WORK SESSION MEETING

June 26th, 2018

The Bessemer City Council met in work session on Tuesday, June 26th, 2018 at 3:00PM in the Council Chamber of City Hall. Proper notice was given.

Call to Order

Mayor Becky S. Smith called the meeting to order.

Members Present

Mayor Becky Smith, Council Members: Dan Boling, Joe Will, Donnie Griffin, Kay McCathen, and Alfred Carpenter were all present. Also present were City Manager, James Inman, department heads, and summer intern Mikel Graham. Council member Sonny Boyd was absent.

Interim Financing

City Manager, James Inman requested that Council table public hearing, resolution, and awarding of bid tab regarding interim financing until July 9th, 2018 meeting. City Manager Inman stated that two (2) bids were received, but the lowest was nearly $4 million, twice the projected amount.

By motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the public hearing and resolution regarding Interim Financing for the new public works building has been moved to the July 9th, 2018 regular City Council meeting. Said meeting will be held in Council Chambers at 7:00PM.

Discussion-ABC Board

Mayor Smith informed Council that the ABC Board is in need of a new chairman as well as a candidate to fill Ward 3 vacancy. Council member Joe Will stated that he would follow up with his candidate, and provide an update at a later time. Mr. Will also informed Council current chairman, Dr. Crouch, would like to serve another term.

By general consensus, the appointment of Ward 3 ABC Board member as well as Chairman will be added to the regular Monday, July 9th, 2018 meeting for Council consideration.

Discussion- Downtown Development, Planning & Zoning Board Appointments

Light discussion amongst Council, City Manager, and Department Heads ensued regarding Downtown Development, and Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments.

Zoning Administrator, Dr. Byers led the Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments discussion. After reviewing General Statutes and conferring with City Attorney, Dr. Byers recommended that Council rescind sections 4.4 and 4.5 at the July regular meeting. Rescinding said sections would allow Council to dissolve the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments. Therefore, returning all zoning powers back to Council, until a vote to re-establish both boards. Byers recommends that Council re-establish both boards at the August regular meeting, where updated language will be provided for adoption to the UDO.

Discussion further ensued regarding board member terms, the amount of board members, Chairman selection process, and rules of procedure for the board.

By general consensus, Council moved to table a vote for Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustments Chairman and board members to the Monday, August 13th regular meeting.

Economic Development Officer Joshua Ross led the Downtown Development Board discussion. Ross informed Council that after reformatting bylaws, the board would go from a nine (9) to five (5) member board. Furthermore, Ross requested that Council vote to disband in July 2018, and reappoint board members. Discussion regarding the selection process by interview, the format of the application, and board member training were discussed.

Department Reports

Bessemer City Department heads gave reports on their department status:

Parks & Recreation Director JoD Franklin addressed Council regarding the Swimming Pool, a district tournament, and the July 4th Pool Celebration. Discussion ensued regarding summer plans for pool revenue after July 4th holiday. Mr. Franklin also noted that Gaston County Emergency Management conducted a rescue life skills course earlier that morning at the Pool.

Economic Development Officer Josh Ross informed Council of recent interest in the industrial park. As the Osage Mill Redevelopment project advances, many have become interest in a business opportunities downtown. Ross also noted efforts are being made to expand the longevity of downtown banners as four (4) sets, one for each season will now be utilized. The Osage Mill Redevelopment team's progress was also discussed. The team recently held an important stakeholders meeting regarding workforce development and has a small business incubation idea for the buildings community space. Dhollandia's two (2) and four (4) year apprenticeship program for local students was discussed as well.

Dr. Robyn Byers, Zoning Administrator thanked Council for allowing her to serve. Mayor Smith thanked her for her service and informed Byers that she will be missed.

Chief Tom Ellis informed Council that the investigation of the Surf & Turf incident was still being conducted. Chief noted the invaluable contributions made by the Gastonia and County police departments. Light discussion ensued regarding the "Lock it or Lose it" campaign and the School Resource Officer (SRO) program. A new officer is expected to be placed in the Bessemer City Middle School in the months to come. Council member Donnie Griffin thanked the Chief for his efforts to ensure that City Police were apart of the school system. City Manager Inman expressed his gratitude for Assistant City Manager Jamie Ramsey and Chief Ellis, as they represented the City well in its time of need.

Public Works Director, Jamie Ramsey addressed Council regarding the following: Water line project, tying of Water Lines, and booster station changes. FMC and Skyland booster changes will be done in the weeks to come. Mayor Smith inquired about paving and patching on E. Iowa Avenue. Director, Ramsey informed her that he would have someone look into it.

Finance Officer Jenkins informed Council that the 2017-2018 audit had begun. As a procedural step for internal control testing, each Council member will receive a letter from the auditor.

Finance Officer Jenkins informed Council that although she couldn't assist with completing the document, City Clerk, Hydeia could.

City Manager's Report

City Manager, James Inman addressed Council regarding the following:

Budget Amendments

Several budget amendments were needed to balance the year end budget. Said amendments included changes to the General Fund, Water & Sewer Fund, Capital Project, Police and Administration department budgets.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the end of year budget amendments were approved.

Sounds of Summer Cruise-In Discussion

Discussion ensued amongst Council and Department Heads regarding crowd safety, vendor set up, and law enforcement. City Manager Inman spoke to many concerns of protecting the visiting public and ways to conduct monthly cruise-ins more efficiently. City Manager Inman informed Council that in advisement with Parks & Recreation Director, JoD, a recommendation on ways to combat stated issues would be discussed at a later date.

SunTrust Bank Building

Manager Inman addressed Council regarding the possibility of purchasing the old SunTrust bank building. Although official action can't be taken until July, three (3) purchasing options were discussed. The bank spans across three (3) different parcels and tax value is a little over half a million. The old bank building is of interest, as it would serve as the new Customer Service facility. The building features a drive thru, where citizens could drive up and pay their utility bill. Mr. Inman informed Council that in order to begin a thorough look of the building and conduct inspection a letter of intent must be signed.

By general consensus, City Manager Inman was given permission to sign the letter of intent and place the purchasing of the SunTrust building on the July 9th regular City Council meeting for a vote.

Other Items of Interest

Manager Inman informed Council that he will be out of the office the week of July 2nd for a medical procedure. During his absence, Assistant City Manager Jamie Ramsey would be acting Manager. Discussion ensued amongst Council and Manager Inman regarding America's Best Motel on Edgewood Dr.'s office building and Code Enforcement. Motel owners were given notice that the building is set to be demolished. Efforts to ensure that homes in Bessemer City are meeting the minimum housing code are being made. Summer Intern Mikel has been tasked with reviewing homes where services have been disconnected for more than a year. Per ordinance, any home vacant for more than a year in City limits is a violation. Notices for compliance with city code will be sent to those in violation.

Council General Discussion
Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. There was none.

Adjourn
Being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM by motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote.

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Becky S. Smith, Mayor Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk