REGULAR MEETING **May 11th, 2020**

The Bessemer City Council met in regular session on Monday, May 11th, 2020 at 7:00 PM in Council Chambers of City Hall.

Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Alfred Carpenter, Dan Boling, Joe Will, Kay McCathen, and Donnie Griffin were all present. City Manager, James Inman and City Attorney, David Smith were present.

Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Council Member, Donnie Griffin led the audience in prayer. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the May Agenda

By motion of Kay McCathen and unanimous vote, the May agenda was approved with no revisions.

Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

Mayor Smith opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

Consent Agenda

The following items on the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Dan Boling:

- Approval of Minutes- Regular Meeting Minutes of March 9th, 2020

Proclamation-National Police Week 2020

Mayor Smith read aloud the proclamation that declared National Police Week in Bessemer City as Sunday, May 10th – Saturday, May 16th. The proclamation publicly, salutes the service of law enforcement officers in our community and across the nation.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the proclamation was adopted. A copy of the proclamation is available at City Hall.

Proclamation-Juneteenth Day 2020

Mayor Smith read aloud the proclamation that declared Juneteenth Day in Bessemer City as Friday, June 19th. The proclamation publicly commemorates Juneteenth as a emancipation day in the African American community.

By motion of Kay McCathen and unanimous vote, the proclamation was adopted. A copy of the proclamation is available at City Hall.

Establish Public Hearing-FY 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance

City staff requested that a public hearing regarding the 2020-2021 proposed budget ordinance be established for Council's next regular meeting.

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, a public hearing regarding the 2020-2021 proposed budget ordinance will be held at 7:00PM in Council Chambers on Monday, June 8th, 2020.

Public Hearing-Recycling Program

By motion of Kay McCathen and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the City's recycling program was opened at 7:10 PM.

Mayor Smith addressed the survey responses that staff obtained through citizen input. Said survey had over 100 responses. The following individuals participated in the recycling program survey and gave their opinion on whether the City should continue the program:

-Lisa Spencer of 803 S 8th St. – Said it is not worth the cost. Voting to do away with the program.

-Samuel Puckett of 802 North 9th Street said my monthly bill is enough, no increase please! Voting to do away with the program.

-Catherine Webster of 1205 Fallsway Court said rising costs. Voting to do away with the program.

-Joseph James of 113 W Alabama Ave said from all the research I've done on recycling only 60% to 80% actually recycled but we pay for 100%. Voting to do away with the program.

-Brent Sikorski of 305 East Ohio Ave said I don't believe the residents of the city can handle a huge increase in the cost to maintain recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Vanessa McNeil of 217 E Washington Ave said not if you're going to pass the cost on to the customers. Voting to do away with the program.

Sundra Carson of 702 S Skyland Drive said the cost of everything is going up and we are on a fixed income. I appreciate the opportunity that BC has given us to have a voice in this matter. A rise in the cost of recycling will add an extra burden to our monthly expenses. Voting to do away with the program.

Michael Meeks of 812 W Virginia Ave said he would not recommend that Council continue the program.

Richard Kelly of 209 East Iowa Ave. said I support recycling, however, I DO NOT WANT TO PAY ABSORBENT FEES JUST TO APPEASE THE WASTE CO. OR China. They will still pick

up the same volume even if the recycles become trash. Go figure. Voting to do away with the program.

Cathy Maynor of 803 N 6th St It will be too expensive. To many restrictions. Voting to do away with the program.

Cindy Mcmillan of 313 East Texas Ave said I cannot afford to pay more. Voting to do away with the program.

Jennifer Mitchell of 407 West Virginia Avenue said I feel that recycling definitely benefits my family because we fill the recycle can every two weeks. My concern is, if you discontinue recycling, then all of my recycle materials will go into the garbage can and I will not have enough room for both trash and recycle with a once weekly pickup. I would definitely need either two. Voting to do away with the program.

David Davis of 110 W. Boston Ave. said no I am 95 and live on a fixed income cannot afford an increase. Voting to do away with the program.

Roy & Jeryl Ware of 510 E. Penn. Ave said we live on a fixed income and can barely pay what we pay now. Voting to do away with the program.

Terri Clemons of 409 E. Hartford Ave. said we don't want our rate to increase more than triple the cost we are paying now. Voting to do away with the program.

Carolyn Schofield of 124 E Iowa Ave said stop recycling until or unless market improves, under current circumstances costs will continue to rise. Voting to do away with the program.

