

**City of New Bern  
Board of Aldermen Meeting  
February 13, 2018 – 6:00 P.M.  
City Hall Courtroom  
300 Pollock Street**

- 1. Meeting opened by Mayor Dana E. Outlaw. Prayer by Alderman Harris. Pledge of Allegiance.**

- 2. Roll Call.**

Present: Mayor Dana Outlaw; Aldermen Sabrina Bengel, Jameesha Harris, Robert Aster, Johnnie Ray Kinsey, Barbara Best, and Jeffrey Odham. Absent: None. A quorum was present.

Also Present: Mark Stephens, City Manager; Kristen Culler, Assistant City Manager; Michael Scott Davis, City Attorney; and Brenda Blanco, City Clerk.

- 3. Request and Petition of Citizens.**

Bethany Richards of 405 Harbor Drive expressed concerns about the need for a safer means of travel for bicyclers. She advocated for better road maintenance and the need for shoulders and bicycle lanes. Mr. Stephens highlighted the improvements that have been made over the past few years and those that are on the horizon.

Gerald Boucher of 3403 Richard Court questioned the placement of stop signs at Powell Street and Pinecrest Avenue and Powell Street and Midyette Avenue. It was his suggestion that these be relocated so the stop signs are in the same direction as others in the neighborhood. He also noted a desire for the manholes on Richard Court to be addressed by adding an additional layer of asphalt on the street. Mr. Stephens replied staff would review the stop signs; however, the manholes are an issue that will need to be addressed by the developer.

William Green of 413 Fairway Drive, Trent Woods, announced the New Bern High School Marching Band is working to raise the funds needed to purchase six sousaphones for the 2018 marching season. The band has grown significantly in size, and it no longer owns sousaphones. The total cost to purchase the six instruments is \$50,000, of which \$7,000 has been raised to date. The Board was distributed a copy of a flyer detailing the fundraiser.

Sarah Foster of 1322 Spencer Avenue voiced concern about the amount of traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and the hazards posed by the volume of traffic. She spoke in support of closing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street between Rhem Avenue and Trent Boulevard.

Randy Turan of 1402 Spencer Avenue also spoke about the amount of traffic that uses 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as a cut through. He encouraged the City to close the street.

## Consent Agenda

**4. Consider Adopting a Resolution Closing Specific Streets for an Antique Car Show.**

Frederick Wagner, Event Coordinator with First Capital Chapter Antique Automobile Club of America, requested the 200-300 blocks of Middle Street and 300-400 blocks of Pollock Street be closed on May 12, 2018 from 6 a.m. until 2 p.m. for a car show.

**5. Consider Adopting a Resolution Amending the Street Closure for the Black History Month Parade to Include a Rain Date.**

A resolution was adopted on January 23, 2018 approving street closures for the Black History Month Parade scheduled for February 17, 2018. The resolution did not provide for a rain date, and organizers are concerned about the possibility of inclement weather and have requested a rain date of February 24, 2018. The proposed resolution has been amended to include this alternate date. The streets that will be closed to vehicular traffic from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. are the 500 block of Fort Totten Drive, 1300-1800 blocks of Trent Boulevard, 400 block of First Street, 700-1300 blocks of Broad Street, and 400-800 blocks of George Street.

**6. Approve Minutes.**

Minutes from the January 23, 2018 regular meeting and February 2-3, 2018 retreat were provided for review and approval.

Alderman Odham made a motion to approve Items 4-6 of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. The motion carried unanimously.

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**7. Presentation by UNC School of Government on the Development Finance Initiative Project.**

In 2015, the City engaged the UNC School of Government's Development Finance Initiative ("DFI") to evaluate the redevelopment potential of several City-owned properties located downtown. Marcia Perritt and Omar Kashef, representatives from the DFI, shared a PowerPoint presentation to briefly review the overall project. Mr. Kashef discussed the underutilized sites that were ultimately selected for potential development, the engagement of stakeholders, and the focus of current efforts. Projects considered were mixed-use development with parking options or a hotel. Recent studies reveal New Bern's hospitality market is one of the stronger markets in the state. Discussions were held with Craven County regarding the potential development of the Craven and Pollock Street, but that is currently on hold as the County continues to analyze its space needs. Therefore, current efforts are centered on the vacant lot at the intersection of Craven and South Front Streets,

which is commonly referred to as the "Talbot's Lot". This lot would serve as an ideal location for a hotel, in part due to its proximity to the Convention Center.

Mr. Kashef reviewed DFI's recommended next steps in pursuing potential use of the lot at Craven and South Front Streets. Two of those steps will include forming a downtown stakeholders' advisory committee and obtaining public input. During his presentation, he indicated second stories along Middle and Craven Streets are not being developed or utilized due to a lack of parking to which Alderman Bengel expressed disagreement. She stated that second stories are being developed and that currently in the central business district there are no parking requirements for second-story development and that the only second stories not being developed are because of property owners, not parking. Alderman Bengel also stated that we cannot do business development without sufficient parking.

Alderman Harris questioned the area of Five Points as a potential development site, and Ms. Perritt responded by noting DFI is aware that area is a gateway into the City and a priority for the Board. She also voiced awareness that the Board is interested in exploring an urban redevelopment area. DFI recognizes the connection between the Five Points area and downtown, and they would be willing to help the Board think through some strategies.

Alderman Bengel commented that Ms. Perritt and Mr. Kashef were the best and brightest the State had to offer, and she thanked them for their efforts. She also noted that in the spirit of transparency, she requested DFI to review the corner lot at Craven and South Front Street, as some citizens during her campaign had expressed concern to her about the lot at Craven and Pollock Streets. Alderman Bengel noted a desire for the project to be successful, but she felt that could only be accomplished if the stakeholders had buy-in from the beginning and not after the fact.

**8. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the North Carolina Statewide Emergency Management Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement – Revision 2017.**

The City has previously adopted a resolution approving a North Carolina Statewide Emergency Management Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement. This agreement is revised from time to time, with the last revision having been approved in August of 2005. Because of changes in local officials and state positions, it has become necessary to once again revise the agreement. Stanley Kite, Craven County's Emergency Services Director, circulated "Revision 2017" to participating local governments for approval. This agreement meets FEMA's requirements and helps speed up the process for local governments when applying for FEMA reimbursement.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the North Carolina Statewide Emergency Management Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement – Revision 2017, seconded by Alderman Harris. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**9. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving a Qualified Source for Obtaining the Ethics Training Required by NC General Statute §160A-87.**

NC General Statute § 160A-87 requires all members of governing boards to receive a minimum of two clock hours of ethics education within 12 months after initial or subsequent election or appointment to office. The training shall cover laws and principles that govern conflicts of interest and ethical standards of conduct at the local government level. Statute allows for the training to be provided by the NC League of Municipalities or UNC School of Government, among others, or by a qualified source of the governing board's choosing.

Eastern Carolina Council ("ECC") is offering training on February 22, 2018 from 6-8 p.m. at their office. This training will be conducted by David Baxter, an attorney with Sumrell, Sugg, Carmichael, Hicks & Hart, PA. The Board is asked to consider approving this as a qualified source for meeting the training requirements.

Alderman Harris made a motion to adopt a resolution approving a qualified source for obtaining the ethics training required by NC General Statute §160A-87, seconded by Alderman Bengel. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**10. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving a Contract with the NC Department of Environmental Quality for Grant Funds for the Neuse River Gateway Project Phase II.**

On August 9, 2016, the Board authorized the submission of a final application to the NC Department of Natural Resources – Coastal Management Division for the 2016/17 Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant. The application was approved, and the City has been awarded \$55,000.00. The grant does require a total match of \$18,333.33, of which \$9,166.66 shall be in-kind services and \$9,166.67 shall be cash. Funds will be utilized for the Neuse River Gateway Project Phase II to resurface the parking lot at Parks and Recreation's administrative office and to create handicap accessibility at the boat launch.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a resolution approving a contract with the NC Department of Environmental Quality for Grant Funds for the Neuse River Gateway Project Phase II, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**11. Consider Adopting a Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to Creative Economic Development, LLC for a Creative Give Back Grant.**

Staff is seeking approval to submit an application for the Creative Give Back Grant offered by Creative Economic Development, LLC. If received, the grant funds will be utilized to formulate a sustainable organizational and economic development plan for the City Market project. The City Market calls for outdoor vending areas, a market, a commercial kitchen accelerator, and an inventor's space. This grant can assist with developing the most effective and efficient organization and layout of

these elements. While the grant does not require matching funds nor the Board's consent to apply, it will look favorable in the scoring process to show the Board supports the application.

Alderman Aster questioned why a farmer's market was being considered at this location. Jeffrey Ruggieri, Director of Development Services, explained plans do not specifically call for a farmer's market, but does provide for vendor space as part of the market concept. The proposed market would offer additional goods and services, which include teaming up with Lovay Wallace-Singleton to support her program at the Veterans Employment Base Camp and Organic Garden and with other disadvantaged members of the community.

Alderman Bengel said the current farmer's market is concerned about this, and she suggested the funds be used to help the current market. She also suggested expanding the outdoor area for more workforce training versus vending areas. Mr. Ruggieri said that idea had not been mentioned before, and staff has been proceeding with the City Market concept as discussed many times in the past. Alderman Kinsey asked for clarification as to whether the plan was to have an additional market place, which would mean the City has two markets. According to Mr. Ruggieri, that was essentially the plan, although not for the purpose of competing with one another, but to offer different goods and services. The grant would be used to review the plan and suggest an optimum way to run the market. Because of the location and proximity to the bypass, this market would be great for economic development and for vendors. Many vendors have expressed a desire not to be located in a downtown farmer's market, and this is an opportunity to meet that demand. Alderman Odham pointed out this site is located in the CNI area, which has been identified as a food desert and there could be some grants to help address this. Mr. Ruggieri stated Mrs. Wallace-Singleton is working to secure some of these grants to produce and sell items at the market.

Alderman Odham made a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to Creative Economic Development, LLC for a Creative Give Back Grant, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried 6-1 with Alderman Bengel voting against it.

**12. Consider Adopting a Resolution to Consider Temporarily Closing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Between Rhem Avenue and Trent Boulevard.**

The Ghent Community has long expressed concerns about the volume of traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, which is routinely used as a cut-thru between Country Club Road and Trent Boulevard. The neighborhood has voiced concerns about increased traffic volume and safety issues for children and residents. Staff has worked to alleviate some of these issues by installing additional stop signs, posting "No Thru Traffic" signs, increasing police presence, relocating the Public Utilities Department and directing City employees to avoid use of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street as a means of access to the City Garage. In spite of these efforts, the Ghent Community still has concerns. A 2016 traffic study revealed the street has an average of 1,675 vehicles per day.

At the request of Aldermen Bengel and Aster, a temporary closure of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is proposed between Rhem Avenue and Trent Boulevard. This closure will be for a period of 90 days from February 19, 2018 and May 20, 2018. During this time, staff will perform multiple traffic-count studies and will also monitor the impact on adjoining streets.

Alderman Kinsey questioned whether all citizens in the Ghent Community were in favor of this closure. He also asked about emergency response times, noting this is an older community that may consist of older citizens. Alderman Bengel reiterated this is a temporary closure to gauge the impact this step will have on the traffic.

Citizens in the audience expressed a desire to provide input. Alderman Bengel made a motion to allow citizens to comment, seconded by Alderman Harris. The motion carried unanimously. Pamela Woods of 1903 Country Club Road spoke against the closure. She pointed out there are only five homes on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and each intersection along 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is marked with a stop sign. She was concerned closing the street would push the traffic to Spencer Avenue where there are more homes and children. She did not feel closing this portion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street would push traffic to the stoplight on First Street, but instead would route the traffic through the community. After hearing Mrs. Woods' concerns, Alderman Harris suggested the Board hold off on making a decision until a public hearing could be held to hear from the citizens.

James Woods of 1903 Country Club said he felt most of the traffic was coming from Country Club. He stated the traffic light at the intersection of Pollock and First Streets was too long and made it difficult for motorists to turn left onto Trent Road. Thus, it is easier to turn from Country Club Road (First Street) onto 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. He was against the temporary closure and noted it would inconvenience other City citizens. He pointed out motorists are already avoiding the neighborhood because of the additional stop signs.

Mike Genest of 1412 Spencer Avenue, pointed out he was speaking as a citizen and not as President of the Ghent Neighborhood Association. Personally, he did not have an opinion as to whether this is a good or bad idea. He was in favor of increasing exposure of the issue and inviting public comment. He noted there are people beyond 2<sup>nd</sup> Street who would be affected by this choice. They have strong opinions about this and their voices have not yet been heard. The Ghent Neighborhood Association has not discussed this matter and does not have an opinion. Alderman Odham noted Jordan Hughes, City Engineer, will soon be holding a community meeting about impending work to be performed in the neighborhood. Alderman Odham suggested this topic be discussed during that meeting. In the alternative, Alderman Bengel asked if a 30-day trial would be more amenable to the Board.

Randy Foster of 1322 Spencer Avenue noted the Ghent neighborhood is a residential area. He said 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is the only even-numbered street that intersects with Trent Boulevard. He felt closing the access between Rhem and Trent Road would restore that street to the same status as the other even-numbered streets.

Alderman Harris again suggested a public hearing be held, possibly at the Board's meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Alderman Odham inquired as to when the infrastructure work would begin in the area, and Mr. Hughes replied the first week in March. As part of the project, there will be street closures, lane closures and traffic shifts. Work is anticipated to last 180 days with varying traffic patterns.

Mr. Stephens announced a more recent traffic analysis from 2017 showed approximately 56 cars per hour at a rate of 12.5 mph. Alderman Odham expressed concern that a 30 or 90-day closure would not reveal a true impact on the neighborhood because of the scheduled construction work.

Alderman Bengel asked for alternative options such as directing City staff not to go through the area and to adjust signage. Mr. Stephens noted that direction has already been given to staff to avoid the street. No thru traffic signs can be erected, but he pointed out that is not an enforceable sign.

In light of the comments made this evening, Alderman Best felt there would be an increased problem created by temporarily closing the street, especially in light of the upcoming work. Alderman Aster stated he was not aware of the impending construction, nor was he aware the neighborhood association had not met about this and did not have a unified opinion. He suggested the closure be put on hold. Alderman Bengel asked Mr. Stephens to look at the timing of the stoplight at the intersection of First Street and Trent Road. Mr. Stephens pointed out that is a NC Department of Transportation ("DOT") light, and the City cannot adjust it, but can only submit a request to DOT. He also pointed out the road diet may render some adjustments to the timing of the light.

The Board did not take action and discussed taking up this issue at a later date when the pending construction is completed.

**13. Consider Adopting an Amendment to the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 and Modifying the Classification Pay Plan.**

A recent Market Analysis Pay Study was conducted to provide a comprehensive review and comparable analysis of the City's present position classifications and pay plan. The City's salaries were compared with 16 other local governments. To provide data necessary to ensure the competitiveness of New Bern's salaries with comparable employers, which is imperative for effective recruitment and retention efforts. It also ensures external competitiveness and internal equity and consistency among similar positions. Ninety-nine classifications were recommended for pay grade advances in order to place employees in the appropriate market-based salary range. As a result, employees who are currently below the recommended minimum will need to be brought up to the suggested minimum salary, and salary compression issues will need to be addressed. The total implementation cost for these changes is \$308,000 annually. The cost for FY2018 will be approximately \$154,000, although some of this expense can be absorbed through position vacancies. To accommodate these changes, a budget amendment is proposed to fund the changes through a reduction in contingency.

Additionally, Section 4 of the FY2017-18 Budget Ordinance will be modified to incorporate an updated Classification Pay Plan.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt an amendment to the Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 and modifying the Classification Pay Plan, seconded by Alderman Harris. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**14. Consider Adopting a Budget Ordinance Amendment for FY 2017-18 General Fund.**

This budget ordinance amendment appropriates funds to the Police Department. Fund balance in the amount of \$66,500 will be transferred to cover the replacement of an interview room camera system at a cost of \$47,000, \$4,500 for three additional surveillance cameras for the George Street property, and \$15,000 for special operations. Additionally, the amendment appropriates \$240,000 for salary expenditures, which will be funded through \$201,500 from contingency and \$38,500 from unspent funds budgeted for the election.

In future budgets, Alderman Odham suggested all positions be budgeted for even if there are vacancies. This would eliminate the need for budget amendments to cover salaries.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a budget ordinance amendment for the FY2017-18 General Fund, seconded by Alderman Harris. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**15. Appointment(s).**

Alderman Aster made a motion to appoint Alderman Bengel to the New Bern-Craven County Public Library Board of Trustees, seconded by Alderman Harris. The motion carried unanimously.

**16. Attorney's Report.**

The City Attorney had nothing to report.

**17. City Manager's Report.**

The City Manager had nothing to report.

**18. New Business.**

Alderman Bengel.

The City Manager was asked to announce the topics that would be discussed at Friday's work session. Mr. Stephens said the topics suggested at the retreat for Friday's work session were redevelopment, a redevelopment commission, and firefighting issues. Attorney Davis is not available on Friday, nor are representatives from the School of Government. Those topics will be discussed at



a later time. Friday's work session topics will include fire response and stormwater utilities.

A request was again voiced for a disability committee to be formed to act in the capacity of an advisory group to the Board. In lieu of a committee, Mr. Stephens suggested a working group, which was agreeable to Alderman Bengel. He further suggested the Board make recommendations for those to be involved in the group.

#### Alderman Harris

Concerns expressed during a recent meeting of the Pembroke Community were shared by Alderman Harris. Residents on Evans Street have concerns about mosquitos and the ditches being cleaned. Concern was also expressed about the lack of park maintenance. Several people indicated a desire to attend the Board's meetings, but noted the seats are uncomfortable. Alderman Harris recommended cushions be obtained for the benches.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> at Craven Community College will host a Black History Celebration in the student center, and she will be one of the speakers.

#### Alderman Kinsey

The possibility of holding meetings in each ward was questioned. The Mayor and Mr. Stephens both noted it is not possible to provide live video coverage and taped meetings do not render good quality. Other issues are a lack of microphones, echoing in the buildings, etc. However, work sessions could be held in wards, if the Board so desires. Aldermen Harris and Kinsey suggested locations to include HJ McDonald, West New Bern Recreation Center, and the Omega Center. Mr. Stephens will explore the proper equipment that would be needed for remote meetings. Alderman Best asked if conducting the meetings at different locations would be a greater expense, and Mr. Stephens confirmed it would if additional equipment is purchased. Also, there is a significant amount of staff time involved in setting up the location, moving chairs and tables from one location to another, etc. This takes staff away from their regular duties.

#### Alderman Best

A Black History Parade will be held this Saturday. Those interested in participating in the parade should contact Victor Taylor.

Last night, Alderman Best visited Bayview Nursing Home during their annual Valentines Ball. She had the pleasure of crowning the king and queen, who were in their 90's.

### **10. Closed Session.**

Alderman Odham made a motion to enter into closed session pursuant to NCGS Section 143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss a personnel matter, seconded by Alderman Kinsey. The motion carried unanimously, time being 8:12 p.m.

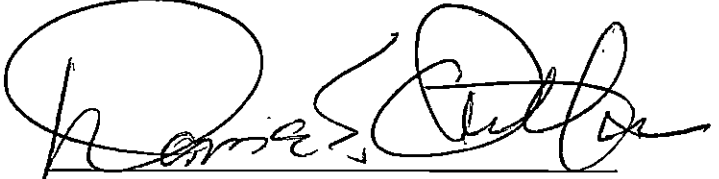
### **11. Adjourn.**

Alderman Odham made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Aster. The motion carried unanimously, time being 9:45 p.m.

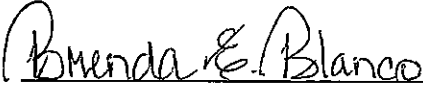
The attached documents are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

NOTE: For additional details and information on the Board of Aldermen meetings, please visit the City of New Bern's website at [www.newbern-nc.org](http://www.newbern-nc.org). Video and audio recordings of the meeting have been archived.

Minutes approved: March 13, 2018



Dana E. Outlaw, Mayor



Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk