



**Minutes of the City Council Regular Meeting  
Telemeeting Via Zoom Video  
April 25, 2022  
Regular Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

The two thousand four hundred and thirty-third meeting of the Jennings City Council was held on Monday, April 25, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Video.

**A. SWEARING IN**

**1. Newly Elected and Re-elected City Council Members Swearing In.**

Deletra Hudson, City Clerk, administered the Oath of Office for Allan Stichnote, Jane Brown, Dr. Kimberly Morton, and Lorraine Clower.

**B. REGULAR MEETING**

**1. Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**Council members present:** Allan Stichnote, Yolonda Fountain Henderson, Terry Wilson, Jane Brown, Dr. Kimberly Morton, Gary Johnson, Lorraine Clower, and Joseph Turner.

**Council member(s) absent:** none.

**Also present:** Mayor Yolanda Austin; Deletra Hudson, City Clerk; and Sam Alton, City Attorney.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Brown, the City Council approved the agenda for the meeting. All in favor; none opposed.

**4. Approval of the minutes from the Regular Meeting of March 28, 2022.**

On the motion made by Councilman Stichnote, seconded by Councilman Wilson, the City Council approved the minutes from the Regular Meeting of March 28, 2022. Councilman Johnson opposed. Roll call: Allan Stichnote, Terry Wilson, Lorraine Clower, Joseph Turner; Dr. Kimberly Morton abstained; Yolonda Fountain Henderson and Gary Johnson opposed.

Councilman Johnson asked for a correction to be made on page 6. Commented that he asked if there could be a collective effort to clear debris from the road.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that she asked about Alexandria Place and had asked about a \$2000 check that was written.

Sam Alton, City Attorney, stated that councilmembers could submit their corrections to the minutes ahead of the City Council meeting.

Councilwoman Clower requested that it be in the minutes, that she received a phone call from Mayor Austin telling her what to say and she wondered how the City employees are being treated. Councilwoman Clower had also stated that she worked for the people, not the mayor.

Mayor Austin requested that councilmembers would submit their corrections to the City Clerk before the City Council meeting.

#### **5. Approval of the minutes from the Special City Council Meeting of April 13, 2022.**

On the motion made by Councilwoman Brown, seconded by Councilman Wilson, the City Council approved the minutes from the Special City Council meeting of April 13, 2022. Roll call: Allan Stichnote, Yolonda Fountain Henderson, Terry Wilson, Jane Brown, Dr. Kimberly Morton, Gary Johnson, Lorraine Clower, and Joseph Turner.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson requested a correction be made to the minutes of the Special City Council Meeting of April 13, 2022. The correction was the misspelling of her name, Yolonda Fountain Henderson not Yolanda Fountain Henderson.

#### **C. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONERS, REMONSTRATIONS, COMPLAINTS, AND REQUESTS**

##### **1. Comments by the public. (Please sign in. Comments are limited to 3 minutes. See Decorum Ordinance.)**

*Corine Caldwell, 2525 Shannon Avenue*, stated that she had lived in the City since 1997 and it seemed difficult for residents of Jennings to participate in the City Property Auction. She stated that not everyone has access to a computer and there was poor communication from the City.

Mayor Austin informed Ms. Caldwell that the auction had begun on Monday, April 25, 2022. Ms. Caldwell stated that she had been trying to acquire 2608 Kinamore Drive. Mayor Austin informed Ms. Caldwell that 2608 Kinamore Drive was not on the list of properties for auction.

*Reynal Caldwell, 2525 Shannon Avenue*, asked about the City property auction, and whether the properties were for sale or held for large businesses to acquire.

Mayor Austin explained the auction process. She stated that the auction brochure would be available the following day at the front desk of City Hall or could be found on the City website.

*Clarence Britton, no address provided*, asked the City Council, how could residents listen to the City to get stuff done and if the City Council could not get anything done amongst themselves. He stated that the City Council continues to discuss that there are yards that need to be cut, and the residents receive the same prompting to get on the list.

Mr. Britton asked what the purpose was of the new City Hall. He stated that the City was spending money on something that was not needed right now. He stated that he lived in the City for 40 years and loved living in Jennings, but it is like a war zone now. Nothing was being done about it; some were trying to do something about it.

Mr. Britton wanted everyone to be voting for the right person for the City Council, not crooks. He stated that most of the council members were crooks. He had been in the City for 40 years. He announced that he would be running for City Council during the municipal election in 2023. Mr. Britton stated that if he could not get any answers from the council members, then he would go to the Attorney General.

Councilman Johnson did not agree with the way the meeting was limited by social distancing guidelines from the City. Mayor Austin asked that Mr. Britton provide his telephone number to the City Clerk.

*Nancy Sparks, 7223 Sapphire Avenue*, thanked former Councilwoman Rose Eichelberger and another woman for assisting in an issue. Someone pitched a few items out on the lawn of 7221 Sapphire Avenue, which had been vacant for 20 years. She asked for over three years, how could she purchase the home and have it demolished. She appreciated that someone had gotten back to her.

Mayor Austin asked that Ms. Sparks provide her telephone number to Schona McClellon, Director of Housing, for her to follow up. Schona stated that she was the other woman that Ms. Sparks spoke to.

**Pat Taylor, 9257 Catalina Drive**, stated that the City's communication needed improvement. There was a community cleanup on Saturday, April 23, 2022, and she did not find out about it until the Thursday before. She expressed her concern regarding communication about meetings and activities to residents.

Ms. Taylor expressed her concern about the safety of residents in the City of Jennings. She suggested the placement of more speed bumps or signage. She stated that she was told to contact the St. Louis County Department of Transportation but had not been able to get a hold of anyone.

Mayor Austin stated that several people in City Hall have been working to spread the word by email or text message. She stated that information she wanted to make sure that the City had Ms. Taylor's contact information.

Councilman Wilson informed Ms. Taylor of a feature on the City website that if she were to submit her email address on the list to receive updates from the City website, when the City posts to the website, she will receive an email notification. He encouraged residents to continue to check the marquees for information. Ms. Taylor stated that it was difficult to read the marquees at times. Councilman Wilson agreed but stated that the City will continue trying to get information out to residents and get more creative with getting the word out.

Councilwoman Brown stated that it was the top priority of council members to get residents on the contact list.

Mayor Austin asked for the streets for speed bump placement. Ms. Taylor suggested the 9200 block of Catalina Drive area.

**Marietta Beck, 5476 Hodiament Avenue**, congratulated the new and re-elected councilmembers. She thanked Schona. She also suggested that the councilmembers focus on the big business of the City, not the little things. Ms. Beck commented on the poor audio quality of the in-person and Zoom City Council meeting. She stated that she would not be able to attend the whole meeting due to the poor audio quality.

**Christina Rosado Shelton, 7029 Idlewild Avenue**, stated that she had been a resident of Ward 3 for almost 20 years. She had three points of concern: lack of police presence, lack of citations issued, and how is the \$2 million of the American Rescue Plan Act funds distributed to the City being handled.

Ms. Shelton stated that regarding the lack of police presence was declining, and Ward 3 needed more patrols. She stated that because of the lack of police presence there had been an uptake in the playing of loud music, hearing gunshots all the time, and seeing people in the streets.

Ms. Shelton also expressed concern over the issuing of citations. She noticed the parking of commercial trucks, but she does not see any citations being issued to the property owners. She has noticed that people are fixing their cars at their houses, cars parked, and big furniture on their lawns, and some residents have not pulled in their trash cans from the street.

Ms. Shelton expressed concern over the beginning of Spring that could be the start of problems with grass being cut.

Ms. Shelton asked how is the \$2 million being distributed. She asked if some of the funds were being given to residents. She suggested that the funds be used to demolish abandoned homes, distributed for repairs to homeowners, utility assistance, and road maintenance.

Ms. Shelton also commented that the audio was muffled and she could not hear anything during the meeting.

Councilwoman Clower responded to Ms. Shelton, asking that she contact her to discuss their concerns. She stated that she was trying to find a solution for the demolition of homes in Ward 4.

*Alice Wilson, 8860 Old Lucas and Hunt Road*, congratulated the new and re-elected councilmembers. She introduced herself as a part of the Jennings Youth Commission.

Ms. Wilson took a moment to inform those in attendance of the Youth Commission's upcoming events: Family Fit Camp on Saturday, May 21, 2022, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Rodney Epps Park, 5557 Hamilton Avenue. Attendees will be working out with music, and food, and the event is for all ages. The event was hosted by the Grind Hard Foundation, whose focus was to expand involvement. The second event was the Family Picnic at Lions Park on June 11, 2022, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. There will be a DJ, games, and barbeque for an all-ages event.

Ms. Wilson informed the council members that they should receive a copy of the flyer by text message. She encouraged those listening to invite their friends and family.

## **2. Councilmember's Reports (Reports are limited to 10 minutes. See Decorum Ordinance)**

*Councilman Stichnote* thanked everyone who voted for him in Ward 1. He welcomed re-elected councilmembers back and Councilwoman Morton.

Councilman Stichnote reported that he had received complaints about potholes at Buzz Westfall. He received a request for 'No Parking' signs on the east side of Pohlman Lane. He also received a request for speed bumps on Glade Avenue, near Dever Drive, and on Huiskamp Avenue.

Capt. Mann gave a brief report. Crimes against persons were up about twenty-four percent. He reported that the City had seen its second homicide of the year on Lillian Avenue. He stated that the police were pursuing a person of interest. Crimes against property are down twenty-three percent compared to last year. He stated that there was an uptake in larcenies. He encouraged residents to lock their doors and not to keep any valuables in their cars. Crimes against society increase with traffic stops and are evidence of those stops.

Councilwoman Clower remarked on the comment regarding the lack of police presence from Ms. Shelton, that she did not see police presence in Ward 4 as well. She recalled an incident of gunshots heard on Wilborn Drive. She asked what could be done, and she suggested that more patrols could discourage bad behavior. She asked about police car GPS if there was a way to find out if police officers had been in Ward 4 and how to track that. Capt. Mann explained the shifts of officers. He stated that he gets requests for street patrol every week. He gave an example of how patrol requests are met, how they can stack up and there were only so many hours in a day to meet the City's demands.

Councilwoman Clower stated the new contract only had four officers on duty and asked if there were more officers on duty at a time in previous police contracts with the City. Capt. Mann stated that he did not know what the previous contracts had stated. He explained what a beat meant and how patrol officers were assigned.

Councilman Johnson expressed concern over the tracking speeding on the citation report. Capt. Mann stated that he would have to analyze the report on a deeper level. Councilman Johnson asked where the City Council should look for information on speeding citations. Capt. Mann stated that that information should be found in the Municipal Court Report.

Deletra Hudson, City Clerk, stated that there were some comments left in the Zoom chat regarding only four officers in all of Jennings at a time. Capt. Mann stated that the contract states that there should be four officers on duty for each shift, and there were three shifts. That did not include special units from St. Louis County.

Deletra stated that there was another comment from Zoom, that police staffing seemed too light, and there needed to be an external analysis. Capt. Mann stated that CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) assesses the department every four years and St. Louis County Police Department has a competent Research & Analysis Unit. He stated that it comes down to the cost to hire more officers for more shifts.

Deletra stated that another question was left in the Zoom chat about the police shifts and if they overlap. Capt. Mann stated the shifts. Another question in the Zoom chat asked if there was one officer per ward. Capt. Mann explained that beats, police patrol territories, do not correspond

directly with wards and that he keeps a map in his office to consult. He offered to show the map to council members. Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that she would like to view the map.

Councilman Wilson asked what the average patrol area size was in municipalities similar to the City of Jennings. Capt. Mann suggested going by a City's call volume and explained the factors that affect reporting and call response. He recommended that residents report what they see when they occur, as it helps the Police Department.

Deletra stated another question from Zoom, asking if residents could see a visual representation of officer coverage per shift and their times and what was the officer to citizen ratio compared to other cities. Capt. Mann stated that in his experience, a city could never have too many officers. He announced that there would be a Town Hall meeting on May 26, 2022, at 6 p.m. at Gary Gore Community Center, where there will be a presentation and a question & answer segment.

Councilwoman Clower stated that the City Council was informed by Lt. Schafer at the March 2022 City Council meeting that the contract cannot be changed. She stated that according to the contract, there are four (4) officers on duty at a time. Capt. Mann stated that there are other units constantly in the City of Jennings assisting and providing mutual aid in addition to the basic contract. For example, Highway Safety, Special Response, Tactical Operations, and K-9 units.

**Councilwoman Fountain Henderson** welcomed Councilwoman Morton and others that have returned to the City Council. She expressed her willingness to help Councilwoman Morton in any way.

She reported that there was a free gas giveaway, which she was in line for but she was turned away. It looked like it was organized. Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that she found that Mayor Austin was aware of the free gas giveaway and did not inform the council members. She promised residents that if she were aware of any functions like that, she would inform them. She stated that there was another free gas giveaway the weekend before but there was an hour wait to find out the location.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson thanked those who came to the town hall meeting to discuss the ARPA funds hosted by St. Louis City and St. Louis County. She stated to Mayor Austin that she was appalled that citizens were turned away for the council meeting because it was limited to seat twelve attendees, yet at the Groundbreaking Ceremony there were many people in attendance.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that it was heartbreaking that she and Councilman Johnson were denied attendance at the City's ARPA meeting by Mayor Austin. She stated she reviews her City Council meeting packet before attending the meeting. She typed up what she had to say before the City Council meetings and she noticed that not everything was in the minutes, yet she believed they should be included. Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that she had asked at the last meeting about Alexandria Place that did not end up in the minutes in which the City Attorney stated he was not aware in 2017. She stated that she had information regarding Alexandria Place.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson attended the cleanup event, and she was informed that the information about the theme had been distributed. She stated that she did not get the email about the theme. She remarked that the cleanup event could have been better organized, yet the cleanup stayed in Ward 2 and a little in Ward 1. Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that Ward 4 needed the cleanup the most.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that as of May 20, 2022 students would be out of school.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that Essential Workers Day was April 26, 2022, at 10 a.m., which will be celebrated at McDonald's, 8983 Jennings Station Road.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson announced a tentative cleanup event. With the help of Officer McCrary and another St. Louis County officer, they are attempting to host a large cleanup. She stated that the City needed to have better communication with its residents.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that she attended the dedication service for Marlon Owens on March 31, 2022, at Missionary Baptist Church, 5300 Helen Avenue. She announced that there will be a dedication for Pastor Leonard Dennis.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that a speed bump was needed on Shannon Avenue.

She thanked the residents that attended the meeting. Councilwoman Fountain Henderson commented that the residents could be packed into the Council chambers.

**Councilman Wilson** stated that he was under the weather. He addressed the resident comment about members of the City Council being crooks. He stated that he takes it offensively. He stated that he would love to have more dialogue about how the City could do better and improve communication. Councilman Wilson stated that with the attitude that nothing will ever change, nothing will change. He invited Mr. Britton to have additional dialogue.

Councilman Wilson recognized those who participated in the cleanup, the Fire Department, and the Police Department. He observed that a few areas that were cleaned up are dirty again. He witnessed someone throwing a whole dinner out their car window. He stated that no littering signs do not deter people from littering.

Councilman Wilson thanked Schona for helping to resolve the situation with the fence behind the Urban League.

Councilman Wilson informed everyone that there are many jobs available in the City. He stated that the jobs need to be promoted more publicly. He encouraged residents to spread the word. He also encouraged residents to use the City website, where a lot of information can be found.

Councilman Wilson thanked Jim Maixner, Public Works Department, for the removal of the speed bumps along Ada Wortley Avenue. He asked if the speed bumps that were removed were able to be used for other areas that are on the list for speed bump placement. Jim stated that they will be used for other areas waiting on the list. Councilman Wilson stated to Capt. Mann that it would be appropriate to get a traffic study on the 9200 block of Catalina Drive.

He thanked the residents who attended the meeting and he looked forward to serving the residents of the City of Jennings.

**Councilwoman Brown** thanked those who attended the meeting. She welcomed Councilwoman Morton and welcomed Councilwoman Clower back.

Councilwoman Brown thanked those who attended the cleanup event on Saturday, April 23, 2022. She stated that there was good comradery at the event. She received a comment from someone that they were disappointed that not many more residents turned out. Councilwoman Brown thanked the first responders who came out to the event: the St. Louis County Community Outreach Unit, North County Fire & Rescue Protection District, as well as students from Jennings Senior High School, and the Public Works Department. She stated that they covered all that could be done and were not able to do the whole City in three hours.

Councilwoman Brown reported that Kellie Shelton, Economic Development Coordinator, is contributing to the City's beautification plans. She announced that there will be another opportunity for residents to be involved in the beautification process and reminded them that there are three community gardens. She stated she had the contact information for those interested to get involved. Councilwoman Brown promised to keep residents updated on the beautification progress.

Councilwoman Brown reported the Urban League had the pleasure of serving 425 families for a food giveaway on March 29, 2022. She stated that the information was able to get out and people were able to take advantage of the event. One of the volunteers mentioned that enjoyed being able to give back and that they returned to assist in this giveaway.

**Councilwoman Morton** thanked all her supporters and thanked council members for welcoming her with open arms.

Councilwoman Morton reported that she has heard residents wanting speed bumps and potholes to be filled. She has heard concerns about vacant homes, ordinances, and high grass and will give that list and notes to Schona.

Councilwoman Morton has heard feedback about the need for more police presence.

Councilwoman Morton asked if the Recreation Department bus could help residents by transporting them to doctor visits. She stated that she would work on some proposals of how that can happen.

Councilwoman Morton expressed gratitude for the food pantries and reported that she had been taking some to residents. She stated that the City needs to think about how to help residents with limited income.

Councilwoman Morton announced that there has been some brainstorming about a block party in Ward 3, inviting other wards to participate.

**Councilman Johnson** responded to Ms. Sparks regarding 5224 Apricot Avenue being turned in to the Building Department on March 23, 2022. He stated that he drives through the City, ward-by-ward, and makes note of concerns. He thanked Ms. Sparks for bringing up the address.

Councilman Johnson announced that the Community Cupboard on West Florissant Avenue and Hamilton Avenue at the JETS (Jennings Educational Training School) will be hosting a food distribution on May 13, 2022.

Councilman Johnson reported that residents not bringing their trash cans in from the street is becoming a problem in Ward 3. He suggested that tagging the trash cans would help. He was open to assisting in tagging the trash cans.

Councilman Johnson also reported that there have been residents parking on their grass. He has been submitting the information to the Building Department and Capt. Mann. He stated that it was like a domino effect and may occur more often. He was sure that it was a violation of an ordinance in the City of Jennings.

Councilman Johnson thanked Jim and Public Works for the dumpster during the Saturday, April 23, 2022, cleanup event. He stated that there were about three truckloads to clean up the ward. He stated that he had about 20 people helping in Ward 3.

Councilman Johnson stated that there was a list of events happening in Ward 3, and for more information to reach out to him.

Councilman Johnson stated that the business on Carl Avenue and West Florissant Avenue has become a junkyard. He went to the West Florissant Avenue side of the property and along Carl Avenue, the cars parked there looked as though they need to go to a scrapyard. Councilman Johnson asked what kind of business license they had.

Councilman Johnson thanked the Youth Commission. He reported that he attended the Easter Egg Hunt at Koeneman Park on April 9, 2022.

He reported that there was a Ward 3 meeting, and it was good to come together.

Councilman Johnson stated that there was a Town Hall meeting about the distribution of ARPA funds. He stated that there was \$2 million allocated and its uses were voted on. He stated he made the public aware that the uses could be changed to ensure the funds are spent the right way. Councilman Johnson stated that only thirteen percent of the first part of the allocation is going to residents in the form of \$40,000 for the Ring Doorbell program, \$96,000 for internet access, an additional \$96,000 on broadband, \$75,000 for demolition of 5 houses, and the rest of the funds are going to small businesses and nonprofits. He inquired how many nonprofits have supported or attended the Recreation Department or Youth Commission functions.

Councilman Johnson asked that regarding the City property auction, how is the City able to limit bidders to those who are in good standing with the City of Jennings. He stated that he did not disagree but wanted to know how it was going to be enforced without an ordinance to state so. Sam stated that he would like to review the code to see what the vacant property registration states. He stated that the City could reserve the right to reject the bidder.

Councilman Johnson stated that when someone applies for an occupancy permit, one must have their taxes current and insurance on the property. He asked if that could be enforced. Sam stated that it could be enforced.

**Councilwoman Clower** requested that her report be recorded verbatim. She thanked everyone for coming to the City Council meeting and supporting her in the election.

Councilwoman Clower stated that the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward has the most issues. She stated to Jim- grass cutting. Last week, the Public Works came on the 5400 block of Helen Avenue, but twelve other vacant houses are needing to be cut, side-by-side and across from each other. She asked him, as the Public Works Director, why they were not all cut at the same time. She knows that there needs to be greater work done but these properties have been sitting on Helen Avenue for years. That paperwork should be done in order to see the effect of Public Works. Councilwoman Clower asked for the 5400 block of Helen Avenue, the 5300 block of Janet Avenue, and the 5400 block of Hodiament Avenue. With the way it is going, you will never see the effect.

