



Legislation Text

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Minutes for the special called meeting on September 16, 2005
SPECIAL MEETING-FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2005, 3:30 P.M.

The Jonesboro City Council met Friday, September 16, 2005, at 3:30 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, Williams, Perrin, Street, Johnson, Dover, McCall, Ashley and Furr. Councilman Moore was unable to attend.

A resolution by Delane Hogan was read asking for a public hearing for the abandonment of a 15' utility easement and road right of way located in Sage Meadows. Councilman Perrin moved, seconded by Councilman Dover to adopt the resolution. A public hearing was set for October 4, 2005, at 6:15 p.m. at the Huntington building. All voted aye. Those members voting aye were: Farmer, Province, Hargis, Williams, Perrin, Street, Johnson, Dover, McCall, Ashley and Furr. The resolution was assigned number 2005:108.

Councilman Farmer explained the Finance Committee recommended the special meeting due to concerns regarding the resignation of Dr. Paul Copeland, Director of Community and Economic Development. It was explained several people had talked with attorney Mr. Ralph Ohm who recommended if Dr. Copeland was reinstated, he receive back pay. In addition, Attorney Ohm recommended until he has had sufficient time to review the facts, the position of Director of Community and Economic Development should be frozen. Mr. Ohm also asked that the merits of the situation not be discussed until he's had a chance to review everything involved and get a better understanding of the facts.

Councilman Farmer moved, seconded by Councilman Street to follow the recommendations of Attorney Ohm, regarding reinstatement and back pay, as well as freezing the hiring of the position. All voted aye.

Councilman Farmer stated based on emails from Mr. Brian Wadley Director of Operations, and Gayle Vickers of the Community and Economic Development Department the transit system was in order, and after consulting with Washington, D.C. the \$1.2 million in funding was available, as well as another \$400,000 to go on line October 1 as long as the plan is in place. There had been questions regarding the status of the transit system and council members were assured everything is as it should be.

Councilwoman Furr informed the council the questions she asked were based on the same information that Councilman Farmer had. She further discussed she was concerned with the grant due to the questionable status of the hiring of Dr. Copeland and EEOC guidelines. Councilwoman Furr explained that she spoke with Ms. Suzanne Hackney who assured her that HUD had cleared the position. Ms. Hackney concurred with Councilwoman Furr.

Councilman McCall questioned whether the position would be empty and what the time frame would be. Councilman Farmer indicated in speaking with Attorney Ohm something should be back from Mr. Ohm within the next few weeks regarding Dr. Copeland's resignation. It was also questioned what the appeal process would be. It was explained that it would go to Finance's Personnel committee if an appeal was made.

Councilwoman Furr stated for the record that she never called for Dr. Copeland's resignation, nor did she have a conversation with anyone regarding asking for Dr. Copeland's resignation.

Councilman Perrin questioned the filling of the director of public transit with the supervisor's position director of Community and Economic Development's position being vacant. Ms. Hackney indicated that the position would be held until the department head is filled.

City Attorney Phillip Crego informed the council that Mr. Ohm hoped to have a recommendation made next week after Mr. Ohm is done gathering the facts.

Councilman Hargis questioned the organization of the department of Economic Development. He indicated there was a need for the Grants Department and Transit, but suggested the duties for the position of Director of Economic Development be re-evaluated.

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