MINUTES OF THE CITY OF BRISTOL, TENNESSEE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING

May 7, 2019

CALL TO ORDER:
The City of Bristol, Tennessee City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Margaret Feierabend on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the Slater Center Auditorium.

ROLL CALL:
Present: Mayor Margaret Feierabend, Vice Mayor Michelle Denise, Councilman Chad Keen, Councilwoman Lea Powers, and Councilman Jack Young.

Others Present: City Manager William Sorah, City Attorney Danielle Kiser, City Recorder Tara Musick, and members of City staff.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:
Roger Leonard from State Street United Methodist Church gave the invocation and Vice Mayor Michelle Denise led the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA ADDITIONS AND / OR CHANGES: None.

PROCLAMATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS:
National Police Week / Peace Officer’s Memorial Day – Councilman Jack Young read a proclamation designating May 12-18, 2019 as National Police Week and May 15, 2019 as Peace Officer’s Memorial Day. Captain Walter Brown was in attendance to accept the proclamation. Captain Brown thanked the Council for recognizing police officers and the sacrifices made locally and across the state.

Economic Development Week – Councilwoman Lea Powers read a proclamation designating the week of May 6-11, 2019 as Economic Development Week. Tom Anderson, Economic Development Director, and Jon Luttrell, Business Development Specialist, were in attendance to accept the proclamation. Mr. Luttrell thanked Council and talked about the Hiring Expo on April 25th that resulted in the employment of approximately 250 persons and the upcoming Small Business Festival May on 9th.

National Emergency Medical Services Week – Vice Mayor Denise read a proclamation designating the week of May 19-25, 2019 as National Emergency Medical Services Week. Darrell Mears, Interim Battalion Chief, was in attendance to accept the proclamation. He expressed his appreciation for all the work and training of the City’s EMS personnel and for the Council and staff acknowledgement of their efforts to help keep the public safe.

National Public Works Week – Mayor Feierabend read a proclamation designating May 19-25, 2019 as National Public Works Week. Wes Ritchie, Public Services Manager, was in attendance to accept the proclamation. He thanked Council on behalf of all the employees in the Public Works Division.
National Travel and Tourism Week – Councilman Chad Keen read a proclamation designating May 5-11, 2019 as National Travel and Tourism Week. Courtney Cacatian, Executive Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau, was in attendance to accept the proclamation.

Bristol First Program Award – Blake McCracken, Equipment Operator II for the Utilities Division of Development Services, was nominated for the Bristol First Award by Mr. Ken Keith. Mr. McCracken was nominated for his high level of service and for making a contribution to the City of Bristol that enhanced the image of the City while he served Mr. Keith in an outstanding courteous manner in an emergency situation. Terrie Talbert, Director of Community Relations, presented the award to Mr. McCracken.

PRESENTATIONS: None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

APPEARANCE OF CITIZENS: None.

APPOINTMENTS:

Community Development Advisory Committee – City Council addressed the vacancy of four seats on the Community Development Advisory Committee. Ms. Ella Kane, Ms. Marjorie Tester, Mr. Steven Willinger, and Mr. Daniel Witcher were unanimously appointed to the Community Development Advisory Committee to serve a term of office ending April 30, 2022.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

A. First Reading of New Ordinances:

Ordinance 19-1 – An Ordinance to Rename Pine Circle Drive to Andover Drive

City Manager Bill Sorah explained this request came from the City of Bristol, Virginia as part of their NextGen, or Next Generation, E-911 process. They are renaming a certain streets to address issues with their upgrading of the E-911 system. Andover Drive is one of the streets that Bristol, Virginia is pursuing a renaming. They have requested Pine Circle Drive, which extends approximately 45 feet into Bristol, Tennessee, be renamed as Andover Drive. This request went before our Planning Commission on April 15th and received a favorable recommendation. If approved on first reading, there will be a public hearing and second reading at the June 4th meeting. City Manager Sorah then requested David Metzger, Traffic Engineer, give further details.

Mr. Metzger explained Andover Drive is in the far western portion of Bristol, Virginia. There are currently two sections of roadway that intersect each other that carry the name Pine Circle Drive in Bristol, Virginia. One is collinear with Shankel Mill Road in Bristol, Tennessee which dead ends east of Andover Drive and will retain the name of Pine Circle Drive. The other is collinear with Andover Drive and intersects with Grove Park Drive in Bristol, Tennessee. This is the section they are renaming Andover Drive in Bristol, Virginia. The portion of Pine Circle Drive in Bristol, Tennessee that intersects with Grove Park Drive is the point of this request. Pine Circle Drive in Bristol, Tennessee is less than
45 feet long and Bristol, Virginia requested Bristol, Tennessee consider renaming this short portion of roadway to Andover Drive to assist them with 911 compliance. There are no adjacent addresses in Bristol, Tennessee off Pine Circle Drive and there is only one adjacent property which is off Grove Park Drive and is a heavily wooded, undeveloped property so City staff has no objection to the name change. If the ordinance is approved the change will be coordinated with Bristol, Virginia to take place August 1, 2019 to allow time to address any issues with addresses in Virginia.

Council Young made a motion to approve the ordinance and Councilwoman Powers seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote.

Since there were several in attendance with specific interest in Resolution 19-34, Mayor Feierabend requested the order of the agenda be changed to present this resolution prior to continuing with the first reading of the two remaining ordinances.

Resolution 19-34 – A Resolution Authorizing the Donation of Real Property to Sullivan County for Public Use

City Manager Sorah stated this resolution authorizes the donation of surplus real property located at 135 River Road, Bluff City, Tennessee to Sullivan County, Tennessee. The property was acquired in January of 1996 at a sum of $34,650 for the purpose of establishing a fire and emergency services station. During this time, the City had annexed to the crossroads of Piney Flats at Allison Road. It was necessary to acquire the property to extend emergency services into that area. Subsequent to that, in the early 2000s the City deannexed that area yielding a large portion of the Highway 11-E corridor all the way back to the river leaving this property at the extreme southern end and not a property that would be used for the purpose intended.

Recently, Sullivan County inquired about the acquisition of the property for the purpose of establishing a Sullivan County Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Station. The creation of an EMS station at that location has benefits to both the City, Sullivan County, and that greater area. Staff recommends relinquishing this property to Sullivan County for that purpose.

Councilman Young asked for information on the conditions for the donation. City Manager Sorah explained the property must be used for a public purpose. If in the future the County decides to use the property for another public purpose that is acceptable. However, if they decide otherwise it can be returned to the City or if they give it to a non-profit organization the City is to be reimbursed the value of the property. In essence, the City is providing it to the County for a public purpose.

Councilwoman Powers made a motion to approve the resolution and Councilman Keen seconded.

Councilwoman Powers spoke about the history of the cooperation between the City and County and how important that was and is to the community.

Mayor Feierabend commented on the appropriateness of this donation taking place at the same meeting as the proclamation designating EMS Week.

The resolution passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Sullivan County Mayor Richard Venable thanked City Council for the generous donation to the people of Sullivan County. He values the partnership with the City and the progress that has been made over years past and will be in the years to come. He expressed his appreciation to the City for working through some difficult times.
Commissioner Mark Vance spoke about his service to the community over the years in EMS and that he approached the City about buying the property. He jokingly suggested the City donate the property to the County to build an EMS station and was pleasantly surprised the City agreed to do so. He expressed his appreciation for the City and County working together as a team to benefit the community as a whole. He also expressed appreciation of the property donation on behalf of the men and women who provide local EMS.

The meeting continued in the original order of the Agenda with consideration of the remaining two ordinances.

**Ordinance 19-2 – An Ordinance to Adopt a Budget, and Appropriate Funds for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020**

City Manager Sorah stated this ordinance is the culmination of five months of work by staff and Council to compile and review the budget, ensuring it aligns with goals of Council, and establishing metrics for performance by the various departments in meeting the objectives set forth by this Council earlier this year.

Ordinance 19-2 is considered on first reading this evening for the formal adoption of the Fiscal 2020 Budget and Appropriations. The budget totals $121,058,532 and reflects an increase of $14,245,711 which is a 13.3 percent increase from the Fiscal 2019 Budget. This ordinance establishes the property tax levy at the current rate of $2.1612 per $100 of assessed value. The proposed budget also maintains the current solid waste fees, stormwater fees, water and sanitary sewer rates. It is a balanced budget with a drawdown of $533,000 from the General Fund to support much needed capital projects.

The municipal portion of the budget stands at $62,012,492 an increase of $3,635,232 from the Fiscal 2019 Budget. The proposed budget focuses on the key themes of economic development, education, and infrastructure. The budget continues all City programs and services as in the past while making strategic capital investments to meet the future needs of the community. Major projects include the redevelopment of the 700 block of Shelby Street, Downtown streetscape and pedestrian improvements, reconstruction of East Cedar Street, renovations at the water filtration plant, and the resurfacing of approximately fourteen lane miles of roadway. Key partnerships include the continued development of Tri-Cities Airport’s Aerospace Park, site development at Bristol Business Park, and improvements at Partnership Park II. The proposed budget includes a wage adjustment of three percent for City employees and an incremental adjustment for those employees identified as being below market wage for comparable positions in other communities.

The school system portion of the budget totals $59,046,040, an increase of $10,610,479. This increase, and the increase of the overall budget, is primarily attributable to the $14,250,000 increase of funds in the School Capital Facilities Fund. This fund accounts for the disbursement of proceeds from the Sullivan County school construction bonds and will be available for the first year of construction of the new middle school.

The Fiscal 2020 Budget remains unchanged from what was presented, discussed, and tweaked by City Council during the April 23rd work session. If Ordinance 19-2 is approved on first reading, a public hearing and second reading will be scheduled for the June 4th meeting of City Council.

Councilman Young asked with the drawdown, if we will continue to maintain a reserve of five months in our fund balance. City Manager Sorah replied yes, that the City’s financial plan requires at least a
three month reserve, recommends four months, and we will still have more than five months reserve after the drawdown.

Vice Mayor Denise questioned that with a balanced budget last year, were we still able to add money to the reserve and if so, what amount. City Manager Sorah confirmed it was a balanced budget and approximately $600,000 was added to the fund balance reserve. Approximately two-thirds of the amount was due to a very aggressive pursuit of delinquent property tax collection and was primarily from one entity. Therefore, this is not something that will occur annually. Vice Mayor Denise then pointed out that there was a balanced budget last year, there was no increase in property taxes, $600,000 was added to reserves, a balanced budget is being presented this year also without raising property taxes, and there will still be five months reserves after the $533,000 drawdown.

Councilman Young made a motion to approve the resolution and Councilman Keen seconded.

Councilman Young expressed his appreciation for the budget process that commenced six months ago and the importance of maintaining the reserve in fund balance. He acknowledged the hard work of staff throughout the process and was appreciative of the opportunity for Council involvement at the day-long work sessions.

Mayor Feierabend asked who the key people are in the budget preparation. City Manager Sorah responded that would be all department heads and their staff for the departmental budget development process. The key players of the budget team for total budget preparation, including the capital improvement plan, include Tara Musick, Director of Finance; Hollie Verran, Accounts Manager; Mary Lee Williams, Director of Administration; and Tim Beavers, Director of Development Services.

Vice Mayor Denise reiterated the stability of the property tax rate over the last several years while cutting back the budget during lean years, and the sacrifices of the employees during those times. She expressed her appreciation to the employees for their dedication and hard work especially during those lean years and how pleased she is that this budget includes a three percent wage increase for all employees as well as an incremental adjustment for those employees identified as being below market wage for comparable positions in other communities.

Councilwoman Powers also said she was pleased about the across the board wage increase and the incremental adjustment for those employees identified as being below market wage, but clarified the incremental adjustment will take another four years to get everyone to the appropriate pay scale as identified. She reiterated although the budget is balanced, it is still thin and some capital projects are still on hold. She is looking forward to when the staff wage adjustments are met, the needs of new rolling stock can be met, and more of the capital improvements can be addressed while trying to keep the tax rate low.

Mayor Feierabend stated that we do not have the tax base of neighboring communities as we also have a smaller population, but still have a lot of the same costs and responsibilities as they do. There is a fine line between keeping the tax rates affordable for businesses and residents while still trying to fund capital projects, to be competitive with employee wages, and provide quality of life for the community. She expressed her appreciation to staff not only for presenting a balanced budget through the years, but also seeking additional funding sources and partners to assist with various projects and creatively meet some of the goals and objectives.

Councilman Keen agreed with prior Council comments and stated that most of the delayed capital projects have been within the school system. We need to move forward with these projects and the new middle school is part of that process. Council will be looking to the school board and administration to
help identify the next step. He feels the educational opportunities in the community is key to economic development.

As there were no further comments, a roll call vote was taken and Ordinance 19-2 passed unanimously on first reading.

Budget workshops will be held May 9th at the Slater Center Cafeteria and on May 30th at the Tennessee High School Auditorium. Both meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. with an opportunity for the public to speak with the department heads and any of their staff that are present and the budget presentation will begin at 6:30 p.m.

**Ordinance 19-3 – An Ordinance to Amend the Appropriation of Funds and Budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019**

City Manager Sorah explained this ordinance is our annual housekeeping measure to ensure the City is in legal compliance with the requirements for municipal budgets. It amends several different budgets based on expenditures such as the General Purpose School Fund, School Nutrition Fund, Chapter 420 Fund, Grant Fund, and Capital Equipment Fund. Most of these expenditures are related to additional grant funding, revenues from other governing agencies, or private contributions. The General Purpose School Fund is increased to reflect costs associated with the Stone Castle Fieldhouse project, textbook purchases, and additional grant funds. The Chapter 420 Fund is amended to reflect increased State sales tax generated by the Pinnacle retail development and distributed from the State to the City and its Industrial Development Board consistent with the development agreement. In addition, the Capital Equipment Fund is increased to address higher than anticipated costs for public safety equipment, replacement of a police cruiser damaged in an automobile accident, and the acquisition of two public works vehicles that were ordered during Fiscal 2018 but did not arrive until this fiscal year.

The General Purpose School Fund is amended to $41,187,392; School Nutrition Fund is increased to $1,994,000; Chapter 420 Fund is increased to $6,750,000; Grant Fund is amended to $140,309; and the Capital Equipment Fund is amended to $675,000.

Councilwoman Powers made a motion to approve the ordinance and Vice Mayor Denise seconded. The motion passed by a unanimous roll call vote. The public hearing and second reading of the ordinance will take place at the June 4, 2019 Council meeting.

**B. Adoption of Ordinances (Second Reading):** None.

**C. Resolutions:** (Presented and approved previously in the evening, immediately following Ordinance 19-1)

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

City Manager Sorah presented the Consent Agenda to Council. Councilwoman Powers made a motion for approval and Councilman Young seconded the motion. The following items were approved by unanimous Council vote:

- Minutes April 2, 2019 City Council Meeting
- Minutes April 23, 2019 City Council Work Session
- Resolution 19-35 A Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of a Replacement Patrol Rated Sport Utility Vehicle
Resolution 19-36  A Resolution Authorizing the Finance Director to Write Off Uncollectible Utility Receivables

Resolution 19-37  A Resolution Approving a Contract with the Tennessee Department of Transportation for the Maintenance of State Highways

Resolution 19-38  A Resolution Awarding a Bid for Upgrade of the Fuel Management System

Resolution 19-39  A Resolution Amending the Agreement for Engineering Services for Water Filtration Plant Motor Control Center Upgrade

Resolution 19-40  A Resolution Awarding a Bid for the Purchase of Equipment for Police Vehicles

Resolution 19-41  A Resolution Authorizing Submittal of an Application to the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development for a Tourism Enhancement Grant

BOARD OF EDUCATION LIAISON REPORT:

Dr. Gary Lilly, Director of Schools, reported the TN Ready Testing is complete and it went very smoothly. This is Teacher Appreciation Week and the district has many very high quality teachers and he commended them for being dedicated to the success of the students. There are lots of year-end activities in progress beginning with Class Night on Thursday, May 16th at 7 p.m. at Viking Hall. The Senior Walk is on May 20th which is when the seniors go back to the elementary schools they came from and talk to the elementary students who line the halls. This is important for the graduates as they reflect on their path, but it is also important for the elementary students and helps them visualize their future. Tennessee High graduation is on Friday, May 24th at 8 p.m. in the Stone Castle, if it there is no rain. On Saturday, May 25th the Tennessee On-Line Public School (TOPS) graduation is at 7 p.m. in the Frank Winston Auditorium. Dr. Lilly thanked Council and staff on behalf of the Board of Education for the allocation and increase to the school budget, as well as the contribution to the new middle school. This support allows the school to offer more and better opportunities to the students.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT:

City Manager Sorah began by saying as result of the Bristol Exchange meetings, there will not be a regular scheduled work session this month. The Small Business Festival is Thursday, May 9th through Saturday, May 11th and the Economic Development team has worked very hard with the group of entrepreneurs across the Tri-Cities to make this a valuable presentation. Everyone is invited to the event kick-off at Bristol Motor Speedway at 9 a.m. on Thursday morning.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Feierabend recognized members of the audience, and in particular, the candidates for the upcoming Council election in attendance which included Miles Vance, Mahlon Luttrell, Vince Turner, and Steve Willinger.
Councilman Young expressed his appreciation to Representative John Crawford for attending the Council meeting and for his representation of the area to the legislature in Nashville. He also expressed condolences for the family of Dr. John Gaines, former Council member of 16 years who served several terms as Mayor and Vice Mayor, as well as appreciation for the insight and perspective Dr. Gaines shared with him even before being elected to City Council. Early voting is in progress now for the upcoming Council election later this month and Councilman Young encouraged everyone to participate. Council represents all the people.

Councilman Keen mentioned the Small Business Festival and Start Up Tri Cities events and thanked the Economic Development staff and the area volunteers for their efforts to make them successful. He talked about the amphitheater at Dragway and the excitement of the upcoming Alabama concert. Councilman Keen thanked all the City employees, specifically Blake McCracken, and for the courtesy they show the citizens.

Councilwoman Powers commented on economic development, the industrial parks with infrastructure in place, an exceptional school system that is working to meet the needs of our workforce as it evolves, and that the City is in a wonderful position for great things to happen. She emphasized the cooperation and partnerships with other local entities and the importance they play in the next steps. She expressed her excitement concerning the date change for the Rhythm and Roots Festival and the new poster along with this year being the 20th anniversary of Border Bash and how these events complement each other. She gave kudos to the marketeers of downtown Bristol and the involvement/support of the private sector as well.

Mayor Feierabend talked about the Hiring Expo and the Small Business Festival being good examples of how we are approaching economic development. Reading Buddies, the mentoring program at elementary K through second grade, is winding up this week and she encouraged people to contact the school system to sign up for next year. She emphasized the importance of not only reading to and with the students, but also the relationships that develop between mentor and students. Household hazardous waste collection is on May 11th in Bristol, Virginia. Friends of Steele Creek will have their annual meeting on Saturday at 2 p.m. She expressed appreciation to the teachers in the area. On June 5th, our Police Department will be presenting a class on how to deal with an active shooters. There is a naming survey available and she encouraged participation. Regionalism indicators take several years for data to catch up and economic indicators for other areas such as Asheville, Chattanooga, and Nashville show they have recovered quicker than Bristol. Naming the region is important for economic development. The senior survey is on the City website and she encouraged the seniors to participate as it gives them a voice as well. She thanked the County Commissioners for their participation.

Mayor Feierabend spoke of Dr. Gaines and the important role he played in her life. Dr. Gaines approached her about coming on the Council in the 1990s. Mayor Feierabend was the first woman appointed Mayor in the City of Bristol, Tennessee. Dr. Gaines strongly supported and encouraged her in that role and over the years for which she is deeply grateful. She then thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in City government.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Tara E. Musick, City Recorder

Margaret Feierabend, Mayor