

**REGULAR MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NASHVILLE  
COUNTY OF BERRIEN  
JANUARY 24, 2022  
6:00 P.M.**

**INVOCATION:** Keith Stone

**PLEDGE:** Mayor Pro-Tem John Clayton

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Pro-Tem John Clayton

**ROLL CALL:** Members of the City Council present included Mayor Pro-Tem John Clayton, Councilmen Antonio Carter, Eric Gaither, Rodrick Smith, Shane Willis and Councilwoman Amy Garner

**STAFF PRESENT:** Diane Westberry, Peter Schultz, Jackie Jordan, Nancy Pesce, Police Chief Edwards, Fire Chief Davis, John Reynolds, Tim Tanner

**ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING(s):**

January 10, 2022 Regular Meeting: Eric Gaither made a motion to adopt the minutes. Antonio Carter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA:**

Mayor Pro-tem Clayton asked to add an item: discuss location of Executive Session meetings. Eric Gaither made a motion to add the additional item which was seconded by Shane Willis. Antonio Carter made a motion to adopt the formal agenda with the addition. Eric Gaither seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1- Child Trafficking – Judge Mickey Johnson:** Judge Johnson addressed the Council regarding the nationwide problem of child trafficking describing it as modern-day slavery and rape. He provided statistics and signs to be aware of stating anyone who suspects someone may be a victim of child trafficking should contact law enforcement immediately and referred everyone to [www.alapahjuvenilecourt.com](http://www.alapahjuvenilecourt.com) for the information he provided and more.
  
- 2- Discussion on Audio During Meeting – Diane Westberry, City Manager:** Mrs. Westberry explained she had Taylor Strickland from the high school look at the City's sound system and equipment as requested at the previous meeting. She said he thought the best option for the City would be a wireless microphone system which is approximately \$1,100 including labor. In addition to this option, the City could livestream the meetings using an iPad with the necessary equipment. Since the City already has an iPad, the additional iPad equipment would bring the total to approximately \$1,330 and Main Street Director Nancy Pesce could livestream the meetings. Antonio Carter made a motion to go with the option of the wireless microphone set and iPad

equipment so the City can livestream the meetings. Shane Willis seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**3- Affidavit for January 10, 2022 Executive Session – John Clayton, Mayor Pro-tem:**

Mayor Pro-tem Clayton presented the Affidavit for the Executive Session that took place on January 10, 2022. Eric Gaither made a motion to approve the Affidavit. Antonio Carter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**4- Historic Preservation Commission Nominees – Diane Westberry, City Manager:**

Mrs. Westberry referred the item to Councilman Gaither. Mr. Gaither stated two (2) members of the Historic Commission have disqualified themselves. Mr. Gaither made a motion to remove Jeff Wilson and Michael Acree from the Commission and add Jessica Willis and Hunter Guthrie. Antonio Carter said he did not have a problem removing the two (2) members but the entire Council should participate in presenting new nominations and he would like the current, remaining members of the Commission to be involved. Mr. Gaither rescinded his motion and made a motion to remove Jeff Wilson and Michael Acree from the Commission. Antonio Carter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. After brief discussion, a work session was set for 5:30 prior to the next regular Council meeting on February 14, 2022 to discuss the Historic Preservation Commission nominees.

**5- Location of Executive Sessions – John Clayton, Mayor Pro-tem:** Mayor Pro-tem Clayton expressed concerns of Executive Sessions being held in the Council Chambers. He said it had been brought to his attention the possibility of people in the lobby being able to hear things said in Executive Session in addition to seeing what happens and there is a concern of information getting out that should be kept confidential. He explained there is a conference room in the back of City Hall that can be used for Executive Session and this would keep the public from having to move in and out of the Council Chambers. Following a brief discussion, the item is to be placed on the Agenda for the February 14<sup>th</sup> regular Council meeting.

**6- Executive Session/Personnel Matters – Councilman Eric Gaither:**

At 6:28 p.m., Eric Gaither made a motion to enter Executive Session. Antonio Carter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. All employees were excused from the meeting leaving only the City Manager, City Attorney and Council. The City Manager will provide the proper record of the Executive Session.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:28 P.M. – 7:26 P.M.**

At 7:26 p.m., Eric Gaither made a motion to come out of Executive Session. Antonio Carter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

**REGULAR MEETING RESUMED**

Mayor Pro-tem John Clayton stated no action was taken in Executive Session.

