

**CITY OF NEW BERN
BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING
JULY 25, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.
CITY HALL COURTROOM
300 POLLOCK STREET**

- 1. Meeting opened by Mayor Jeffrey Odham. Prayer by Ethel Sampson. Pledge of Allegiance.**

- 2. Roll Call.**

Present: Mayor Jeffrey Odham, Alderman Hazel Royal, Alderman Robert Aster, Alderman Barbara Best, and Alderman Robert Brinson. Absent: Alderman Rick Prill and Alderman Johnnie Ray Kinsey. A quorum was present.

Also Present: Foster Hughes, City Manager; Marvin Williams, Assistant City Manager; Jaimee Bullock-Mosley, Assistant City Attorney; and Brenda Blanco, City Clerk.

- 3. Approve Agenda**

Alderman Aster made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Alderman Brinson. The motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Consent Agenda

- 4. Consider Adopting a Resolution Calling for a Public Hearing on an Amendment to Sections 15-416, 15-417, and 15-423(d) of the Land Use Ordinance.**

Staff requested a public hearing be called for August 08, 2023 to consider an amendment to the Land Use Ordinance. The amendment will correct a single-digit typographical error in Section 15-423(d) and will replace language that was inadvertently omitted during modifications to accommodate NCGS 160D.

- 5. Consider Approving a Proclamation for Celebrate Shelter Pet Day.**

Jo Anna Kloster requested a proclamation recognizing Celebrate Shelter Pet Day.

- 6. Approve Minutes.**

Draft minutes from the June 27, 2023 closed session and July 11, 2023 regular meeting were provided for review and approval.

Alderman Aster made a motion to approve Items 4-6 of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Alderman Brinson. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

7. Presentation by Old North State League to Use Kafer Park for Summer College Baseball.

Alec Allred, Co-Founder of Old North State League, shared a PowerPoint presentation about the league and its interest in leasing Kafer Park for their collegiate summer baseball league. The league consists of 16 teams and is the 4th largest league of its kind in the country. New Bern has a deep history of baseball and has a strong tourist draw. The league will invest between \$250,000 to \$350,000 in the park in exchange for a 10-year lease at \$1 a year. It will work with the City and East Carolina Amateur Baseball League (“ECABL”) on any events they wish to host at the park.

Alderman Brinson asked if the league had any parking concerns. Mr. Allred explained on-street parking would be provided and lots may be rented from local businesses to provide additional parking on game days. This provides an additional revenue stream for those businesses. Alderman Best asked if there were concerns with balls hitting windows, and Mr. Hughes noted a 35-foot-high net was installed about a three years ago. With respect to cars parked on the street or private property, the league would be responsible for the costs of any damages from fly balls.

Noting the public outcry about Union Point Park, Alderman Best suggested the voices of the citizens be heard before the Board makes a decision or gives direction. Alderman Aster felt the opportunity would be good for New Bern since it would be a significant investment in the City and would provide additional entertainment. Instead of a formal hearing, Alderman Brinson suggested a townhall type meeting be held at the Omega Center since that area will be most affected by traffic, lighting, etc. While she supported the request, Alderman Royal also felt citizens should have an opportunity for input, although not necessarily through a formal hearing. Alderman Aster noted the park had existed for probably a hundred years and had always been a positive feature.

Mayor Odham thanked the league for its interest in New Bern. He had no issue with involving the public but felt there was a need to appropriately educate the public. From the discussion, it was his interpretation the Board was in favor of further discussion with citizen input.

8. Consider Adopting a Resolution Approving the 2023 Water Shortage Response Plan.

Pursuant to NC General Statutes, the City must update its Water Shortage Response Plans every five years. New Bern’s plan has been updated, approved by the NC Department of Environmental Quality, and is ready for adoption by the Board.

Alderman Royal made a motion to adopt a resolution approving the 2023 Water Shortage Response Plan, seconded by Alderman Best. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

9. Consider Adopting a Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Execute a Real Estate Purchase and Sale Agreement with Weyerhaeuser Company for Land for New Electric Substation.

In preparation of constructing a new substation and interconnect to the bulk electric system, land acquisition is necessary. The proposed agreement represents the purchase of 6 acres from Weyerhaeuser at a cost of \$15,000 per acre for a total purchase price of \$90,000. The cost of the purchase will be expensed from previously established electric project funds.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a real estate purchase and sale agreement with Weyerhaeuser Company for land for a much-needed, new electrical substation, seconded by Alderman Brinson. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

10. Consider Adopting a Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Execute a Letter of Agreement with Weyerhaeuser for Easement Rights.

In relation to the previous item, easements are necessary to connect the new substation to the Duke transmission system as well as provide new interconnects to the electric distribution system. A total of 22.983 acres is necessary at a cost of \$9,798.55 per acre for a full purchase price of \$225,200. Alderman Best questioned whether Weyerhaeuser would provide the easements at no charge, and Charlie Bauschard, Director of Utilities, responded no.

Alderman Aster made a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a letter of agreement with Weyerhaeuser for easement rights, seconded by Alderman Best. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

11. Consider Adopting an Ordinance Amending the 2019 Electric Improvements Project Fund.

This ordinance amends the 2019 Electric Improvements Project Fund to recognize a \$87,183 reduction in appropriation from the Golden Leaf grant. Golden Leaf approved \$320,000 in funding for the Utilities Disaster Recovery and Resiliency Project. The project has been completed and expenditures reimbursed in the amount of \$232,817. Since the grant has been closed, the budget needs to be reduced by the difference.

Alderman Royal made a motion to adopt an ordinance amending the 2019 Electric Improvements Fund, seconded by Alderman Best. Upon a roll-call vote, the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

12. Appointment(s).

Alderman Royal made a motion to appoint Kathleen Marty to the Board of Adjustment to serve the remainder of Peter Dillon's unexpired term, seconded by Alderman Brinson. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. Ms. Marty will serve in Seat 2, which has a term expiration of June 30, 2025.

Alderman Royal made a motion to appoint Brendan Loftin as an alternate on the Board of Adjustment, seconded by Alderman Brinson. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. Mr. Loftin will fill Seat 9 previously held by Kathleen Marty and will serve a 3-year term to expire June 30, 2026.

Alderman Brinson made a motion to appoint Kellie Kiser to the Planning and Zoning Board, seconded by Alderman Best. The motion carried unanimously 5-0. Mrs. Kiser will fill Seat 6 and serve a 3-year term to expire June 30, 2026.

Mayor Odham noted the Board has one vacancy to fill on the Redevelopment Commission and one reappointment to consider. Alderman Royal expressed a desire for the appointments to be made at the Board's August 08, 2023 meeting when everyone is in attendance. The Redevelopment Commission's next meeting is scheduled for August 09, 2023, and the Clerk can be ready to notify the appointees so they can plan to attend that meeting. The Board was in consensus with this recommendation.

13. Attorney's Report.

The City Attorney had nothing to report.

14. City Manager's Report.

- The annual Battle of the Badges blood drive was held this past Friday. A total of 254 pints of blood was collected. The Fire and Rescue Department won the battle by receiving more donor votes than the Police Department.
- The Stanley White Recreation Center's groundbreaking ceremony will be held August 04, 2023 at 11 a.m. on Third Avenue. A light lunch will be provided following the ceremony, and the public is invited.
- Last week, contractors milled the streets in Duffyfield. Fine grading was finished today, and paving is to start tomorrow morning with completion by the end of the day Thursday.
- Immobilization of two stormwater projects will commence this week on Trent Road with work to start immediately thereafter.
- The audit process is beginning, and staff would like to reconstitute the audit committee. Last year's committee consisted of Mayor Odham, Alderman Brinson, and Alderman Best. Alderman Royal and Alderman Brinson expressed a willingness to serve this year. At the next meeting, Aldermen Kinsey and Prill will be given an opportunity to serve in the mayor's place. If they are not interested, Mayor Odham will serve again.

15. New Business.

Alderman Best

Thanks to Mr. Williams and Public Works for cleanup at Evergreen Cemetery. A citizen reached out about a neighbor who is creating an environmental issue by having a lot of stuff on the side of their home that produces a smell of mold and mildew. Mr. Hughes stated he would obtain the details from Alderman Best and pass the information to a nuisance abatement inspector.

Alderman Aster

Construction in the James City area is producing hazards such as backed up traffic, bumps in the road from pipe placement, etc. Everyone was advised to be careful.

Today is the celebration of his 43rd anniversary.

16. Closed Session.

A closed session was not needed.

17. Adjourn

Alderman Royal made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Best. The motion carried unanimously 5-0, time being 6:38 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: August 08, 2023



Jeffrey T. Odham, Mayor



Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk