

MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The City of Jesup Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting Monday, April 3, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. at City Hall Council Chamber. Mayor Ralph Hickox called the meeting to order. Roll call was as follows.

Mayor, Ralph Hickox	Present
Commissioner, Shirlene Armstrong	Present
Commissioner, Tim Cockfield	Present
Commissioner, Bill Harvey	Present
Commissioner, Ray House	Present
Commissioner, Stanley Todd	Present
Commissioner, Pamela Shuman	Present
City Attorney, Mike Conner	Present
City Manager, Rose Marcus	Present
Police Chief, Perry Morgan	Present

The Lord's Prayer was led by City Attorney Conner.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Chief Morgan.

Commissioner Armstrong made a motion seconded by Commissioner Harvey to approve the minutes of the regular meetings dated March 7, 2023 as corrected and March 21, 2023.

All Council voted yes.

Allen Brown, Commander for the American Legion, came before Council to ask to rename the Flat Top Building, formerly the City Jail, on NW Broad Street to the Vernon Jackson, Sr. and Sadie Jackson Building. He added the American Legion had been meeting in the Flat Top Building for approximately 23 years and Vernon Jackson, Sr. and his wife Sadie were instrumental in opening Post 311 in Jesup. Allen Brown stated he had asked the American Legion to name Post 311 after Vernon and Sadie Jackson, but was informed a post could only be named after a deceased person. The American Legion members then asked if it was possible to change the name of the building so Vernon and Sadie Jackson could be honored while they were alive.

Commissioner Cockfield stated there was a reason why buildings were only named after deceased people and most big organizations adhered to that rule. He added he would like to take it under advisement as he was not familiar with Vernon and Sadie Jackson.

Commissioner Armstrong asked if Allen Brown was asking us to overrule the decision made by the American Legion.

Allen Brown responded no, the post would still be named after Vernon and Sadie Jackson, but not until they were deceased. He was asking to change the name of the building to honor them while they were alive.

Commissioner Shuman thanked Allen Brown for coming and stated she would like to do more research on Vernon and Sadie Jackson before deciding.

Commissioner Harvey stated Vernon and Sadie Jackson were fine people and he was not against naming the building after them, but he understood that the building was going to be destroyed. He stated Council should table the discussion until a later date.

Commissioner Todd stated he knew of no finer people than the Jackson's, but he wasn't sure if we should name the building after them. He agreed Vernon and Sadie Jackson did deserve recognition for their service to the community before they were deceased, but the matter needed to be taken into consideration.

Mayor Hickox suggested a proclamation to recognize and honor Vernon and Sadie Jackson while Council considered their decision.

Commissioner Cockfield made a motion seconded by Commissioner Harvey to table the decision to rename the Flat Top building after Vernon Jackson, Sr. and Sadie Jackson.

All Council voted yes.

Donna Jo Thomas, a resident of Sunset Blvd, came before Council to request connection to City water. She informed Council her property was across the street from the City water line. She stated she had contacted Water Supervisor Anthony Crawford and City Engineer Bill Shuman and had been informed what was necessary to connect the water line and City Manager Marcus had informed her of the cost. She added she would be incurring all the costs to connect her property to City water.

City Attorney Conner informed Council the City could connect the water as Wayne County did not provide water service nor was there another City that could provide water to Donna Jo Thomas' property and there was not a water delivery strategy agreement from Wayne County that would prevent the connection of her property to City water. He added the issue of a right-of-way would need to be resolved and an easement given to the City of Jesup.

Donna Jo Thomas responded she owned the property for the easement.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion seconded by Commissioner Shuman to allow Donna Jo Thomas to connect to City water.

All Council voted yes.

Mayor Jason Weaver, with the City of Screven, came before Council to ask Jesup to assist with fireworks for Independence Day 2024. The City of Screven purchased fireworks for 2023 last year after being informed of a price increase that would more than double the price of fireworks. The firework display has been in Screven for over 30 years, but with the price increase the Mayor and Board of Commissioners decided to look for other alternatives. Plans are to move the fireworks display from the City of Screven to the Wayne County Soccer Complex which would allow the fireworks display area to be locked. The Babes Baseball Field parking lot would be used for a festival and the parking lots of Wayne Christian Academy, Unity Church of God and Bill Morris Park would allow plenty of parking space. He stated Wayne County Recreation

Department, Wayne County Tourism Board, Wayne County Chamber of Commerce and the City of Odum were committed to assist with the event and the purchase of fireworks. A committee would be formed with representatives from boards of all entities as well as fire and police departments from Wayne County, Jesup, Odum and Screven. Mayor Weaver stated this could be the biggest fireworks display on the South Georgia Coast and hoped the City of Jesup would want to be a part of it.

Commissioner Todd and Commissioner Shuman expressed their concerns regarding the noise with neighborhoods and a Hospice center so close to the soccer complex.

Jason Weaver stated the noise could not be helped, but it was only a 22-minute firework display.

Mayor Hickox thanked Mayor Weaver for coming and stated the Board of Commissioners would discuss the fireworks display at the Planning Retreat.

Ricky Reddish, a resident of Jesup, came before Council to give a history of the Arch Fest. He stated the City of Odum and the City of Screven both had an event and the City of Jesup needed an event to call our own. The Board of Commissioners got together with the Downtown Director and the Arch Fest was established in 2000. The Arch Fest was not formed to increase sales for Downtown merchants, but to showcase the City of Jesup. He stated the citizens of Jesup love the Arch Fest, but suggested changing the date to prevent conflict with other fall events in October.

Commissioner Shuman stated the Arch Fest is about community and showcasing Downtown Jesup and our dance teams, singing groups and other local talent.

Water Department Supervisor Anthony Crawford came before Council to request permission to bid out an altitude valve for the elevated tank on Project Street. The altitude valve keeps the tank from overflowing and the current altitude valve will no longer open. He estimated the cost at \$22,000.00 to \$25,000.00.

Commissioner House made a motion seconded by Commissioner Cockfield to approve request to bid out an altitude valve for the Water Department.

All Council voted yes.

Water Department Supervisor Anthony Crawford came before Council to request permission to bid out a dead-end water line extension on Pine Street. He stated the line had blown out four times in the past three weeks. He added extending and connecting the water line to the opposite side of Pine Street would keep the water fresh and ease the pressure. Approximate cost is \$45,000.00 to \$55,000.00 to extend the line.

Commissioner Shuman made a motion seconded by Commissioner Harvey to approve request to bid out extension of the dead-end water line on Pine Street.

All Council voted yes.

Commissioner Armstrong made a motion seconded by Commissioner Cockfield to adjourn to Executive Session.

All Council voted yes.

Commission Harvey made a motion seconded by Commissioner Cockfield to come back from Executive Session.

All Council voted yes.

Mayor Hickox stated the business discussed in Executive Session was taking legal action against 774 E Plum Street and 195 W Bay Street to clean up yards.

Commissioner Cockfield made a motion seconded by Commissioner House to begin legal action against 774 E Plum Street and 195 W Bay Street to clean up yards.

All Council voted yes.

City Manager Marcus stated City Tax Clerk, Tracy Smith, would be planning the Arch Fest this year. She reminded Council of the upcoming Planning Retreat scheduled for April 4-6, 2023 on Jekyll Island.

Commissioner Todd asked for an update on the Homeless situation.

Police Chief Perry Morgan responded progress was being made, but the homeless were now moving around more and staying in different locations so it was harder to locate them.

Commissioner Todd asked if McMillan Creek Greenway Boardwalk was permanently closed and if the City has a company contracted to repair and maintain the boardwalk.

City Manager Marcus responded the boardwalk needed serious repair and maintaining a wooden walkway through a swampy area was costly. She added a company signed an agreement to repair the boardwalk but not to maintain it due to the project being larger than they expected.

Commissioner Todd requested the garbage cans be removed from the McMillan Boardwalk entrance on Sixth Street if the boardwalk was being closed.

Commissioner Shuman asked if another material could be used for the boardwalk that would withstand the swampy areas.

City Manager Marcus responded that the current boardwalk was constructed with grant funds, so to construct a new boardwalk would require another grant or Council would have to agree to fund the project.

Commissioner Cockfield asked what was needed to assist the Police Department in removing the homeless from Jesup.

Chief Morgan responded the new ordinances were being enforced to remove some of the homeless and officers began patrolling the homeless camps at night.

Commissioner Shuman stated her district was looking good and she thanked the City employees for keeping the grass cut. She added she was looking forward to the Planning Retreat.

Commissioner Armstrong stated Leroy Young, who was introduced to Council at the March 7, 2023 meeting, was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Leroy Young had asked to return at a later date to present his proposed plans to Council for attainable housing in Jesup. Commissioner Armstrong stated the water tower on NW Broad Street was full of junk asked the Police Department to make sure no homeless person was living there. She stated the grass at the cemetery needed to be cut. She informed Council the District 9 meeting was April 11, 2023, at 6:00 PM at the Municipal Golf Course in Hazlehurst and invited all Council members to attend.

Mayor Hickox thanked Police Chief Morgan for his efforts in dealing with the homeless situation. Mayor Hickox stated Congressman Buddy Carter would be attending the next Homeless meeting on May 3, 2023 and he was thankful for all the resources offered to help the homeless.

Meeting was adjourned.

Rhonda Tillman
Acting City Clerk/Treasurer