

ROME CITY COMMISSION

Monday, February 28, 2022

The Rome City Commission met at 6:30 p.m. this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Mayor Stevenson presided with Mayor Pro Tem Cochran and Commissioners Bojo, Beeman, Doss, Quick, Askew, Collins, and McDaniel present. Mayor Stevenson called on Pastor Young to open the meeting with prayer, and she led in the salute to the flag.

Minutes – February 14, 2022

The Minutes of the February 14, 2022 meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by an unanimous consent.

Scott Kasmar – Police Officer of the Year

Commissioner Askew presented a proclamation proclaiming PFC Scott Kasmar as the Rome Police Department Officer of the Year for 2021. In addition to Officer Kasmar's outstanding performance, Commissioner Askew read of a particular incident in 2021 in which Officer Kasmar went above and beyond the call of duty to assist an elderly citizen with food and medical needs.

Police Chief Denise Downer-McKinney and Assistant Chief Debbie Burnett were present during this celebration. Chief McKinney spoke of Officer Kasmar's high performance and noted that he was also Rome Police Officer of the Year for 2019.

Black History Month – Dedication to Education

Commissioner Beeman stated that, for Black History Month 2022, the City of Rome was recognizing citizens in the following three areas – education, small business ownership, and athletics.

Regarding dedicated service to the field of education, Commissioner Beeman announced that the following 36 employees of the Rome Board of Education who have 15 or more years of service will be recognized with a Certificate of Recognition:

- 1) Dennis Dillard
- 2) Sylvia Shields
- 3) Fredia Hanner
- 4) Carlene Turner
- 5) Ingrid Dowdy
- 6) Cynthia Morgan
- 7) Rufus Dowdy Jr
- 8) Lisa Johnson
- 9) Pamela Williams
- 10) Clarence Ray
- 11) Aquila Askew
- 12) Jennifer Perkins

- 13) Shannon Roper
- 14) Sharon Sublett
- 15) Catasha McDaniel
- 16) Portia Jones
- 17) Charleathia Lawrence
- 18) Kenneth Brown
- 19) Janice Buchanan
- 20) Faith Collins
- 21) Gail Veal
- 22) Rosa Brown
- 23) Gary Jones
- 24) Gloria Bradford
- 25) Aneatra Caldwell
- 26) Tamekia Campbell
- 27) Alecia Jiles
- 28) Jerome Parks
- 29) Curlene Robinson
- 30) Melody Burse
- 31) Torreann Willis
- 32) John Jester
- 33) Clara Kidd
- 34) Charisse Mann
- 35) Nicole Millsap
- 36) Caroline Threadgill

Rome Board of Education Superintendent Lou Byars was present, and Mr. Byars will present these Certificates of Recognition to the individual school system employees.

Several of these employees were present tonight and gathered for a group photograph.

Commissioner Beeman also recognized the following 15 trailblazers who are being honored for their accomplishment in business or athletics:

- 1) Sherica Bailey
- 2) Rickey Beeman
- 3) La'Shon Berry
- 4) Ron Brand
- 5) Israel Christopher
- 6) Marcus Dixon
- 7) James Hall Jr.
- 8) Wartanna Haywood
- 9) Dr. Eric Holland
- 10) Larry Kinnebrew
- 11) Brandy Moses
- 12) Charles Smith
- 13) Mayor Sundai Stevenson

- 14) Rodney Waters
- 15) Natalie Woods

These individuals, or members of their family, were present tonight. Each were honored with a Trailblazer proclamation and congratulated by the Rome City Commission. Mayor Sundai Stevenson is part of the “trailblazer” field and particularly recognized by Commissioner Beeman.

Water and Sewer Rate Resolution – 9% Increases

Commissioner Bojo presented a resolution, which would increase Rome’s Water and Sewer Rates by 9% effective March 22, 2022. Commissioner Bojo noted that this rate schedule includes a 9% rate increase for Water and Sewer Rates per unit and minimum charges. An automatic 9% increase shall be applied each year effective January 1st for the following three years – 2023, 2024, and 2025. Followed by an automatic 3% increase to be applied each year (effective January 1, 2026) for a period of six years (ending on December 31, 2031).

There was a lengthy discussion concerning this resolution in Caucus prior to tonight’s meeting. These large rate increases are necessary as Rome prepares for the massive upgrade at the Water Treatment Plant in order to meet new EPD Guidelines regarding water quality. The PFAS and PFOS contaminants are one of the primary needs for these new upgrades.

Commissioner Bojo moved to adopt this resolution as presented. Commissioner Collins seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Street Name Change – Sara Wright Way

Commissioner Cochran moved to adopt a resolution, which would rename that portion of West 8th Street running easterly from Avenue B to its terminus at the property of M. Wayne Robinson Builders (tax parcel # J13Y-471) to Sara Wright Way. Commissioner Bojo seconded the motion. This street name request was reviewed by the Public Works Committee, and they have recommended adoption.

This motion was unanimously approved.