Eugene Bumgardner of 610 East Iowa Ave said I am a senior citizen and on limited income and I do not think we can afford to have our recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Matthew Davis of 108 W Lee Ave said I think we should just look to other means of reducing waste separate from recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Gene Bridges of 407 Caswell Avenue said I wholeheartedly support recycling, but as retirees, we cannot afford an increase in fees. Voting to do away with the program.

Andy Goins of 310 McCall Dr. said its no longer profitable why do some other cities have already stopped it’s going to the landfills anyway. Voting to do away with the program.

Ginger Blankenship of 211 Todd Dr. said the contractor usually just puts it in with the trash. They don't recycle it. Voting to do away with the program.

Buzzy Wayne Massagee of 107 Windward Dr said at this time this should be suspended. People are having hard times right now. Making the cost triple is just wrong. This came up when I was on Council. At that time it cost 67000 dollars to recycle when only 28% actually did it. I would urge Council to suspend it for now. Thank you.

Leigh Rhinehart of 112 W Washington Ave said with the COVID19 issue and our economy at a tipping point, tripling the cost of recycling for our residents crosses the line where the cost outweighs the benefits for our small city. Many in our city struggle to make ends meet. To increase recycling costs to the community in today's economy is wrong. Voting to do away with the program.

David Carpenter of 401 South 10th Street said because all that will happen is the recycling material will increase in contamination. I have been a proponent for recycling since I work in the plastics field. What used to happen was if the recycling container was contaminated then it sat and was not picked up. Also it made me sick driving down the street seeing plastic bags full of whatever sticking out of the recycling roll cart container. It seems like most people can't follow the guidelines like I have taped to my refrigerator for reference. If anything only accept glass bottles or properly visible accepted plastic number ID plastic containers and nothing else. Voting to do away with the program.

Grady Williams of 1008 N 6th St said do away with it.

Brandon Botts of 606 E. Iowa Ave. I do not want to pay triple the current cost of the recycling. I do not mind recycling, but if it is such a hassle then I would rather pass. Voting to do away with the program.

Tiffany Straw-Botts of 606 E Iowa Ave said there is no reason to pay that high of a cost for a service that is not really helping the environment. Voting to do away with the program.

Gregory Thompson of 602 S 14th St said not enough participation. Voting to do away with the program.

Aaron Grosdidier of 204 E Virginia Ave said there should never be a charge to the citizens, for recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Teresa Wilson of 211 Costner School Road said I think we pay more than enough for recycling and a lot of our senior citizens cannot afford a huge increase in price. I wish that we could continue our recycling program but I'm not willing to pay $30 or $40 a month just to recycle. Voting to do away with the program.

Samantha Hovis of 507 S. Inman Ave said I think it is high now. I can't pay 3x more. Please don't continue recycling. Thank you.

Josiah Will of 901 Crowders Mountain Rd said I am a proponent of recycling, but with the challenge of keeping City taxes low and charges for trash pickup minimal, I feel that we need to stop recycling as a city and encourage our citizens that want to continue to recycle to use the recycling facility at Tryon.

Terry Battles of 102 West Maryland Ave said on a fixed income. Voting to do away with the program.

Brenda Boyd of 301 E. Tennessee Ave said when rules are followed, I think recycling is a good thing, but most people do not follow the rules. With people out of work due to the Coronavirus, not getting paid, getting food and paying for water, gas and electricity is their first priority. Not recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Marva Grooms of 308 W Virginia Ave said do not want to pay more for recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Sarah Turner of 115 West Maine Avenue said if the items are being rejected even after educating the citizens, we should discontinue the service. Voting to do away with the program.

Katie Tuminello of 303 W Tennessee Ave said I love that we have recycled again, usually our can is nearly full when it’s picked up. Voting to do away with the program.

Shannon McSheehan of 221 E. Maine Ave said I just can't afford any increases on my bill. My gas bill is high enough during the cold months. Voting to do away with the program.

Sherry Thompson of 302 North 11th Street said times are tough right now for everyone. Keeping this would raise the cost to recycle. I myself would not want the extra cost so no I wouldn't want to keep the recycling program.

Maddie Hargrove of 621 Sunset Drive said for those who would like to recycle, the convenience site is very close to Bessemer City and can be used. Voting to do away with the program.

Christopher Walt of 422 Sunset Drive said not worth paying triple the cost we are now paying. Voting to do away with the program.

Jody Davis of 105 Windward Dr. said tired of paying for a service that someone else is making the money from. Voting to do away with the program.

Carol Clemmer of 307 N Skyland Drive said too expensive an increase for the average family. Voting to do away with the program.

Anna Ross of 330 Costner Drive said will we have two trash cans? Voting to do away with the program.

