

**City of New Ellenton**  
**Regular Meeting of City Council**  
**City Hall Council Chambers**  
**Monday, August 20, 2012 @ 7:00 PM**  
**MINUTES**

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**WELCOME:** Mayor Vernon Dunbar opened the meeting at 7:05 PM.

**INVOCATION:** Offered by Councilman David Dunbar, Sr.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Council present** – Amy Bailey, Eartha Rogers, Vernon Dunbar, Daniel Braswell, David Dunbar, Sr.

**Council absent** – Roy Shaw, Terence Williams

**Others present** – City Clerk Vernel Sanders, Assistant City Clerk Courtney Moseley, Fire Chief Mike Kellems, Police Chief Alesia Parks, Rex Nordeen, Annie Mae Ford, Assistant Fire Chief Ricky Foster, Assistant Fire Chief Donnie Cooper, Glenda Henderson, Roger Henderson, Jackie Keenan, Kelly Keenan, Leann Steiner, Doris Bing, Julietta Slaton

**APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:** July 2012

*Motion to approve:* Mayor Pro Tem Braswell

*2<sup>nd</sup> to motion:* Councilman Dunbar

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of approval.*

**APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:**

- 1) July 16, 2012 – Work Session

*Motion to approve:* Councilwoman Rogers

*2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion:* Councilwoman Bailey

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of approval.*

- 2) July 16, 2012 – Regular Meeting

*Motion to approve:* Councilman Dunbar

*2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion:* Councilwoman Rogers

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of approval.*

- 3) July 30, 2012 – Special Meeting

*Motion to approve:* Councilwoman Rogers

*2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion:* Councilman Dunbar

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of approval.*

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1) First Reading: Ordinance addressing the millage

Mayor Dunbar stated that this should have been done with the budget in June but was not. He also stated that the millage is 77.4 and will remain the same.

*Motion to adopt on first reading – Mayor Pro Tem Braswell*

*2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion:* Councilman Dunbar

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of adoption.*

2) First Reading: Resolution addressing the financing of two patrol vehicles

Mayor Dunbar announced that this item is actually going to require two votes . Before the City can borrow money, it must obtain the counsel of a bond attorney and must then pass a resolution to finance. The first vote will address the letter of engagement for Pope Ziegler Law Firm to serve as the City's bond attorneys for this financing process. The second vote will be for the adoption of the resolution to finance.

*Motion to accept letter of engagement from Pope Ziegler Law Firm – Councilwoman Rogers*

*2<sup>nd</sup> to motion – Councilwoman Bailey*

There was a unanimous vote in favor of acceptance.

Mayor Dunbar summarized the terms of the resolution to finance from Pope Ziegler Law Firm, highlighting the change made to Section 2 regarding where the funds would come from to pay for the cars. It should read: "All amounts due and owing on the Lease Amount shall be payable from an appropriation each year of the City's general tax levy or the City's local option sales tax funds."

*Motion to adopt: Councilman Dunbar*

*2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion: Mayor Pro Tem Braswell*

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of adoption.*

3) Hiring Victim's Advocate

Chief Parks recommended Deborah Dean-Romero for hire to fill the vacant Victim's Advocate position. Mrs. Dean-Romero works as Victim's Advocate for Aiken County and her training would continue to be funded by the County, saving the City money. Her salary would be the same amount received by the previous Victim's Advocate, Michelle Holtsizer.

*Motion to hire: Mayor Pro Tem Braswell*

*2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion: Councilman Dunbar*

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of hiring Deborah Dean-Romero to fill vacant Victim's Advocate position.*

4) Funding for the Atomic City Festival

Councilwoman Rogers stated that when planning for the budget, Council allocated \$2500 for the Atomic City Festival that was removed prior to the final reading of the budget. She said that it is to be added back in order to assist in the funding of the fireworks for the event. Mayor Pro Tem Braswell stated that the budget had to be trimmed significantly prior to adoption as it was over approximately \$100,000. Mrs. Annie Mae Ford expressed concerns that the past couple of years the City has not been cooperative in helping with the festival like they used to and that she would like to know why. Chief Kellems said that the reason the Fire Department will no longer be involved is because they completely funded the fireworks last year and were promised a portion of that would be paid back to them from the Atomic City Festival and have yet to see approximately \$600 of that money. Councilwoman Rogers said that she knew nothing about paying the Fire Department back for that. Chief Kellems said that the Atomic City Festival Committee promised to do so. Councilwoman Rogers said that the Atomic City Festival committee consists of only 7 unpaid volunteers that want to do something for the citizens of New Ellenton but they cannot afford everything as they are not a moneymaking group. She further expressed that she thinks it is a shame that the festival has to pay for anything since they don't make any money. City Clerk Sanders and Mayor Pro Tem Braswell expressed that times are hard for the City as well, and just as the festival committee is saying they cannot afford to do the same things they have done in the past, the City cannot afford to do the same things either. City Clerk Sanders further explained that City revenues are down compared to previous years. Councilwoman Rogers said that the City has money and that if the City can afford to

give raises and all that then the City can afford to pay for the fireworks. City Clerk Sanders clarified that employees did not receive raises and that it does not make sense to donate \$2500 to the festival when employees cannot receive raises. Juliette Slaton suggested that the fireworks package be reduced in order to make funding more reasonable, stating that the fireworks do not have to be 20 minutes long and that 10 minutes of fireworks would still be great. Mayor Dunbar stated that he had spoken to Scott Singer who has promised \$1000 towards the fireworks and Chief Kellems said they would donate \$1000 as well. Chief Kellems also explained that a contract has to be signed by whomever is going to be responsible for the fireworks and that Fire Department will no longer do that. City Clerk Sanders stated that could not be in the City's name as it is a liability. Kelly Keenan said that the City is liable anyway because it is on their grounds. City Clerk Sanders said that the City's tort insurance covers the use of our facilities. Councilwoman Rogers asked who is going to sign the contract? Several people stated at once that the Atomic City Festival would need to. Councilwoman Rogers said that they do not have insurance. City Clerk Sanders explained that this is not a City hosted function, that this is a private organization, and the City cannot assume responsibility as this is not covered through the City's insurance. Chief Kellems stated that the Fire Department could not do it anyway, for the same reason. Mayor Dunbar said that the Atomic City Festival would need to engage in the contract, not the City. Mayor Dunbar stated that the City would have to look at the budget to see if we can help with the fireworks. A special meeting was scheduled for September 6 at 6:30 PM to discuss this. *No action taken on this item.*

Juliette Slaton asked to address Council at this time with her concerns about the deterioration of her community. She stated there were dilapidated houses, vacant homes, and properties that were unkempt. She asked if ordinances were in place to address these issues and if so, who is enforcing these rules. She also asked what the City's plans were to bring attention to the City as it is a cute and wonderful City and that she loves living here but does not know how long she can stay if it continues to deteriorate. Mayor Dunbar began to explain that ordinances are in place and Chief Parks asked if she could interject. Chief Parks explained that the way the Police Department was addressing these matters in the past was not legal per the City's current ordinances. Furthermore, she stated that the current ordinances are inadequate and allow for little or no interference from the Police, instead holding the City responsible for cleaning up these properties and later billing the property owners. Mayor Dunbar stated that this was unacceptable. Rex Nordeen explained that the cost of redoing the ordinances is approximately \$14,000 and thus is the reason they have not been able to be redone so far. Councilman Dunbar stated that he agreed this was not good and that Council will do their best to see that these ordinances are updated.

**REPORT FROM POLICE CHIEF:** Presented by Chief Parks

For the month of July there were 94 calls for service, 30 reports were generated, 58 traffic cases, and 5 arrests. School is now in session and officers have been instructed to walk through the school on their shift to make their presence known. Council and citizens agreed that this was a great idea.

**REPORT FROM FIRE CHIEF:** Presented by Chief Kellems

For the month of August there have been 52 calls, mostly medical. Chief Kellems advised that he will soon be presenting a contract to Council from Aiken County that is to be done regularly, in reference to the fire department responding to calls. Chief Kellems also presented a letter to Council and for the record stating that he has taken a job with Safe Industries and henceforth will be recusing himself from discussion and approval of invoices regarding to the purchases made with Safe Industries. Chief Kellems further explained that continuing the relationship with Safe Industries is vital and for that reason Assistant Chief Cooper and Assistant Chief Foster were present as they will speak in his stead on matters related to this company.

## **REPORT FROM COMMITTEES:**

- Administration: Daniel Braswell, Terence Williams  
Mayor Dunbar announced that DC Racers from Dry Branch will be hosting a fundraiser for youth sports in September. Mayor Dunbar announced that there are new Greendale and Silver Bluff principals and praised the schools and facilities. Mayor Dunbar presented suggestions for the website including a listing of Council committee assignments and a comment box for citizens. Councilwoman Rogers asked if the Atomic City Festival information was on the website and Assistant City Clerk Moseley stated that she asked James Grigsby to post that last week and would remind him tomorrow if it is not posted. City Clerk Sanders asked that the City recognize the dedication of Earl Valentine, Jr., who has been coaching football and does not have a child playing. Mayor Dunbar suggested that the website also include a space for “citizen of the week” and City Clerk Sanders and Assistant City Clerk Moseley agreed this was a great idea, however, suggested that it be “citizen of the month” to allow easier maintenance of the announcement.
- Fire Department: Roy Shaw, Eartha Rogers  
Councilwoman Rogers stated that Atomic City Festival wanted to know if the Fire Department would be able to display trucks at the festival on Saturday, October 13 and Chief Kellems said he would check into it. Chief Kellems further stated that they will have the “smokehouse” at the festival on Saturday for kids and families to learn about fire safety techniques and evacuation procedures. Rex Nordeen asked about the status on the red flag that was mentioned in the past for days that burning was prohibited. Chief Kellems said he has not received the flag and will check on it. Kelly Keenan asked who is responsible from the City for lowering the flag when needed, etc. City Clerk Sanders said that typically the office is notified and then we ask Streets & Roads to lower it when necessary. Mr. Keenan said he was wondering because we missed one the other day relating to the Colorado shootings. Assistant City Clerk Moseley asked if there was a website or something that she could visit to keep the City up to speed on this information and Assistant Fire Chief Cooper stated that the Fire Department is on an email list and receives notices for this. He further offered to send that information to City Clerk Sanders.
- Police Department: Terence Williams, Roy Shaw  
NONE
- Streets & Roads: Daniel Braswell, Eartha Rogers  
Councilwoman Bailey stated that she spoke with Streets & Roads and they have agreed to put out something to kill the grass on the sidewalks and will be weeding them as well.
- Sewer: David Dunbar, Roy Shaw  
Mayor Dunbar stated that he saw the completed work at the plant and said it looks good.
- Parks & Recreation: Daniel Braswell, Terence Williams, David Dunbar  
Mayor Pro Tem Braswell announced that the Jamboree for football is Saturday. Football and cheerleading is underway. The concession stand will be ready for the first home game on September 4. Scoreboard is being installed now. Additional money was allocated in the one percent money for park upgrades and would be addressed when money is received.
- Sanitation: Amy Bailey, Eartha Rogers  
NONE

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Dunbar called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*Motion to adjourn:* Mayor Pro Tem Braswell

*2<sup>nd</sup> to the motion:* Councilwoman Rogers

*There was a unanimous vote in favor of adjourning.*

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Clerk's Signature/Date