

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF BRISTOL, TENNESSEE  
CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

**September 20, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The City of Bristol, Tennessee Called City Council meeting was brought to order by Mayor Mahlon Luttrell on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 10:00 A.M. in the conference room at the Ewell L. Easley Annex.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present: Mayor Mahlon Luttrell, Vice Mayor Vince Turner, Councilwoman Margaret Feierabend, Councilman Chad Keen, and Councilwoman Lea Powers.

Others Present: City Manager William Sorah, City Attorney Danielle Smith, City Recorder Mary Lee Williams, Director of Development Services Tim Beavers, Interim Director of Finance Hollie Verran, Director of Community Relations Jon Luttrell, Director of Economic Development Tom Anderson, and other members of City staff.

The purpose of this called meeting is to conduct a public hearing and consider on second reading the adoption of Ordinance 21-13 which establishes the property tax rate for Fiscal Year 2022.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**Ordinance 21-13 – An Ordinance to Establish the Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022**

City Manager Bill Sorah summarized that every four years the Sullivan County Property Assessor reappraises real property in Sullivan County for the purpose of establishing a certified property tax rate. The last appraisal was done in 2017 and yielded a certified tax rate of \$2.1612 per \$100 of assessed value. This year, the reappraisal determined the City to have a total tax base assessment of \$785,801,513 which yields a certified property tax rate of \$1.9863. This rate was presented to Council on first reading for consideration September 7<sup>th</sup> and received unanimous approval. This public hearing is according to statute and later on this agenda is second reading consideration.

There were no public comments.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

**A. Adoption of New Ordinances (Second Reading):**

**Ordinance 21-13 – An Ordinance to Establish the Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022**

This item was summarized during the Public Hearing portion earlier on this Agenda. Vice Mayor Vince Turner motioned to approve and Councilwoman Lea Powers seconded. There was no discussion and the ordinance passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

The next Council work session is on September 28<sup>th</sup> and will start with an attorney-client privileged meeting also known as an executive session. Council will hear from the attorney who is evaluating the opportunity for litigation or other potential strategies in dealing with the Bristol Virginia Landfill. She will brief Council via zoom as she is based in Richmond. Once that is concluded, the meeting will return to normal session. There was some discussion about the regulations for holding an executive session.

**CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Councilman Chad Keen asked if there have been any updates from Bristol, Virginia City Manager Randy Eads about the status of the drilling at their landfill. City Manager Sorah stated he has not received any information other than it is an on-going process. Councilwoman Powers shared information about the landfill that was presented by Bristol, Virginia at their public information meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup>. She would like to know the status of having health data collected. City Manager Sorah said the EPA does not plan on coming back unless the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has some new evidence of additional findings that were not found last summer and he gave further details.

Councilwoman Powers would like to know what the options are. People are upset, it is making people sick, affecting quality of life, and cannot be a healthy situation. What about capturing air and water quality data so that it can be reviewed on an ongoing basis for evaluation to be able to inform people they are not in imminent danger of toxicity—a health risk assessment. The City Manager responded it is his understanding that is currently taking place. Senator Lundberg requested the state health department to become involved and they will respond to him. Council would like to receive an update from Senator Lundberg on the status. Councilwoman Margaret Feierabend would like information as to what the health study that is underway entails, what it involves, who does it, what do they look at, etc., and make sure the local health departments are involved. The City Manager said he would make these requests on behalf of Council. He explained the federal people have greater resources and a greater talent pool to assess the situation and it is and has been underway. This is not the skill set of the local health departments.

Councilman Chad Keen asked for clarification for a public health assessment—is there one in progress? City Manager Sorah replied the process started in June and the preliminary findings from the EPA were sent to Council. For a six-week period, they brought in 24/7 air monitoring equipment and he explained they were moved around to try to capture the best footprint characterization they could. The six-week assessment was completed in mid to late July and they began to look at their early findings. They were going to refine those as it was not the final disposition of the EPA opinion of the matter. The capture of the characterization of the air ended in July, but the processing of that data is ongoing. The EPA sends their information to ATSDR which is a federal public health agency that deals specifically with environmental risks. They are really the agency that is charged with the responsibility of determining if there is a public health risk from environmental damages or any environmental activity. They characterize that specifically to public health.

Councilwoman Powers said they want the public health assessment to be ongoing, not for just six weeks, and if they won't then the state health department should be asked to continue the collection of data. City Manager Sorah stated he asked the EPA about that and they were very clear that unless there was some compelling reason in the analysis of the data collected they would not be back with the canisters for further collection. Councilwoman Powers feels it is unacceptable for the EPA to say they are not

coming back. The City Manager replied the EPA said the only caveat was if during their analysis ATSDR found a compelling reason in the existing data to re-do anything.

Councilman Keen requested City Attorney Danielle Smith to ask the attorney presenting to Council next week if getting a private entity to do a public health assessment is an option. He would also like to know if there is anything to the chemicals in the assessment that the EPA does not consider as being problematic, but for which OSHA recognizes toxicity levels. He wants to make sure the legislators have current information.

Discussion followed concerning the status of various tasks, requests for proposals, multi-sports facilities, and transitional housing along with other similar topics. In addition, there was conversation about several proposed items on the agenda for the September 28<sup>th</sup> work session.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:06 A.M.

  
Mary Lee Williams, City Recorder

  
Mahlon Luttrell, Mayor