

Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
Bluff City Board of Mayor and Aldermen  
January 5, 2016

Vice Mayor Harrington called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members present were (Ray Harrington) John Harrison, Sandra Madison, Tanya Cordle and Richard Bowling.

Prayer was given by Reverend Ron Whitaker followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes for the December 1, 2015 regular meeting were approved with a motion by Alderman Bowling. Second by Alderman Harrison. Vote was as follows: Alderman Harrison – Yes, Alderwoman Madison – Abstained, Alderwoman Cordle – Yes, Alderman Bowling- Yes. Motion carried.

Vice Mayor Harrington opened the floor for the following:

Citizen comments – First Section

Becky Buchanan of 750 Drybranch Road, thanked the board, Mr Fyre, Ms Greene and Chief Depew for the jobs they are doing. Mrs Buchanan thanked Hugh(Thomason) for the work he is doing to improve things. Mrs Buchanan stated that the problem that happened last week should have been fixed years ago when we were getting camera money. Mrs Buchanan asked City Attorney Paul Frye what the sunshine law was. Mr Frye stated that it was an open meetings act for Tennessee. Mr Frye stated that it would take a while and he would discuss it later with her.

Tommy Moore 4434 Bluff City Highway stated that he had a problem that had been going on about 6 months and it has gotten worse. Mr Moore asked when and how he was going to get his yard cleaned up. Mr Moore stated that it had a temporary fix. Mr Moore stated that the smell was so bad you can't stand it in his back yard and his driveway had only been washed off 1 time. Vice Mayor Harrington stated that he would have them out to pressure wash it as soon as there was a little warmer weather. Mr Harrington stated that they were working diligently to get it fixed with this grant but they are now putting a band-aide on it so to speak but it will be fixed as soon as the get the USDA Loan. Mr Moore asked if they were going to clean his yard. Mr Harrington stated yes. Mr Moore stated that he understands that the way to do it is to dig up the dirt and get rid of it. Mr Harrington stated that he was not familiar with the regulations. Mr Harrington stated that he would get Public Works Director Hugh Thomason to address it in the meeting.

David Smith of 200 Highland Circle stated that he went down there the first time and the sewer spill was bad and there were 2 gulley's toward the lake. Mr Smith stated that the only thing the city could do was bring a coffee can of lime down there and spread it. Mr Smith stated that it probably hurt his property value.

Carol Keith of 305 Lakeview Circle stated that we have a serious problem. Mrs Keith stated that people say you could not pay them to live in Bluff City. Mrs Keith stated that people that live here are on fixed incomes and there are 2 people at her house and her water bill costs \$114.00. Mrs Keith stated that we were not going to prosper until we quit covering things up. Mrs Keith asked if she could get a permit to have a march in February. Mrs Keith asked if the citizens would have a chance to vote whether to keep the Charter or not if things can't get any better. Mrs Keith

asked if Alderwoman Madison would bring it up for a vote and if Alderwoman Cordle would second it.

Vice Mayor Harrington thanked everyone for coming. Mr Harrington stated that they were working diligently to fix the problem as soon as they have the money to do it.

City Attorney Paul Frye reported that he had collected a little over \$11,000.00 this month in delinquent property taxes.

#### Comments from Board Members:

Alderman Harrison stated that it was going to take time and they are waiting on the money to fix the problem. Mr Harrison thanked everyone for coming.

Vice Mayor Harrington stated that it should have been fixed decades ago and the board then dragged their feet and did not get it done.

Alderwoman Madison stated that she wanted to drop the Charter. Vice Mayor Harrington stated that they were in Aldermen Comments right now. Ms Madison stated Bluff City is a mess and pray for Bluff City.

Alderwoman Cordle stated that things should have been done and she had no clue that this was going on until she was contacted the same day it was on the news. Ms Cordle stated that she had called all state officials and she was not making any excuses.

Alderman Bowling stated that he was glad to see everyone there tonight and he knows that we have some bad issues. Mr Bowling informed Mr Moore that his yard would be cleaned up and they had to get the pump station up and working. Property owner (Mrs Moore) asked how it was going to be cleaned up. Mr Bowling stated that he did not know they would have to do as EPA required. (Mrs Moore) stated that the driveway was not cleaned and the men put 3 bags of dirt down and then covered it with their dirt. Mr Bowling asked if she had told them not to come on her property. (Mrs Moore) stated him and he did not do anything anyway and he told them to move. Mr Bowling stated that he did talk to him about that. (Mrs Moore) stated that they would not live down there with what (unclear).

#### Report from Financial Officer

Sharon Green reported the financial statement as of November 30, 2015. Fund balances were as follows: General Fund - \$304,399.00, Sanitation - \$10,619.00, Special Police Fund- \$3,930.00, Debt Service - \$177,493.00, Sinking Fund - \$3,095.00, Reserve Fund- \$691.00, Water and Sewer Fund- \$311,349.00. Motion to approve the financial report was made by Alderman Bowling. Second by Alderman Harrison. All in favor. Motion carried.

Chief of Police Greg Depew reported the following:

Monthly report for December, 2015. Full report available at City Hall

Chief Depew reported that the Thanksgiving feed was successful and it would not have been possible with help from a lot of people. The Department was able to help provide Christmas for some families in town.

Chief Depew stated that they were having problems with some of the cruisers. They are down to 3 and the Durango. Chief Depew stated that new cruisers are around \$28,000.00 to purchase and to lease them he would have to provide more info to get amounts. Board instructed him to get with Sharon and get figures he needs. Alderman Harrison asked about fixing 1 or 2 of the vehicles and maybe buy one. Chief Depew stated that it might work.

Report from Public Works Director Hugh Thomason:

Mr Thomason stated that he was there to answer any questions they may have for him as they have his monthly report. Alderwoman Cordle asked when he notified the City Manager about the sewer problem. Mr Thomason stated that the first date was when the Moore's came back from vacation on 5-31-2015, the next incident was 11-29-2015 and again from the week of the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr Thomason stated that he probably told the City Manager that they had problems. Mr Thomason stated that his first responsibility was to notify TDEC within 24 hours and have written documentation to them within 5 days. Alderman Bowling asked if TDEC inspected after cleanup. Mr Thomason stated not typically. Ms Cordle asked if he told the owners they could move. Mr Thomason stated that the homeowner's daughter was giving him a hard time about it and he misspoke before he thought and said you can always move, but he tried to explain that they could no more pick up their house and move it than he could pick up the pump station and sewer line and move them. Mr Thomason stated that he later apologized for what he said. Ms Cordle asked if he stated that he had worked in it for years and had no problems. Mr Thomason stated that they had voiced concerns about their health and he was explaining that he had worked in it for years. Ms Cordle asked if he instructed his men to glue the cap on and Mr Thomason stated that he had them glue a pipe back on but the cap was not glued as it screws on and off. Ms Cordle asked if the station has an alarm on it. Mr Thomason stated that it did and the alarm activated and that Mark (from Public Works) was there working on it. Mr Thomason stated that they had cleaned up their mess as the standard is to put lime down for sanitation. Mr Thomason stated that they were going to do more clean-up on the site. Vice Mayor Harrington asked if they could use the backhoe and clean up the area. Man from audience (Don Weaver) stated that they could get on that bank from many places. Mr Moore stated that he did not want the backhoe on there as it may break the sewer line. Mr Thomason stated that they could when it warms up. Member of audience (David Smith) asked if there was a chance that another spill would happen if we had hard rain. Mr Thomason stated that the current bypass pump is larger than the two pumps that were there but there is always a possibility of a spill. From audience (Robin Moore) stated that she had lived there a long time and the trenches have never been there until this sewer problem started. Alderman Bowling stated that we should do what TDEC recommends to clean the area up. Vice Mayor Harrington stated to replace topsoil as soon as they can. Mr Thomason stated that he would get TDEC's recommendation in the morning.

No Sullivan County Commissioners were present.

Old Business:

Vice Mayor Harrington stated that they needed to decide on what they wanted on the sign for the Veteran's Memorial Park. Mr Harrington stated that they may need to have a workshop to discuss it. Workshop was set for January 12, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

New Business:

Alderman Harrison asked if they had heard anything about the sign. Vice Mayor Harrington stated that they were waiting on General Shale to see if they could get the labor donated. Alderwoman Cordle asked how much the sign ended up costing. Vice Mayor Harrington stated that he thought around \$4,500.00. Alderwoman Cordle asked if maybe the sign is not a priority with all the other things going on now.

Alderwoman Cordle asked City Attorney Paul Frye whenever the City Manager is out sick who is responsible for the day to day operations. Mr Frye stated that normally the Vice Mayor handled it.