**City Manager Report:**

Mrs. Westberry reported Henry Yawn retired so she spoke with Brenda Ferrell, County Administrator, to inquire if the County would be willing to handle building permits and zoning within the City. She said the County would be willing to enter into an intergovernmental agreement to process the building permits and zoning but they would retain all the fees. The Council instructed her to proceed.

She also reported she spoke with the Tax Commissioner to inquire if they would be willing to oversee the billing and collection of the City's property taxes. She explained they are willing to do this and the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) would provide for the Tax Commissioner's office to oversee the billing, collection and tax sales on the City's property taxes beginning with the 2022 property taxes. It would not include outstanding taxes for the years prior to 2022. She explained the current costs to the City is approximately \$6,300 per year for the software and mailing of the tax notices and the County would do it for \$5,000. Additionally, citizens will receive one tax bill and pay both County and City property taxes at one location. The Council instructed her to proceed with the IGA.

Mrs. Westberry also reported the advertisement for request for proposals (RFP's) for engineering services for the 2022 CDBG project will run in the Berrien Press on January 26, 2022. Additionally, the 2022 LMIG was successfully submitted and once the funds are received, they will run the ad for bids which will be for six (6) City Streets: Sherrod Avenue, Short Street, Talley Street, Carolina Trace, Robin Lane and Wedgewood Chase.

**City Attorney Report:**

Mr. Tim Tanner, Attorney with Coleman Talley, LLC, introduced himself to the Council.

**Department Head's Report:**

Nancy Pesce reported the Farmer's Market received Small Business of the Year award from the Berrien County Chamber. The DDA Board met on January 19<sup>th</sup> and the new officers, Dawn Morrison (Chair), Darla Trevino-Bennett (Vice Chair) and Nancy Pesce (Secretary/Treasurer), all signed commitment letters and have been notified of the training requirements.

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is offering help for homeowners in need who have experienced financial hardship due to the coronavirus pandemic that resulted in mortgage delinquency or created a risk of imminent foreclosure. The link is [www.georgiamortgageassistance.ga.gov](http://www.georgiamortgageassistance.ga.gov) and Mrs. Pesce is going to create a flyer with the information which will be provided on the Main Street and City's Facebook pages. Mrs. Pesce also reported having nine (9) sponsors and sixteen (16) teams for the Chili Cookoff at this time.

Police Chief Edwards said he is working on the data of annual statistics and activity to put in a synopsis form due to the size of the data to present to Council at the next meeting. He also reported, upon inquiry in the last Council meeting, the billing cycle for the jail costs has about a three (3) month lag and the current contract went into effect October 1, 2021. Therefore, they expect the October 2021 invoice in February and once they receive it, they can compare costs of the previous contract to the current contract. He also reported on his and Major Knowles attendance to the Chief's conference. Their recommendation is to rewrite all standard operating procedures based on a facility already accredited, such as Valdosta. The process would take approximately six (6) to twelve (12) months. There are no costs until that phase is complete and then it would be approximately \$375 annually.

Peter Schultz reported an upcoming natural gas State inspection and the street department has one mower down.

Fire Chief Clay Davis reported the Volunteer Fire Department responded to one hundred twenty (120) calls within the City limits in 2021 and he looks forward to working with the new Council.

**Public Comments:**

The Council heard comments from Barbara May about the Council making decisions that are best for the citizens of Nashville.

Paul Newbern addressed the Council regarding his race track located on Hazel Avenue and the action taken by the Council in June 2021 regarding the hours of operation. The Council decided to put the item on the Agenda for the February 14<sup>th</sup> regular Council meeting.

**Council Comments:**

Mayor Pro-tem John Clayton welcomed Tim Tanner as City Attorney.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Antonio Carter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Eric Gaither seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

*January 24, 2022.*

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Mayor Pro-Tem John Clayton

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Councilman Antonio Carter

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Councilman Eric Gaither

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Councilwoman Amy Garner

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Councilman Rodrick Smith

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Councilman Shane Willis

**ATTEST:**

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Jackie Jordan, City Clerk