

TOWN OF JONESBORO
Board of Aldermen
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 10, 2018
5:30 PM

A public hearing for the Town of Jonesboro Board of Aldermen was held on Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at the Jonesboro Town Hall Community Room commencing at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor James Bradford called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Present were: Mr. James Bradford, Ms. Nia Evans, Mr. Devin Flowers, Mr. Robbie Siadek, and Mr. Aaron Stringer. Ms. Janet Martin was not present.

An innovation was led by Rev. Reginald L. Staten, Bradford's pastor, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Siadek.

With no additions to the meeting agenda, Bradford informed the public that this hearing was called to publicly respond to an article published in the Jackson Independent by Mr. Herbert Simmons, Jr., owner of Sleep Inn Hotel. Before Bradford delivered his statement, he asked the Aldermen to each speak for themselves.

Evans expressed that Simmons knew of the problems the Jonesboro Water System experienced prior to building the hotel. She further stated that the Town, Bradford, and the Board were not responsible for the hotel's failures. Instead, she suggested instead that it was a failure of its leadership.

Siadek reiterated Evans's comment that Simmons knew of all problems facing the water system beforehand. He further stated that Simmons could have prevented the hotel's problems by building a pressure pump or reserve tank.

Stringer expressed that he was personally offended by the comments made by Simmons in the newspaper because it was a direct attack on the Board of Aldermen. He expressed sympathy that he knew major infrastructure projects were needed in the Town; however, he said Simmons's comments were disrespectful and a slap in the face.

Flowers said that he understood Simmons's concerns and frustrations. He said the Town should have worked closely with Simmons to prevent any incident from occurring.

Once the Board stated their comments, Bradford immediately responded to Flowers's comment about working with Simmons. Bradford stated that he does not do backroom deals. Bradford stated that he did everything he could to work with Simmons; however, Bradford expressed that he would not do anything illegal for Simmons.

Bradford then addressed the claims made by Simmons in the Jackson Independent article. Bradford explained that he did not sabotage Simmons and expressed that having a hotel was beneficial for the Town. Bradford further explained how the water system impacted Simmons's hotel and the steps he and the Town have taken to address all of Simmons's concerns. Bradford expressed that his response was based on fact, not opinion, and he wished it had not come to require a public hearing and statement.

With no public comments, Bradford entertained a motion to adjourn. Flowers motioned to adjourn; Stringer seconded. The public hearing adjourned at 6:07 p.m. Bradford stated that a three-minute break would be taken.

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Town of Jonesboro Board of Aldermen was held on Tuesday, April 10, 2018 at the Jonesboro Town Hall Community Room with a call to order commencing the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Flowers requested "3a. Zoning" be added to the agenda for informational purposes; Evans seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Flowers motioned to approve the agenda; Stringer seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved for the meeting.

Once the agenda was set, Bradford moved immediately to item "3a. Zoning" for discussion. Flowers inquired about the Zoning Board and the procedure for rezoning. Bradford stated that the Zoning Board has been inactive lately due to the loss of the chairman of the board, but he would be appointing a new chairman and would be calling a meeting soon.

The meeting minutes for the March 13, 2018 regularly scheduled meeting were motioned for approval by Flowers; Stringer seconded. The motion unanimously passed.

Bradford gave an update to the Board on the elevated water tank. He informed the Board that a specialist collected samples from the tank to see if the current paint could be painted over instead of entirely removed and repainted. He noted that the specialist expressed optimism that the results would allow the current paint to be painted over. The specialist provided an estimate for repainting the outside of the tank. Stringer asked if the paint on the inside of the tank was safe. Bradford said that he already had the paint inside the tank tested. Bradford reassured the Board the paint inside the tank was safe for drinking water. Siadek asked when the court date for the lawsuit against the company who painted the tank was scheduled for. Bradford told him February 2019 but noted that he would like to settle outside of court sooner if the company would cooperate.

Bradford explained that a resolution from the Board of Aldermen is required in order to get an Attorney General's opinion. The question the Town is seeking advice on is what the Town should do now that it has discovered property was transferred to the Jackson Parish Police Jury as a donation instead of fair compensation for the building of a community center and could have potentially violated the Louisiana State Constitution. Stringer motioned to pass the resolution; Flowers joined him as a second. The resolution passed unanimously.

Evans introduced a garbage receptacle ordinance; Stringer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A public hearing on the ordinance was scheduled for 5:30 p.m. before the next Board of Aldermen meeting.

Bradford accepted public comment on abandoned property. The comment expressed gratitude for addressing nuisance properties. Bradford informed the individual that this agenda item was concerning surplus property, not nuisance properties; however, he allowed the comment. An ordinance was introduced by Siadek authorizing the sale of surplus property through public sealed bids; Evans seconded the motion. Flowers questioned the minimum bid of the property. Bradford stated that the fixed minimum price included filing and preparation fees, which is why it was raised from one thousand dollars. The motion passed unanimously. The ordinance is scheduled for a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. before the next Board of Aldermen meeting.

Evans thanked the public for coming and supporting the Town. Siadek reiterated that gratitude and stated he is glad to nuisances being addressed. Stringer stated that the harsh truth is the Town will be required to raise utility rates in the near future in order to meet minimum requirements for grants and to fix the infrastructure. Flowers expressed gratitude, requested prayers for the Town and stated that if any constituent had a concern, call their Alderman.

Bradford expressed gratitude for those who attended the meeting. He further stated that he understands he can speak seemingly harsh at times but means nothing by it. He said he was not Mayor to benefit anyone but Jonesboro because this is his home and wants the best for it. He advised the public to stop turning on the utilities that have been turned off by the Town for delinquent bills and the Town would begin issuing citations for those violations.

With no further business or comments, a motion by Flowers to adjourn the meeting was made; Stringer seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.