Christine Holland of Bess Town Road said the city should just get rid of the program all together. During this time, everyone is struggling to pay basic necessities so it would be futile to raise a bill that is not necessary for living.

Candace Bridges of 111 west Iowa Ave said people don't do it correctly and it's just an extra up charge on bill. Voting to do away with the program.

Beth Minter of 1206 Fallsway Ct said of cost are rising, SADLY I do not think I agree to keep the service. I recycle more than using the garbage. Couldn't you charge for it as needed?

Morgan Barbour of 1202 Fallsway Ct said ridiculous price! Voting to do away with the program.

Hailey Barbour of 1202 Fallsway Court said who is paying that much for recycling its going in the trash now. Voting to do away with the program.

Michael Brooks of 207 N13th street said not if the city is going to have to increase the cost for it to only wind up in a land fill anyway if it cannot continue to be sold as a commodity as stated. Voting to do away with the program.

Don Horb of 1003 Jonathan Drive said in these times when many in our community are struggling financially it seems unfair to increase the cost this dramatically. I believe recycling is good for the environment but it shouldn't be enforced by increasing the cost so dramatically. Voting to do away with the program.

Toni Hamby of 605 N 14th street said we do not need anything to raise the cost of our city water and sewer and trash bill. Voting to do away with the program.

Angela Rimmer of 501 Dover Dr. said many participants, despite having been educated on HOW to recycle, still continue to contaminate the recycled materials with inappropriate items. We would be paying a higher cost, but still faced with the same problem: contaminated bales that will need to be stockpiled. If citizens feel passionate enough, they can take their recyclable materials to the recycling center in Gastonia. Voting to do away with the program.

Martha Turner of 5024 Ashley Place Drive said I use the recycling every week. I don't want to spend more because I do what I'm supposed to with recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Gina Horn of 1003 Jonathan Drive said I am all for recycling, but don't want to pay triple the cost. Voting to do away with the program.

Kristin Neal of 502 Caswell Avenue said we already pay high rates for water and sewer. Voting to do away with the program.

Shannon Ramsey of 503 W Gaston Ave said not worth cost of product is not in demand. Voting to do away with the program.

Rachel Mears of 308 East Louisiana Avenue said it is hard to afford it now and to triple that would be way too much. Voting to do away with the program.

Keri Barbour of 1202 Fallsway Court said recycling is always dumped on my street. Voting to do away with the program.

Sherry Thompson of 302 North 11th Street said cost too high to keep, times are difficult right now do to virus. Voting to do away with the program.

Julie Hayes of 404 West Maryland Ave said if the cost is going to rise recycling is not worth it. Voting to do away with the program.

Donnie Clifton of 204 E Maine Ave said in my case I don't use the recycling program and haven't since it has been in place. Voting to do away with the program.

Shannon Williams of 209 West Gaston Avenue said this is tough for me because my Household recycles regularly. However I do not want to pay three times what I am already paying for this service. With that being said this means trash will increase and I am not sure one container is enough. We have more recycling than we do trash. Once we put the recycling back in the trash it's going to possibly run the cans over.

Eric Griffin of 202 East Maine said the cost out ways the Benefit, however an additional trash can would be highly recommended. Voting to do away with the program.

Michael Layel of 103 West Texas Ave said rising things out with water our water bill is to high now living on a fixed income. Voting to do away with the program.

John Revels of 217 W Washington Ave. said I'm the bread winner in my family, with 2 small kids and a wife. I pay enough in other expenses to have to worry about something I'm not concerned about to start with. Do away with it.

Kristie Parrish of 303 East Ohio Ave said my neighbors do not put correct items in recycling, so we are wasting our money recycling. Voting to do away with the program.

Scott Weaver of 105 South Skyland Drive said it is sad to see recycling as an increasing cost burden to the City & consumers, but given current market conditions I feel it best to discontinue the recycling program. I also feel it would be prudent to review the feasibility of again enacting the program on an annual basis. Voting to do away with the program.

William Bumgardner of 109 Central Avenue said as important as recycling is, it shouldn't create a hardship, especially for the citizens who try to recycle responsibly. Voting to do away with the program.

Steven Grant of 702 Athenia Pl said no, too confusing on what can be recycled. Voting to do away with the program.

Pam Lutz of 208 Arc Street said not worth the cost. Voting to do away with the program.

Peggy Pearson of 208 Bess Town Road said she would like to discontinue recycling.

Seth & Sarah Smith said to whom it may concern, God put us here to worship Him. One of the ways we can do that is by being good stewards of His creation. On Bessemer City's website it says:
VISION STATEMENT WHAT DO WE DESIRE TO BE? Bessemer City's vision is to continue to be a hospitable and tradition-oriented community, focused on fostering a thriving economy through promoting sustainable development. If Bessemer City decides to end our recycling program we will forced to reconsider what we desire to be. Thank you for your time. Voting to keep the program.

Chris Harmon of 133 Helen Ave said yes, BC should continue to offer recycling BUT NOT with Waste Pro. BC should explore the possibility of finding a single stream recycler that would pick up all household waste, take it to one location for sorting and distribution. As far as recycling not being profitable per Waste Pro, I say hogwash. My company, ADS, consumes over 400 million pounds of recycled HDPE from household waste per year! Voting to keep the program.

Leslie Denise Wilson of 606 Costner School Road said even with rate increase, recycling is an important endeavor our community should continue.

Diane Metcalfe of 1622 Shuford Farm Rd said I live outside city limits and do not have city garbage pick-up but have been an advocate of recycling for many years. We actively recycle and visit the site on Tryon School Road weekly. Former Mayor, John Clark asked me to chair a taskforce in the early 1990s for the city to investigate and implement a city-wide recycling program. The first thing members of City Council did was visit a recycling center in Hickory, NC to better understand recycling. We did and it was an eye-opener! We learned important benefits recycling had on the environment and the long-term devastation of our land if all waste landed in landfills, which no one wanted in their own backyard! We learned that Styrofoam and plastics would lie in landfills, literally, forever and how some materials could be recycled to become usable, viable materials again and again. We brainstormed how to introduce this massive effort to the citizens of BC and decided to begin with children in primary and elementary school, hoping if we taught this is the most basic way that children would understand and see the value in recycling and take this message home to their parents and grandparents. It worked! Members of City Council met with every classroom, distributing coloring books and fun materials we used to teach children about recycling. We enlisted the help of major industries in town, as well as local churches and small businesses. Our goal was to help citizens see the benefit in recycling, knowing that if we can personally relate to something and see the value in it, we're more likely to do it. By the time the City rolled out recycling cans to each homeowner, along with an on-going city-wide educational program, the vast majority of citizens participated and willingly paid the monthly recycling fee. I don't know what's happened over the years, but curbside recycling was very successful in BC at one time. Since then the recycling message for local, regional, state and worldwide has had its highs and lows. Environmentalists and just regular people who see the huge benefit to recycling find it hard to understand the dilemma. Those who don't recycle who are either too lazy, don't understand, and/or don't care find it hard to see what all the fuss is about. I've said all this, (and I do appreciate your attention), to say this, I believe in recycling. I believe in taking care of our land and the environment and leaving the world better for future generations. It's sad that recycling never quite "...caught on" among many cities and towns, and sadder, still, that it's the landscape and future generations who will suffer. However, a familiar expression comes to mind, "...it is what it is." If current BC citizens will not comply then that's what it is. What it is, also, is a shame for all of us in the long run, however. Voting to keep the program.

Delores Conner of 214 E Alabama Ave said recycling is a good thing, helps keep trash out of the landfills and the ocean. Voting to keep the program.

Roger Clemons of 409 E. Hartford Ave said recycling cost too much. Voting to keep the program.

Kenneth Cole of 110 W Ormand Ave said I think we need to recycle to keep from filling up the land fields. Using the county sites to recycle in inconvenient. Does a citizen have an option of participating? I know for some the added expense would be a burden. Voting to keep the program.

Mike Peregory of 914 North 9th Street said I do feel like the city should offer a recyclable program proving there is a market for the products. Voting to keep the program.

Derek Busler of 113 E Virginia Ave said I think the city should stop using waste pro, and instead encourage residents to recycle through sometime of monthly incentive. Perhaps if there were some way to prove so much recycling was taken to our local recycling center such as a coupon. Which could then be issued as a small credit towards our regular trash service. This way, those who choose to recycle will receive the benefit. Voting to keep the program.

Suzanne Cantrell of 111 West Texas Avenue said recycling is not optional we have to work hard to do what is best for the environment even if it costs more. Voting to keep the program.

Chris Patterson of 127 Sunset Ln said to keep recycling.

Otis Whitehurst P.O. Box 35 said cut back on types to only include what they can sell like aluminum cans. They probably put non-profitable items in the landfill already. Make it simple and you will get better compliance too. Voting to keep the program.

Justin Elmore of 512 East Washington Ave said yes! Definitely continue. Help save this planet and try to reuse everything I can. Play our part. Helps the environment. Easy way to recycle. Thank you!

Donna Schroeder of 703 N 14th Street said keep out of landfill. Voting to keep the program.