Turner McCall Boulevard Parking Lot Lease Resolution

Commissioner Bojo moved to adopt a resolution, which would reassign the lease for city-owned property near the intersection of Turner McCall Boulevard and the Oostanaula River (a portion of tax parcel # J13Y-531). This portion of city-owned property had been leased to Hamilton Ridge Apartments LLC and used for part of the commercial parking lot at that site. In December 2020, the lease was reassigned to Keepsake Storage LLC and Freedom Storage LLC. This lease is now being assigned to Elsworth Plaza LLC and will be used for the Buffalo Wild Wings Restaurant that is being established at that site. The other terms of the lease, including the annual rent payment and escalator, are not altered. This new assignment does consent to the location and continued use of a dumpster within the parking area described in the parking lease. Commissioner Quick seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Z22-02-01 Rezone 707 East 2nd Avenue

Commissioner Quick presented rezoning file Z22-02-01, the request to rezone property located at 707 East 2nd Avenue and identified by Floyd County parcel # J14F-175 from Community

Commercial to Multi-Family Residential. The Planning Commission Staff has recommended approval, and the Planning Commission recommended approval via a 6-1 vote. Assistant Rome/Floyd Planner Brice Wood reviewed this file, displaying maps and photographs of the subject and surrounding property. Mr. Wood stated that the owner of the property wishes to remove the existing building formerly used by AT&T/BellSouth and replace it with a 31-townhome residential development. Mr. Wood noted that this property has been idle for several years. He also noted that this development is possible after the ULDC amendment was adopted by the City Commission on February 14, 2022.

Mayor Stevenson called a Public Hearing to order. There was no one to speak in favor or opposition to the rezoning request, and the Public Hearing was closed. Commissioner Quick moved to approve the request to rezone 707 East 2nd Avenue from Community Commercial to Multi-Family Residential. Commissioner Bojo seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Executive Session

Mayor Stevenson announced that an Executive Session was held prior to the beginning of tonight's meeting on the motion of Commissioner Collins, second of Commissioner Doss, and an unanimous vote. One litigation matter and one real estate matter were discussed, and no votes were taken. Commissioner Quick moved to adjourn Executive Session. Commissioner Bojo seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

American Legion – Shorter Avenue and Levee Property

Commissioner Cochran moved to revise and edit real estate deeds involving the levee, the baseball fields, and the Shanklin Attaway American Legion properties, subject to attorney approval. This motion would authorize the Mayor to execute the appropriate deeds and accept property donations on behalf of the City. Commissioner Quick seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

ARP Funds – Housing Incentives Allocation

Commissioner Bojo announced that previously the City Commission had authorized the allocation of \$1M of Rome's American Recovery Plan Act Funds to be used for housing incentives. To date, \$39,200 of that \$1M has been expended.

Since this original allocation, there has been significant changes in our local housing market. There are numerous housing developments under construction, or in the planning phases. The general consensus is these housing incentives are no longer applicable as originally designed. Commissioner Bojo moved to reallocate the remaining \$960,800 of the housing incentives back to the ARP Fund balance. These funds can be reallocated for other uses at a later date. Commissioner McDaniel seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Water and Sewer Committee

Commissioner Bojo announced that the Water and Sewer Committee meeting scheduled for March 3rd has been cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 7th in the Sam King Room.

Library Board

Commissioner Beeman announced that the Library Board has decided to begin opening the Library on Friday's from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. These new Friday hours will begin in May 2022.

Dean Street – Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful

Commissioner Beeman announced that, on February 24th from 8 a.m. until noon, a cleanup event was held on Dean Street and 19th Street. Approximately 128 students were involved, and Commissioner Beeman congratulated Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful Director Hannah Bagley and the students who did such an outstanding job in this cleanup event.

Landmarking Committee

Commissioner Doss announced that the Landmarking Committee continues to meet and determine the format for landmarking plaques. Additional work is ongoing for future landmarking applications.

Downtown Development Authority

Commissioner Quick announced that the Downtown Development Authority will meet on Thursday, March 10th at 8:30 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

Rome/Floyd County Planning Commission

Commissioner Quick announced that the Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, March 3rd at 2:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers.

Community Development Committee

Commissioner Collins announced that the Community Development Committee will meet on March 9th at 8:30 a.m. in the Carnegie Training Room.

Health Board

Commissioner McDaniel announced that the Health Board will meet on Thursday, March 10th at noon at the Floyd County Health Department.

General Administration Committee

Commissioner Collins announced that the General Administration Committee will continue their plan to meet to quarterly; however, the Committee can meet more often if needed.

Senator Ossoff

Commissioner Collins announced that Senator John Ossoff was recently in Rome and met with City officials regarding planned allocations for future transit funding.

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Commissioner McDaniel announced that a search has begun for the replacement of retiring Regional Commission Director Lloyd Frazier.

Parks and Recreation

Commissioner McDaniel announced that the topic of city parks continues to be discussed, and this will likely be a point of discussion at the March 25th City Commission Retreat.

Adjourn

With there being no further business, Mayor Stevenson adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith
City Clerk