has not been able to operate in their normal capacity is Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. The PRT staff has returned to work this week to plan for re-opening as soon as Governor McMaster lifts his Executive Order. The staff will partner with Property Maintenance to begin cutting the grounds at the North Augusta Country Club property.
- The Municipal Center re-opened today to the public and served 80 citizens for utility payments. The Finance department has done a great job to prepare for sanitization and social distancing. Staff will continue to encourage citizens to use electronic options and the drop-box for payments and requests for utility services as much as possible.
- Planning and Development has been very successful with virtual review meetings and have continued to assist customers in a timely manner. The Planning Commission met virtually in April with plans to meet virtually in May, as well.
- Human Resources is operating normally. While working remotely, Kayla Ferguson, Human Resources Specialist, developed an online application option and "on-boarded" five new employees. The HR department purchased *DocuSign*® to facilitate the efficiency of their tasks.
- Municipal Court will begin to hold court again on Monday, May 18. The staff returned to the building this week to prepare letters to issue newly scheduled court dates and to make arrangements in their physical spaces for social distancing. Criminal Investigations Division continues to work by appointment.
- Public Services and Public Safety have continued to work throughout the pandemic with staggered schedules and extra PPE in place.

Mayor Pettit thanked Ms. Moody and staff for continuing to conduct the City's business professionally and mindfully during such stressful times.

Councilmember Dickert asked for a financial update. Cammie Hayes, Director of Finance and General Services, reported as of April 30, 2020 tax collections are at 76% of budget and right on track for the General Fund. Hospitality Tax collection is down 4% from 2019. Utility billing collections for Cycle 1 show two times more delinquent accounts than 2019. Cycle 2 shows 3.5 times more delinquent accounts as 2019. Ms. Hayes commented that discussions are under way as to how payments would be managed after the "no disconnect" order is lifted by the Governor. She also noted that citizens who are struggling with making their payments on time may qualify for a payment plan. There are several options available for making payments. The information has been shared on the City's website and social media.

Councilmember Presnell asked when Council could resume in-person meetings. Mayor Pettit suggested Council would probably have at least one more virtual meeting.

Councilmember Carpenter asked Tom Zeaser, Director of Engineering and Public Works, to please check on a pothole at the intersection of Bunting Drive and Martintown Road.


APPROVED THIS 18 DAY OF

May, 2020.



Robert A. Pettit, Mayor

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Lamar
City Clerk