Debra Hasselwander of 702 West Carolina Avenue said it helps the environment. Voting to keep the program.

Shane Martin of 502 E Ohio Ave said because the landfills that we have are full. But there are too many different types of plastics. Voting to keep the program.

Susan Spencer of 114 West Texas Avenue said to protect the environment. To keep recycling program.

Terrance Rosenberger of 5052 Ashley Place Drive said I can go either way on this. If recycling cost to rise to $12, that is ok with me. Voting to keep the program.

Tammy McLeymore of 101 Linville Court said I recycle but do not want to pay more for the service. Voting to keep the program.

Tim & Linda Bess said To whom it may concern: We would like to continue to recycle if possible but we can’t afford to pay triple or more for this service. We think recycling is a good thing but it

is up to each homeowner to get things sorted correctly for pickup every other week. We hope there will be a way to make future recycling economical again.

Thomas Lineberger 802 Toncin Avenue said as a resident of Bessemer City living at 802 Toncin Avenue, I wanted to express my desire to continue with the recycling program even if that means an increase of triple the current costs. My family will be more diligent to clean our recyclables and only include those items which the city recycles.

However, I realize that this may create an increased financial burden on a significant portion of the city's residents. If this increased financial burden negatively impacts 25-30% or more of the city's residents, then I think, unfortunately, the program needs to be discontinued. May you all discern this decision while looking at the whole picture, and not a fraction of the whole. Voting to keep the program.

Eva Hendricks of 205 W Lee Ave said every little bit of recycling helps our planet and our children. We have taught our children that it is important to do our part to better our community. Voting to keep the program.

Brittany Pawlak of 108 Terrace Dr said recycling is a core component in caring for the environment. Voting to keep the program.

Lasha Johnson of 216 w Maine Ave said because it helps the environment. Voting to keep the program.

Brooke Weatherford of 501 Wilton Court said I believe in a green planet but have heard it doesn't get recycled anyway. Voting to keep the program.

Clint Falls 417 E Florida Ave said because it’s good for the environment. Voting to keep the program.

Dawn Willis of 1009 Jonathan Drive said Pass penalty on to those who are non-complaint. Voting to keep the program.
Melinda Holland of 635 Costner School Rd said I like using the recycling bin, I try to recycle everything in guidelines. I don’t mind a rate increase of a couple dollars from everyone. Voting to keep the program.

Roxanne Mason Bain of 207 E Maryland Ave said not sure. Can we afford not to continue for the sake of the environment? Voting to keep the program.

Kevin Wooten of 714 A Street said we need to continue recycling, just try to keep charges down. Voting to keep the program.

Mandy Rhyne of 212 W Lee Ave said I think recycling is incredibly important for our environment and honestly irresponsible to not participate in. I am willing to pay whatever it takes to do what is right and best for our environment. Perhaps the recycling program can be made voluntary and only those that wish to pay extra can participate. Voting to keep the program.

Lauren Hogan of 206 E Virginia Ave local recycling needs to be available curbside or drop off. Taking away recycling will double the amount of trash that has to be collected. Voting to keep the program.

By motion of Dan Boling and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the City's recycling program was closed at 7:17 PM.

By motion of Joe Will and unanimous vote, the recycling program will be terminated immediately. City Manager Inman will speak with WastePro representatives regarding the cancellation of the program.

Resolution- COVID 19 Request for Assistance

City staff requested that Council adopt a resolution requesting revenue assistance from the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA). Relief funds were sent to Counties to disperse how they desire, however, Cities are suffering from revenue loss as well. Thus, staff is requesting that additional funding assistance be obtained.

By motion of Alfred Carpenter and unanimous vote, the resolution requesting funding assistance for COVID-19 was approved. A copy of the resolution is available at City Hall.

Budget Amendments

City Manager, James Inman presented Council with budget amendments regarding some maintenance and repairing of Centennial Park located downtown.

By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the May 2020 budget amendment was approved.

City Manager's Report

City Manager, James Inman addressed Council regarding a budget meeting, COVID-19, and the Public Works department.

The Public Works department is working to complete all work. As people are staying home more since COVID-19, there has been more debris generated for Staff to address. COVID-19 stage one has begun. City staff has returned back to their respective facilities. However, facilities and City Hall remain closed to the public. A budget meeting will take the place of the May 2020 Work Session on Tuesday, May 26th at 3 PM.

City Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council member, Dan Boling asked City Manager Inman to check on a Code Enforcement issue on 13th Street. Council member, Donnie Griffin inquired about a landscaping issue in Vantine and the City's progress on foreclosed properties.

Adjourn

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Alfred and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 PM.

_____ _____

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