Alderwoman Madison asked about dropping the Charter. Alderwoman Cordle stated that she thought they needed a motion. Alderwoman Madison made the motion. Alderman Bowling stated to let Mr Frye tell them what it involves. City Attorney Paul Frye stated that he would research it. Ms Cordle stated that from what she understands they can get a petition for the citizens to sign to get it put on the ballot for the next election. Ms Cordle stated that the city is turning its back on the citizens. Alderman Harrison stated he did not know how she is saying that. Ms Cordle stated that's the way I feel John. Man from audience (David Smith) stated what about you when the water was coming under your house they did not come down there and fix it and you still have mold under your house. Alderman Harrison shouted I went to jail over that too. Vice Mayor Harrington and Alderman Richard Bowling asked everyone to calm down. Alderman Harrison stated we are not turning nothing on the city we are taking care of it as best as we can until we get that money, I don't care what you say. Mr Harrison stated that this crap that is going on behind everybody's back is getting old too. Mr Harrison stated we need to do what the citizens want and we are not doing it. (Argument ensued between Alderwomen Cordle and Alderman Harrison with Mr Harrison stating that she had been going behind his back turning these two against me.) Alderwoman Madison stated no John we ain't turned against you. Mr Harrison stated that he had people coming to him and telling him this stuff. Ms Madison stated that was a lie. Vice Mayor Harrington stated let's calm down. Member of audience stated you all are not going to solve anything by arguing. Alderman Harrison stated the city could lose the water/sewer grant. Argument continued. Alderwoman Cordle stated that she was going to tell the truth and if it makes everybody mad she doesn't care. Alderman Harrison stated you would rather loose the damn sewer grant and how are you going to fix it if you loose it. Vice Mayor Harrington told them to calm down. Vice Mayor Harrington explained that if the state doesn't think we are competent enough to continue on with things like this, they can rip it from under us and we won't get anything. From audience (Carol Keith) stated we lost our church. From audience (David Smith) stated we are not incompetent. Alderman Harrison stated that right there bringing the camera in here on everything is what is keeping us looking incompetent, being on the news that's what's doing it. From audience (Don Weaver) stated they have a right to come in. Mr Harrison stated they have a right to come but why call them every chance you get. Alderwoman Cordle stated she had never called the news that the Moore's called them. Alderwoman Madison stated she was down there but she did not call. From audience (Ms Moore) stated that she came to Mr Harrison for help and he said he did what he could do and he could not get ahold of Hugh. Mrs Moore stated you couldn't get ahold of him that's right. (Mrs Moore) said we are the bad people and Mr Harrison stated no you are not the bad people. From the audience (Ms Moore) stated the only reason they hooked the pump up was because it was on the news. Alderman Harrison stated we did not know anything about this; you should have come to us. Mrs Moore stated this is not our fault. Alderwoman Madison stated it's not your fault. Mrs Moore stated really.

Mr Harrison stated how am I saying it's your fault, why didn't you or why didn't Robin come to me, I talk to her at least 3 to 4 times a week. Ms Moore stated he should have taken care of it, it should have never (sentence interrupted) Mr Harrison stated Robin why didn't you say something to me I come in there all the time. Audience member (Don Weaver) stated probably afraid you'd get her job like you did the other one. Alderman Harrison stated that was uncalled for, he needs to leave talking crap like that. Vice Mayor Harrington stated keep it down. Vice Mayor Harrington stated Paul you will research (sentence interrupted) Alderman Harrison stated we didn't have nothing to do with the job (sentence interrupted) Vice Mayor Harrington stated John please let's move along.

Vice Mayor Harrington called for any new business. Alderwoman Madison stated about the charter can I bring that up. Mr Harrington stated he is going to research that. From audience (David Smith) stated we don't want to research it we want it gone. Alderwoman Madison stated yes we do.

#### Citizen comments – Second Section

Don Weaver of 4336 –C1 Bluff City Highway asked how we turned in Nashville about our water. Sharon Greene / Finance Officer stated that we received a letter this week stating the things they have to address and get the resolutions back to them for approval. Mr Weaver asked what percentage our water losses were. City Engineer Dave Wilson stated that the percentage was down this year. Mr Weaver asked if they were aware that we don't have a leak detector. He was informed that we do and it works. Mr Weaver stated that he had 4 people tell him that it doesn't and they have not been out with it. Mr Weaver stated that we have an apparatus on the water tank that is supposed to tell you our level and it has not worked since you put it up and I bet you are going to say it has. Mr Weaver stated if it isn't working we need one and it is a high dollar piece.

Carol Keith thanked Vice Mayor Harrington for the job he is doing during the meeting. Mrs Keith stated we can't get anything resolved with arguments. Vice Mayor Harrington stated no. Mrs Keith encouraged Alderwoman Cordle and Alderwoman Madison to stand for what is right. Mrs Keith asked the aldermen to take into consideration about James. Mrs Keith asked what she needs to do to get a permit for a march. Mr Harrington stated that she needs to come to City Hall. Mrs Keith stated that the Chief got more evidence about the writing in their Church and asked him to look into it. Mrs Keith stated that she could put up a reward.

James Richardson 309 Fox Drive stated that he wanted to explain how the pumps (pump station) work. Mr Richardson stated that the floats have been above the inlet ever since the director has been here so the warning will be too late. Mr Richardson stated that being as though the floats are up that high it allows the water to backflow down the inlet behind those houses. Mr Richardson asked why the right action wasn't taken beforehand. Mr Richardson stated he hate that the media had to get involved before it happened. Mr Richardson asked if a request for the pump had been put into the City Manager after the first incident and were the funds approved. Mr Richardson stated that the pump situation had been discussed for years but that did not keep them from fixing them and keeping them within regulation.

With no other business, motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Harrison. Second by Alderman Bowling. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Irene Wells, Mayor

Vice Mayor RAY HARRINGTON

Attest this 5<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2016

Sharon Greene  
Sharon Greene, City Recorder