

**City of New Bern
Board of Aldermen Meeting
March 24, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.
City Hall Courtroom
300 Pollock Street**

- 1. Meeting opened by Mayor Dana E. Outlaw. Prayer by Mayor Outlaw. Pledge of Allegiance.**
- 2. Roll Call.**

Present: Mayor Dana Outlaw, Alderman Sabrina Bengel, Alderwoman Jameesha Harris (via telephone), Alderman Robert Aster, Alderman Johnnie Ray Kinsey (via telephone), Alderman Barbara Best, and Alderman Jeffrey Odham (via telephone).
Absent: None. A quorum was present.

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

In response to COVID-19 and in compliance with the need to social distance, Mayor Outlaw announced four members of the Governing Board were physically in attendance to create a quorum and the remaining three members were participating by telephone. Those physically in attendance took measures to appropriately distance themselves.

Consent Agenda

- 3. Consider Approving a Proclamation for Empathy Day.**

Braedon Oliver Welsh requested a proclamation for Empathy 4 NC.

- 4. Consider Approving a Proclamation for Month of the Military Child.**

Valerie Nasser, Military Liaison Counselor with Craven County Schools, requested a proclamation for Month of the Military Child.

- 5. Consider Approving a Proclamation for New Bern Resolves – 1st NC Provincial Congress Month.**

Bob Ainsley, Vice President of the New Bern Chapter of Sons of the American Revolution, requested a proclamation for New Bern Resolves – 1st NC Provincial Congress, which is observed annually from August 25-27th.

6. Consider Approving a Proclamation for National Boys & Girls Club Week.

Katrina Peri with the Boys & Girls Club requested a proclamation for Boys & Girls Club Week.

7. Consider Accepting a Petition to Annex Property at 203 Riverside Drive and Adopt a Resolution to Call for a Public Hearing on the Annexation.

Robert A. Yulick petitioned the City to annex his property located at 203 Riverside Drive, which is a 0.4-acre vacant lot located in Number 2 Township. It was requested a public hearing be scheduled for April 14, 2020 to consider the request.

8. Consider Adopting a Resolution to Call for a Public Hearing to Rezone 2409 Oaks Road from R-6S Residential District to C-4 Neighborhood Business District.

Nasr Algaradi requested to rezone a 0.25-acre parcel located at 2409 Oaks Road from R-6S Residential District to C-4 Neighborhood Business District. A previous request to rezone this property to C-3 Commercial District was denied by the Board of Alderman due to the perceived impacts a vape/tobacco shop would have on the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Algaradi has since amended his plans to utilize the property as a convenience store. He is now seeking to have the property rezoned as C-4 Neighborhood Business District. The Planning and Zoning Board unanimously approved this request at its March 3, 2020 meeting. It was requested a public hearing be scheduled for April 14, 2020 to consider the request.

9. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving a General Warranty Deed Between Habitat for Humanity of Craven County NC, Y'Phu R'mah and wife H'Nhian Siu, and the City of New Bern for 1205 Church Street.

At its March 8, 2016 meeting, the Board of Aldermen approved a Deed and a Transfer and Reversion Agreement with Habitat for Humanity for the property located at 1205 Church Street. A home has since been constructed on the property, and Habitat is now ready to convey the property to Y'Phu R'mah and wife, H'Nhian Siu. To facilitate this conveyance, the City's signature is needed on a general warranty deed to evidence that Habitat has complied with the terms and conditions of the Transfer and Reversion Agreement and that the reversion provisions of the Agreement are no longer applicable.

10. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the Sale of 318 Crescent Street.

On January 28, 2020, the Board voted to initiate the upset bid process after receiving an initial offer of \$3,800 for the purchase of 318 Crescent Street. The offer was submitted by the adjacent property owner. The parcel is a vacant 0.08-acre lot with a tax value of \$7,600. The property was acquired jointly by the City and County through tax foreclosure in March 2013. The bid was advertised, but no upset bids were received. If the property is sold for the initial offer, the County will receive

approximately \$1,698.78 of the proceeds, and the City will receive approximately \$2,101.22. These estimates include the cost of publishing the legal notice.

11. Consider Adopting a Resolution Temporarily Suspending Utility Disconnection Policy and Specific Fees.

The federal, state and local governments have taken certain measures in an attempt to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 viral infection. In response to these efforts, it is proposed that the City suspend utility disconnects for nonpayment from March 16, 2020 until April 16, 2020. Additionally, late fees and delinquent fees will also be suspended effective March 16, 2020 until April 16, 2020.

12. Approve Minutes.

Minutes from the March 10, 2020 regular meeting were provided for review and approval.

Alderman Harris made a motion to approve Items 3-12 of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Alderman Best. The motion carried unanimously 7-0.

13. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving a Memorandum of Understanding for the Administration and Procedures of the Smithfield Agreement Environmental Enhancement Grant Program.

The City applied for an Environmental Enhancement Grant through the NC Attorney General's office and has been awarded funding in the amount of \$70,000. The funds will be utilized to support the remaining balance needed to develop a Resiliency & Hazard Mitigation Plan. A Memorandum of Understanding must be executed with respect to the administration and procedures of the Smithfield Agreement Environmental Enhancement Fund Grant Program.

