

Minutes
Bluff City Board of Mayor and Aldermen
Special Called Meeting
October 9, 2024

Mayor Broyles called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Members present were Jerry Malone, Lori Staton, Carol Keith, Ben Adams and Lisa Arnold

Prayer was given by Carol Keith, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Greg Depew

Mayor Broyles opened the floor for the following:

Mayor Broyles stated that this is a Board requested meeting and we will be working from an Agenda presented by the Board, specifically Alderwoman Staton. We will stay exactly on the Agenda. Mayor Broyles asked everyone involved to remain as civil and as respectful as possible.

First Session - Public Comments

James Roberts of 231 Lakeview Drive stated I've come before you tonight as a citizen of Bluff City. I can attest that I have never found another area like North East Tennessee, Western North Carolina, or Southwest Virginia. Over the last few years, I have become aware of a lack of personal accountability and leadership. Mr Roberts stated on Monday I filed with the Municipal Court of Bluff City a petition for injunctive relief for infringement upon Citizen Comment, Free Speech and Due Process. Our Judge determined that he lacked the jurisdiction to hear the case. Due to the over worked court system the petition could not be heard before tonight's meeting. The infringement was only the first of a long line of grievances perpetrated by the current Mayor / Town Manager. I filed this on behalf of the citizens of Bluff City. It is my hope that this board's decision tonight will allow every resident and town employee to breathe a sigh of relief.

Carolyn Payne of 4818 Bluff City Highway stated for years I have been coming down here and I have been speaking on behalf of the citizens and the employees of Bluff City. The integrity that should be shown to the Board, Employees and the Citizens of the Town of Bluff City, has been flawed. The employees are in fear of losing their jobs every day.

Kimberly Arwood 353 Kings Road in Piney Flats voiced concern about an Alderman posting a comment about a police car floating down the river in Elizabethton. The policeman made it to safety. He made a comment that Mayor Broyles may have the Chief check out this car and may get a real deal. Being a person that has been working with the people and seeing the devastation on people's faces, I can't sit at home and not say anything. Mrs Arwood stated how dare you put that on facebook with laughing emoji's. I am personally offended by this.

Julie Venable of 209 Smith Street Ext stated she is correct about the photo. Ms Venable asked if the City has done anything for those people or has the Family Committee. Ms Venable stated, Mayor Broyles, I believe you should step down from being Mayor and City Planner.

Discussion / Action - Relieve the duties of the position of Town Manager currently held by the Mayor of Bluff City, effective immediately and hire Michelle Roberts as Town Manager

in the interim, until the job of Town Manager is filled permanently by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Mayor Broyles opened the floor for Board comments. Alderwoman Staton stated I did write this. I want to nominate Michelle (Roberts) for the position. Ms Staton asked Mrs Roberts to speak. Mrs Roberts presented her resume which includes her time in the military. Mrs Roberts stated I have been responsible for multiple budgets. Mrs Roberts reported that prior to her current position, I was a leader of Supply Chain Management Department at the V.A. in Johnson City. Mrs Roberts continued to discuss her responsibilities. Alderman Adams asked Mrs Roberts if she had ever cussed an employee before? Mrs Roberts stated I have never cussed out an employee before, however I have had similar grievances brought to me in my supervisory position and have to be the one to mend those situations.

Alderman Malone asked Mrs Roberts if she was going to quit her job at the V.A. and come to work here full time, or how much time do you have to spend here. Mrs Roberts stated I have considered that aspect but my goal is not to quit me job with the Federal Government. I have looked at the time management aspect of it. I will have ability to devote time to this town. Mr Malone asked if they had discussed a pay scale. Mrs Roberts stated no, and my reasons for being here are not based on anything compensation related. Mr Malone stated she has a very impressive resume.

Vice Mayor Keith stated your door will be open to every employee that needs to talk to you. Mrs Roberts stated yes, and I will say, as my husband mentioned earlier about integrity, I value the oath of office that I have had to take over the years.

Alderman Adams requested that Mayor Broyles resign his position as Mayor. Mayor Broyles stated that is not on the Agenda. Alderman Adams stated I believe we have discussion and comments. Mayor Broyles stated I refuse. Alderman Adams commented that this meeting was supposed to be on Monday and that was denied. Mr Adams read a communication he had with the Mayor. Mr Adams stated that the format for October 10th should be changed from a Special Called Meeting not a workshop.

Vice Mayor Keith voiced concern about being asked to sign a check as the second signatory as she has not signed paperwork to be able to do so.

Alderman Malone stated that he had not been contacted by anyone about looking into hiring someone.

Alderwoman Staton stated that she is the one that did this agenda. Mrs Staton stated that she met Michelle and James Roberts and when I spoke to them about another situation that is going on, they wanted me to be informed. After speaking to them, I thought those are two very capable people and I would love for the Board to meet them.

City Attorney Paul Frye stated you can vote on an item that is on the Agenda. Alderwoman Staton made a motion to hire Michelle Roberts as Interim Town Manager until we hire one with MTAS. Second by Vice Mayor Keith. Alderman Adams reported problems such as making a hostile working environment and

controlling people by fear. More discussion was held about complaints. City Attorney Paul Frye stated at a Special Called Meeting or a Regular Meeting, when it is time for Citizen Comment, a citizen can talk on any subject they wish to talk about. Alderman Adams stated that, in reference to a house that needed condemned, we were supposed to get a Code Inspector. The person that was supposed to be training for that, turned in the equipment and we no longer have anyone for that position. Alderman Adams asked Mayor Broyles if he would resign. Mayor Broyles stated I will not. Alderman Adams stated that they need to call a Special Called Meeting to have him removed as Mayor. Vice Mayor Keith reported another citizen complaint about the Mayor wanting a trailer that was in the front yard moved or he would have the house condemned.

Mayor Broyles stated we have a motion and second on the floor for the Board to hire Michelle Roberts as Town Manager.

City Recorder Sharon Greene asked to speak. Ms Greene stated Ben (Alderman Adams) when I called you at the same time that I called the Vice Mayor, I was needing a check to mail the bills out. Did I call and ask you to sign a check for me? Alderman Adams stated absolutely.

City Attorney Paul Frye stated to remove the Mayor there would have to be a recall petition. With a Motion and Second on the floor to hire Michelle Roberts as Interim City Manager, the vote went as follows: Alderman Malone stated I have no objection to hiring her. I do have concern about the details of what we are going to pay her and what she expects. Can we sit down and work out the details. Alderwoman Staton stated I can help you with that. When this happened before City Attorney Paul Frye said the job description is in the Charter and we could set up a workshop to discuss pay and anything else to go along with that. With a motion and second on the floor, vote went as follows: All in favor. Motion carried.

Mayor Broyles swore Michelle Roberts in as Town Manager.

Second Session - Citizen Comments

James Roberts of 231 Lakeview Drive asked City Attorney Paul Frye to clarify for the Board, the procedure for removal of the Mayor. Mr Frye stated a recall petition per State law. Mr Roberts stated the board has other options.

David Harmon of 200 Holston Drive stated that County Commissioner Glover had stated that Mayor Broyles told him that he would tell the people what they needed to know.

Carolyn Payne of 4818 Bluff City Highway stated that the other way that removal of the Mayor is moral terpretude. Ms Payne stated that Mayor Broyles needs to turn in his keys and give a list of his passwords and anything else related to the position.

Shirley Clark of 932 Lona Lane stated I quit coming to the meetings. I was very interested in being on the Board but that didn't happen. You all said that the Board members do not have to answer questions during Citizens Comments. When I came in tonight it made me feel so much better.

Justin Widener of 364 Cedar Street stated a month ago I said I was going to run for Alderman and at that time I had a lot of support. There was a comment made by the Mayor stating I will sign this but I will not vote for you due to me stating I would back Vice Mayor Keith to help build this community back. This hurt me and I am here tonight as a citizen saying Sir you need to step down.

Chief Greg Depew I have to get this of my chest. Chief Depew stated in 1998 I walked the riverbank looking for 4 of my family members. It ain't funny, as 4 family members died in a flood. I don't appreciate getting a text about a funny LOL emoji about a Carter County cruiser where a deputy swam to shore to save his life because he was trying to save other people. We need to unite, serve the people and do our jobs.

Brian Hunt of 191 Lakeview Drive stated it is just like Mr Auger said, you have to keep the temperature. It's way too hot and the only way to cure this is for Jeff (Broyles) to step down.

Jeanann Sanders of 251 Jonesboro Drive stated I am the Court Clerk here. Ms Sanders stated as I sit here, I think to myself, I am sorry we are wasting your time, because I look at your face. Ms Sanders stated on the 27th I had to put my dog to rest and still came into work on Heritage Days. Mayor Broyles stated you certainly did. You gave me nothing but attitude that day. Ms Sanders stated in March of 2023 you took me out of the CMFO program that I took to do Sharon's job. You told me I was not prepared for that program. I said you haven't looked at my resume and you don't know my background.

Alderman Adams stated I want to apologize to all you employees. As Mr Roberts stated I have been too complacent. I should have talked to you all to see what was going on.

Vice Mayor Keith stated that she came to City Hall one day and the odor of sewer was strong. I called the Mayor told him that the girls could not sit in here, it's not healthy. He said I am the City Manager. Mrs Keith stated but you serve at the pleasure of the Board. Mrs Keith stated I will stand with you as long as you don't lie to me.

Alderman Malone stated I made a mistake by sending the photo of the cruiser. I sent it to the Mayor to probe him and not the Chief about picking out police cruisers. Chief Depew stated I accept your apology.

Alderwoman Staton stated I know a lot of towns are like this, but let's make Bluff City the best we can and letting everyone have the voice they deserve.

Vice Mayor Keith stated we can do it together.

Sarah Malone of 123 Hillcrest Road stated I know there is a lot of people in this room, some that are for you Mr Mayor and some that are not. I want to say I appreciate what you have done. I had no idea some of the things that have gone on. But I do appreciate what you have done for the City and I appreciate the Board. I want to say something about Mr. Adams friend. I was present during

Farmers Market and he did not cuss your friend out. Your friend was driving through tents of people and he put himself between the truck and the people. I am now the Chairperson of the Family Committee as Jeff's wife felt that she needed to due to the animosity that has went on in this town. I have had nothing but help from Jeff. The Committee has sent food and supplies to Erwin. Mrs Malone told Mayor Broyles I do appreciate you. Vice Mayor Keith stated to Mrs Malone we appreciate you and the Family Committee.

Alderman Adams stated I have known Euniece Blankenship for many years and I love her. As soon as I heard about this sewer issue, I couldn't believe it and the big shock I had was she was afraid to tell me about it. I love all you guys that work here and you don't deserve to work in that. Mr Adams stated if you have a problem you can talk to me about it and I will do what ever I can.

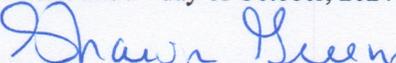
Alderwoman Staton stated Officer Holsclaw has been instrumental in taking all sorts of goods to the Elk Lodge in Elizabethton. On his days off he gets a four wheeler to deliver things to people who are stranded.

Vice Mayor Keith stated you have 4 people on this Board that will stand up for what is right.

Mayor Broyles congratulated Mrs Roberts and stated you can expect my full support in this transition. I will hold nothing back and I am ready to sit down when you are ready and pass anything along that she needs.

With no other business Mayor Broyles adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:44 p.m.


Lori Staton, Mayor

Attest this 9th day of October, 2024

Sharon Greene, Recorder / CMFO