

Mayor & Board of Aldermen – Regular Meeting

Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2024

Present: Mayor Michael Brown
Vice Mayor Wiggins, Aldermen Cates, Hummel, Fisher & Sutton

Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

1. **Call to order by Mayor Brown**
2. **Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag**
3. **Establish Quorum**

All present

4. **Approval of Agenda**

Vice Mayor Wiggins made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Alderman Sutton seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

5. **Reading and Correction/Approval of Minutes of Regular Board**

March 21, 2024 – Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Alderman Hummel asked a correction to be made on item 1 – Call to order by Vice Mayor Wiggins.

Alderman Cates made a motion to approve the March 21, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. Alderman Hummel seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

6. **Citizen's Comments**

Melvin Boyce – Baby Jacks Restaurant – Requesting water bill relief on a bill that was substantially high and not due to negligence on the owner's part. American Leak Detection (ALD) was called to repair a leak when the weather was bad. The water bill continued to increase so ALD was called again, discovering 2 additional leaks at the end of the property line; the water was running profusely. The repair was made; however, it generated a \$19k (nineteen thousand dollar) water bill.

Town Manager Ellis stated this was a unique situation, which fell under the town's leak adjustment policy. Mr. Ellis said any adjustment beyond the leak policy would require the Board's direction and approval. The Board agreed in tasking Mr. Ellis to produce a method of further adjusting the sewer portion in this matter.

Promela Hannahan – 25 Blackhill Cv. – inquired about Section 8 (low income) housing being built at Hwy 64 and Hwy 196. She asked when the building would begin.

The Board identified the development she was speaking of as Windy Ridge. Director Courton responded there is no “Section 8” and “no Affordable Housing” in the project. He stated there were stipulations on the project, that the developer could not move forward until a sewer plant is built, which is an approximate 2-year delay at this point.

Richard Deloach-20 Terry View Cove – expressed concern in the cost of the tree trimming done by Chickasaw Electric, asking who pays for it.

Mayor Brown answered Chickasaw Electric, it is no cost to the town.

Sandra lungerich- 10 Blackhill Cv.- Addressed the Board related to Sports Complex. She asked if it was on tonight’s agenda to approve bids? Mr. Ellis answered, there are 2 items on the agenda associated with the Sports Complex which can be elaborated on when we get to that item on the agenda. Ms. lungerich stated the problem with that is, board discussions/decisions are made after the citizens have their turn in speaking and asking questions. How are citizens to address it after the board has talked about it? Mr. Ellis offered, and with the board’s consent, he was allowed to provide an outline of the project. He began with Phase 1-A, consisting of infrastructure, grading, drainage that was put in for ball fields, soccer fields and some parking lots. That Phase was completed at the end of last year. The town applied for and received a \$2.5 million dollar grant from TDEC for the next phase; it is a 50/50 matching grant. The town has the matching funds available for Phase 1-B. This phase consists of finishing the 4 soccer fields, 2 will be lit, lighting in the parking lot, concession stand, restrooms, walking trail and fencing. A bid request was put out a month ago for an engineering and architecture contract. In that same time, a bid request was put out for a grant management contract, to insure it is properly maintained. The 2 items being presented tonight are in response to those bid requests, which the Board will vote on. Ms. lungerich requested the board to put the park project on hold until other town obligations have been met. She stated it was difficult to get information and requested transparency for the citizens on items before they are voted on. Lastly, she commented on an email she sent to the board members, stating she received 2 responses and 2 who have not opened it yet.

Mayor Brown asked Mr. Ellis to share information on the town’s new face-book page. An official town face-book page was launched earlier this week. This is an attempt to share with the community useful information that is positive and accurate. It can be found at “The Town of Oakland.”

7. Communications from the Mayor

The Mayor asked Mr. Ellis to thank the city staff for the work being done on the budget, “there has been more information provided than ever before.” Mr. Ellis expressed his appreciation also.

8. Communication from the Aldermen

Vice Mayor Wiggins addressed the Baby Jacks issue saying he would like to see a new policy for water adjustments to be put in place.

Related to the Sports Complex, Vice Mayor Wiggins reiterated the park was a referendum item that was voted on by Oakland citizens, increasing the local sales tax by a half cent to fund it.

Alderman Hummel agreed that an adjustment on Baby Jacks bill is warranted, however, adjustments should be considered on a case-by-case review, rather than an across-the-board policy change.

Alderman Cates asked Mr. Ellis about the current adjustment policy. Mr. Ellis said the current policy states from the street to the building and nothing internal. The incident with Baby Jacks met the criteria allowing a maximum adjustment of \$250 on the sewer portion only, for 2 months. Alderman Cates concurred with Alderman Hummel on case-by-case review.

Alderman Sutton commented that he wants a report on "Citizens Comments," in what was done or communicated in response to the concerns and/or comments expressed in the monthly meetings.

Alderman Sutton explained the park project has no bearing on increases to water or sewer rates. He clearly stated, "If the park project shut down tomorrow, it would not affect your sewage rate." The State of Tennessee mandates that Water and Sewer Departments are self-funded and must pay for themselves. Water and sewer rates are adjusted in accordance with the cost associated for the town to provide its customers with reliable and safe utility services. The funds generated by the local sales tax increase are held in the General Fund and can be used for departments within General Fund, Admin. Police, Fire, Building Codes, Planning, Public Works and Park & Recreation (a separate fund, different than the Sports Park Complex Fund).

9. Department Head Reports

Fire Chief Walls shared information related to tornado/disaster sirens and education from the Fayette County Emergency Management Association (EMA). The Oakland Fire Department is responsible for activating the sirens in an event occurrence, however there are concerns of who would activate the sirens should the Oakland Fire Department be on a dispatched call. Chief Walls investigated and found that counties throughout the state rely on their Emergency Operation Center (EOC). He met with Director Winfrey of the Fayette County EOC, and he agreed to update the Memorandum of Understanding, if the EOC is open, to trigger the sirens. In conjunction with sounding the sirens, Chief Walls requested in-service training/education for the town's department heads to streamline the dispatch of emergency resources to citizens.

Fire Chief Walls reported the siren, ordered last year, is expected to arrive soon. Once online, as the town develops, it will allow the sirens to be moved out while maintaining the mile

range and increase the area(s) that are currently dead to the sound, while also allowing expansion of the system currently in place.

Vice Mayor Wiggins inquired of the water-loss this reporting period, asking Water Director Armstrong, if the reported 400k gallons last month was good, which he stated yes. Director Armstrong went on to explain that water loss reported consists of fire hydrant use and flushing. Loss concerns are based on "revenue" usage verses "non-revenue" usage. Non-Revenue is associated with pipe, main, and reservoir leaks, meter malfunctions, and meter tampering (water theft).

Alderman Hummel asked Fire Chief Walls to explain "overlapping" calls to confirm the town has calls covered and to determine if adjustments are needed in the upcoming budget to alleviate the overlapping calls. Chief Walls described overlapping calls as an initial call dispatched and while responding to the call, a 2nd call or 3rd call comes in. This year he is looking to expand the program in attempt to respond to 4 or 5 medical calls on time. But there is a need to expand the fire response and rescue response to 2 incidents.

Alderman Hummel asked Parks & Rec Director Weston how the Oakland Activity Center Rental was going and questioned if there was a need to increase the rental fee. He stated the entire process was working well and the Activity Center has been reserved for every weekend for the next month. Alderman Hummel asked if the town was on track for the Annual Fireworks Celebration, which he replied yes. Lastly, she suggested to him to start advertising the fireworks event soon.

Alderman Fisher asked Water Director Armstrong if the Town of Oakland is charged for their usage. It was requested to provide a total of the town's water and sewer bills, to make it public at the next meeting.

Alderman Sutton recognized the job performance of Wastewater Director Blake Coker, his treating over 1 million gallons of wastewater a day with no violations.

10. Town Manager Report

Mr. Ellis stated he had been contacted by Josh Escue, the pastor of Oakland First Baptist Church asking that an invitation be extended to citizens and board members to attend 10:00 am Sunday Services as the church will celebrate its 185-year Anniversary, with a meal to follow.

11. Old Business: Ordinances Second and Final Reading

None

12. New Business: Ordinances First Reading – Public Hearing

None

13. Consideration of Resolutions:

A. Resolution 24-34 Water Line Replacement/Repairs – Solicitation of Bids

Vice Mayor Wiggins made a motion to hear Resolution 24-34.

Vice Mayor Wiggins made a motion to approve Resolution 24-34. Alderman Sutton seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Resolution 24-34 passed.

B. Resolution 24-35 Oakland Sports Complex PH 1-B Architect & Engineering Agreement

Alderman Hummel made a motion to hear Resolution 24-35.

Alderman Sutton made a motion to approve 24-35. Vice Mayor Wiggins seconded the motion. Four (4) voted in favor, one (1) opposed. Voting in favor were Alderman Sutton, Vice Mayor Wiggins, Aldermen Cates and Alderman Hummel. Alderman Fisher cast the opposing vote. Resolution 23-35 passed.

C. Resolution 24-36 Oakland Sports Complex PH 1-B Grant Management Agreement

Vice Mayor Wiggins made a motion to hear Resolution 24-36.

Vice Mayor Wiggins made a motion to approve 24-36. Alderman Sutton seconded the motion. Four (4) voted in favor, one (1) opposed. Voting in favor were Vice Mayor Wiggins, Aldermen Sutton, Cates and Hummel. Alderman Fisher cast the opposing vote. Resolution 23-36 passed.

D. Resolution 24-37 Uncollected Utility Bills – Write off to Bad Debt

This Item was tabled until May 16, 2024 regular meeting.

E. Resolution 24-38 Village Park Subdivision Inspection Agreement PH 4

Vice Mayor Wiggins made a motion to hear Resolution 24-38.

Vice Mayor Wiggins made a motion to approve Resolution 24-38. Alderman Fisher seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed. Resolution 24-38 passed.

14. Other Items of Business

Reschedule the April 24, 2024 Budget Work session to Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 6pm

15. Approval of Invoices

One (1) invoice was presented for approval, MTAS – over 45 days.

Attorney Minor suggested to table this issue until he, Town Manager Ellis and Recorder Bullard contacted MTAS related to continuing with the Oakland Municipal Code codification.

Alderman Cates made a motion to table payment of invoice 19083, dated 7/15/2021 in the amount of \$3,650. Alderman Hummel seconded the motion. The motion passed.

16. Meeting Adjourned

Alderman Cates made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Date: April 18, 2024



H. Michael Brown, Mayor



K. Yvonne Bullard, City Recorder