Alderman Best made a motion to adopt a resolution approving a Memorandum of Understanding for the administration and procedures of the Smithfield Agreement Environmental Enhancement Grant program, seconded by Alderman Bengel. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

14. Consider Adopting an Ordinance to Amend Article III, City Water and Sewerage Systems of Chapter 74 "Utilities".

The City amended its ordinances in 1999 to prohibit the use of master water meters for multi-tenant residential and commercial establishments. Recent trends indicate there is a strong desire to have the ability to master meter the water services for these facilities. New Bern is one of the very few water systems that does not allow master metering and this has created hardships for some new developments. In order to better align the ordinance with the needs of the development community, it is recommended the ordinance be amended to allow master water meters. After

Mayor Outlaw expressed concerns about tenants whose water may be disconnected because of failure of the property owner to pay the water bill. Attorney Davis offered additional explanation behind the reasoning for switching to a master meter and noted the property owner would be required to pay a large deposit to cover the increased service.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt an ordinance to amend Article III, City Water and Sewerage Systems of Chapter 74 "Utilities", seconded by Alderman Kinsey. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 7-0.

15. Appointment(s).

No appointments were made.

16. Attorney's Report.

The City Attorney had nothing to report.

17. City Manager's Report.

Mr. Stephens noted at the last meeting the Board asked for clarification on the appointment to the Executive Committee of the Eastern Carolina Council of Government ("ECCOG"). The ECCOG has confirmed the City's standing appointment to the General Membership Board will automatically roll to the Executive Committee and no further action is needed at this time. Currently, Alderman Kinsey serves as the appointment to the General Membership Board.

Staff is evaluating the COVID-19 situation daily. City buildings and facilities have been closed to the public, unless personal contact is initiated by staff. Most contact with the public is being handled electronically. The Utility Business Office is offering service through its drive-thru, over the phone and by email. Alderman Bengel reiterated the City is still open and conducting business, but is practicing social distancing in the process. Mr. Stephens stated at some point there may be a need to implement telework, but not at this time. He also noted certain public facilities have been closed, such as playgrounds and the recreation center. The Governor has issued restrictions on specified businesses. Anyone with questions should view the Governor's Executive Orders numbered 115 through 120 on the State's website. The public was also encouraged to utilize the resources that are shared on the City's website.

18. New Business.

Alderman Bengel

Because of COVID-19, there is no business happening in downtown or within the City. Alderman Bengel stated she had been working with the Chamber of Commerce, Swiss Bear, Lt. Governor Dan Forest, and House Representative Jason Saine, who is chair of the Appropriation Committee, to try to find resources to benefit the businesses. Tourism is down, and restaurants have lost 75% of their

business. The Small Business Association has relaxed some of its regulations. The Rural Center has now made some grants available, and loans are also available through Golden Leaf. Employees should be encouraged to file for unemployment. The one-week wait period and requirement to seek other employment has been waived. Although she supported social distancing and those who are sick staying at home, concern was expressed about the impact of a mandatory stay-at-home policy on those who need to earn a paycheck. Mr. Stephens was asked to share information on available resources to help people pay their utility bills. He was not aware of the current status of the round-up program, but confirmed payment arrangements could be made on accounts. Additionally, late and payment arrangement fees have been waived by the City.

Alderman Harris

During the pandemic, the main concern is to make sure everyone practices social distancing and that they only go out in public if needed.

Alderman Aster

Gratitude was expressed to Mr. Stephens for keeping the Board updated on the latest with respect to COVID-19.

Alderman Aster provided an update on the Old Airport Road work.

The NC Department of Transportation will be making modifications to the intersection of Thurman Road and Hwy. 70 East in the next 30 days.

Alderman Kinsey

Thanks was expressed to Mr. Stephens for sharing information on COVID-19 and to the school system for feeding the children while schools are closed.

Alderman Best

Gratitude was expressed to Mr. Stephens for sharing information on the coronavirus and to the employees for continuing to serve the public. All citizens were encouraged to adhere to the restrictions imposed by the Governor.

If it passes, Alderman Best stated the stimulus payments will not be a loan that has to be repaid. She questioned how other resources donated by banks and large corporations would be distributed to working-class citizens. Alderman Bengel explained individuals would have to apply for assistance, and Mayor Outlaw said the funds would likely go to the bank's foundations for distribution. Alderman Bengel suggested information should be routed to the City Manager for sharing.

Alderman Odham

The City Manager and City staff were thanked for their work during this pandemic. He noted Craven County is the governing authority, and citizens should reach out to them for the most up-to-date and accurate answers. People were encouraged to exercise personal responsibility and heed the warning to stay home when sick, use hand sanitizer, and practice social distancing. Alderman Aster asked citizens to be aware of and on alert for scams that are circulating.

Mayor Outlaw

Ethel Sampson was recognized for the article in the paper regarding her recent Community Fabric award.

The City is doing an excellent job communicating information about COVID-19 and is looking for leadership from the County and the County Health Director. Mayor Outlaw stated the City did not have an agenda to shelter in place, and he hoped things would not get to that point. However, the more citizens do not react in a prudent manner, the more likely the Governor may have to implement that restriction. Mr. Stephens announced the three or four areas in North Carolina that have issued such a restriction.

19. Closed Session.

A closed session was not needed.

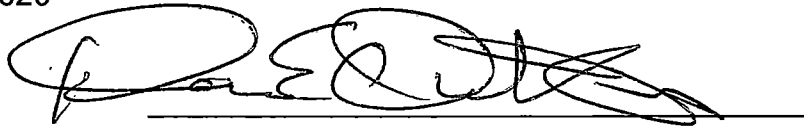
20. Adjourn.

Alderwoman Harris made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Bengel. The motion carried unanimously 7-0, time being 7:13 p.m.

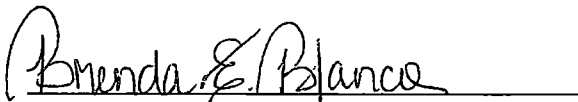
The attached documents are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

NOTE: For additional details and information on the Board of Aldermen meetings, please visit the City of New Bern's website at www.newbernnc.gov. Video and audio recordings of the meeting have been archived.

Minutes approved: April 14, 2020



Dana E. Outlaw, Mayor



Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk