



Legislation Text

File #: MIN-05:121, **Version:** 1

Minutes for the special called City Council meeting on September 27, 2005
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING-TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2005, 4:30 P.M.

The Jonesboro City Council met Tuesday, September 27, 2005, at 4:20 p.m. for a special called meeting. Members present were: Mayor Douglas Formon, City Clerk, Donna K. Jackson, City Attorney Phillip Crego and eleven council members. Those members were: Farmer, Province, Hargis, Moore, Williams, Perrin, Street, Johnson, Furr, McCall and Ashley. Councilman Dover was unable to attend.

Councilman Moore explained that a letter was recently received from the engineering company that is monitoring the methane gas at the landfill and a decision needs to be made by October 1. Mr. Royce Leonard informed the council there is a request for an additional \$12,500 to complete the landfill migration project. The company is in the process of completing the action plan the City made that was also approved by ADEQ. The additional money is needed to complete the process. Councilman Moore explained FTN Associates, Ltd. was hired and once they went on site, they discovered a methane gas problem. The company needs another 60 days to further monitor the landfill. The money will allow them to finish the 60 day monitoring. The money is in the landfill budget. It was explained that FTN put in the wells cheaper than expected, which allowed them to start the monitoring period. The \$12,500 is needed to finish the monitoring for an additional 60 days to satisfy ADEQ. After the company finishes the monitoring, they will provide a report with their finding. It was also explained the company put in wells around the perimeter of the landfill to monitor where the gas is going. The monitoring event will end October 12, 2005, with the final report prepared following. Questions were raised regarding how the company came up with the \$12,500 fee. It was explained that the company did not initially expect to find methane due to the landfill being 20 years old. It was explained, FTN will provide a recommendation as to what the City should do and how much it will cost to fix the problem. Councilman Moore moved, seconded by Councilman Farmer for adoption of a resolution to extend the contract with FTN Associate, Ltd. for continuing environmental services related to landfill gas migration at the city landfill. A voice vote was taken resulting in all members voting aye. Those members voting aye were: Farmer, Province, Hargis, Moore, Williams, Perrin, Street, Johnson, Furr, McCall and Ashley. All voted aye. The resolution was assigned number 2005:116.

Councilwoman Williams explained the special meeting was called due to concerns over the minutes from the last City Council meeting regarding the pulling of the item on the agenda to amend the position of Grants Coordinator and confusion over comments made in regard to hiring the Grants Coordinator. She explained it was the view of her and possibly other Council members that the positions of Grants Coordinator and Transit Director would not be filled until Attorney Ralph Ohms had made a decision regarding the position of Director of Community and Economic Development. She further explained there was some confusion over a statement Councilman Perrin made, but regardless of that statement it was her perception the Grants Coordinator position would not be filled before a decision was made by Mr. Ohm and wanted to clarify the situation.

Mayor Formon explained it was his impression that in the Special Called Council meeting on Friday, September 16, 2005, the positions of Grants Coordinator and Transit Director would be frozen and held, but at the last Council meeting on Tuesday, September 20, 2005, the pulled item had to do with additional

responsibilities and higher pay for the Grants Coordinator position and was pulled due to questions with the budget.

Ms. Suzanne Hackney explained according to Ordinance 3530 the Grants Coordinator was grade 18 and the position was made when the Community and Economic Development department was formed.

Mayor Formon explained that at the last Council meeting, it was his impression from Councilman Perrin's comments that he and Ms. Hackney were to hire someone for the position as soon as possible. The job was offered to Ms. Gayle Vickers last week and she started Monday, September 26, 2005, at full time status.

Councilman Province added that he was also under the impression that the position would not be filled until the question of the director's status was answered.

Questions were raised regarding the process of hiring the Grants Coordinator. Ms. Hackney explained there were nine applicants and the application period was closed on September 19. She informed the Council she had been reviewing the applications as they came in and after it was said to fill the position as soon as possible, she started doing telephone interviews with those who have experience. Ms. Hackney added that the position was offered to Ms. Vickers on either September 21 or September 22 after she sent an e-mail to the Council saying the position had been filled.

Councilman Johnson expressed concerns regarding the application period and how long it took to review the applications before hiring someone. Councilman Province concurred, stating he thought it would take a week or two after the applications were turned in and discussions would follow before someone would be hired.

Councilman Farmer added that in order to prevent this matter from occurring again it ought to be made in the form of a motion. When the Council agreed to freeze the position, it was not in the form of a motion. Also, when the Council discussed at the regular meeting on September 20 to hire someone for the position, it was not in the form of a motion. He further explained that in the future to make something official and to avoid confusion, actions needs to be in the form of a motion.

Councilman Farmer questioned whether a decision is close to being made regarding the position of Director of Community and Economic Development. Mayor Formon informed the Council he will be out of town until Sunday, October 2, and is expecting a decision from Mr. Ohm after he gets back from vacation. He added he had recently spoken with Mr. Ohm several times and had brought up the Grants Coordinator position. He indicated Mr. Ohm did not have a problem hiring the Grants Coordinator position if necessary. He further explained he's expecting to get Mr. Ohm's recommendation on Monday, October 3, before the regular Council meeting on Tuesday, October 4.

Councilwoman Furr expressed concerns about hiring someone while the director's position is unknown when the time period is so short between the filling of the Grants Coordinator position and a decision regarding the director's position.

Councilman Moore added that consideration needs to be made to the transit system, which will be starting in April. He also commented that the situation could mirror the Glenn Batten problem in the Planning department. Councilman Moore added that a procedure needs to be followed to avoid situations like this from occurring in the future.

It was discussed whether Mr. Ohm had any position on the situation regarding the director's status. Mayor

Formon indicated Mr. Ohm has gone over different possibilities, but has not made a final decision yet.

Questions were then raised regarding the organizational flow of the Community and Economic Development Department. It was explained that the director is at the top, then the MPO director, followed by the grants coordinator. Councilman Perrin added that it's probably getting close to under-budgeting for the assistant's position currently held by Ms. Vickers.

Organizational charts being in the budget were then discussed. It was explained organizational charts are to be included in the budget, so the flow of a department could be shown.

Councilman Moore left the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Councilman McCall discussed the City Council Rules and Procedures the rules and procedures are a work in progress and if there are any problems to let someone on the Rules Committee know so they can look into it. He explained the rules were designed to stay within the law and not to prevent anyone from getting their job done. Mr. Brian Wadley indicated on September 19, all department heads were asked to write down procedural problems they were encountering so they could be provided to the Nominating and Rules Committee. Mayor Formon added it was discussed to make template forms to help people figure out what they're supposed to do in certain processes. City Clerk Donna Jackson explained since various departments have their own set of procedures it would be difficult to provide a template form, because it varies with each situation.

Discussion followed concerning the proper way to pull an item off the agenda. Mayor Formon questioned who has the right to pull something from the agenda. Councilman Farmer indicated that typically a motion is needed in order to pull something from the agenda. Ms. Jackson indicated that the proper way to remove items is by motion, but in the past things have been pulled without a vote by the City Council.

Councilwoman Furr asked the Mayor to inform the Council as to what is to be expected concerning Dr. Copeland's position and the Grants Coordinator position. Mayor Formon indicated they will have to wait for Mr. Ohm to get back with him with a recommendation before they do anything about Dr. Copeland's position. He further explained he will follow the Council concerning the status of the Grants Coordinator position. Ms. Vickers informed the Council that an action plan needs to be made as well as grants needing to be looked at. Ms. Vickers further informed the Council that Dr. Copeland offered her the job in July and again in August.

Councilman Farmer indicated he didn't think the Council needed to make a decision since the job was offered to and accepted by Ms. Vickers. Councilman Hargis added that he's in a special position because he supports Ms. Vickers, but at the same time does not want to hire someone full time at this time. He added there is a lack of information that the Council is getting. Councilman Farmer asked for the legal rights of the Council to overturn the hiring of someone by the Mayor. City Attorney Phillip Crego indicated he does not believe the Council has the right to overturn the hiring of someone who is not a department head. He further explained that the Council can amend the budget and not fund the position or reorganize a department, but cannot take action regarding the Grants Coordinator position.

Councilman Farmer excused himself at 5:33 p.m.

Councilwoman Furr discussed that while the Council needs to get more specific about things, the administration also needs to get more specific as well. She explained that whether Ms. Vickers is full time or part time, Ms. Vickers will do her job the same.

With no further business, Councilman Perrin moved, seconded by Councilwoman Furr to adjourn. All voted aye.