Councilwoman Clower spoke with Steve Pokorney, STS Car Care, about tires on Lillian Avenue. He said that he would pick them up.

Councilwoman Clower reported trash dumping on Garesche Avenue. She requested two Public Works men drive around Ward 4 because of additional dumping, that does not have to go through the Building Department.

Councilwoman Clower reported that the streets are beyond patching. She named Hodiament Avenue, Janet Avenue, and Hamilton Avenue. She stated that those streets are beyond patching.

Councilwoman Clower stated that the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward is dealing with vacant houses lined up side-by-side. They have been sitting there for years and need to be torn down. She stated that the street they are located on has potholes. This is what the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward is dealing with and is crying for help.

Councilwoman Clower stated that there is a property located that she will be getting to Ms. Shelton. 5447 Helen Avenue, the porch was detached from the house and is vacant. She stated that it should be an emergency demolition. Why it was not demolished, she does not know. She has been trying to get to Ms. Shelton. Councilwoman Clower stated that a resident had sent a letter to Mayor Austin. She cannot confirm that but it should be done with the ARPA funds.

Councilwoman Clower stated regarding the ARPA funds, the mayor had committed 5 homes to be torn down. She stated that it was an insult to residents. She stated that residents are concerned about demo houses that need to be torn down in Ward 4. Councilwoman Clower stated that there are about 300 houses that need to be torn down, and residents are crying out. It needs to be a priority. She stated that it was an insult to get money from the ARPA funds but yet give residents 400 Ring Doorbells and money to nonprofit organizations. Those nonprofit organizations do not live in the City of Jennings, yet residents are crying out for things to get done. The committee was set up by the mayor.

Councilwoman Clower stated that people have called their councilmembers regarding their complaints, yet as the councilmembers, they cannot get anything done.

Councilwoman Clower stated she was looking at the report of Standing Committees that was already set by the mayor. She stated that it was not voted on by the committee. She stated that the mayor is not listening to people, and she is not listening to the council members.

Councilwoman Clower asked how long will residents in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward going to have to deal with the same issues year after year. It has to stop. It has to stop. When you walk out that door, what do you see. Trash, vacant homes, high grass. When is it going to stop, this City needs help. Councilwoman Clower passed photos of vacant homes around the room.



Councilwoman Clower asked Schona to get with Kellie to discuss 5447 Helen Avenue, where the side of the house is detached. She stated that it was a safety issue and should be an emergency demolition. That's what the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward is dealing with. Councilwoman Clower suggested that the City can put \$10 million into the General Revenue Fund. That way we can issue out some money and get something done. She stated that five houses approved for demolition is an insult.

Mayor Austin stated that Kellie would like to respond. Kellie stated that since she started in March 2021, she had been working on the demolition list. She compiled a list from 2015 to 2021 that had been demolished, and the list was distributed to the council members. The list shows that most of the demolished houses have been in Ward 4.

Kellie stated that she completed the demolition list for 2018-2019, which came from residents, the Building Department, and Public Works. She stated that there are 34 houses on the list. She stated that she has allocated funding for each of the houses on the list. Kellie stated that the bidding for the 2020 funds has been completed. She stated that those houses will be down by May 2022.

Kellie stated that the City just received the 2021 funds from St. Louis County. She stated that the City was getting ready to go into the bid process. She stated there is some capital allocated from the ARPA funds and emergency funds. She stated that all 34 houses on the demolition list have funding sources so the houses can be torn down.

Councilman Johnson inquired about the funding sources of the properties torn down in the past, where did the funds come from, and if the funds were strictly used for City property demolitions. Kellie stated that regarding the 2015-2021 demolitions that were done, she does not have a list of where the funding had come from. She estimated that most of the properties torn down within that period came from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). She stated that from 2018 to 2019 that it was funded by CDBG from St. Louis County.

Kellie explained the application process and disbursement frequency. She explained that not all of the grant funds are allocated for demolition. The funds are used for other projects like the Garesche Street Improvement program and the home repair program. Councilman Johnson asked if the CDBG funds were ever distributed to developers. Kellie stated that CDBG was used for developers in the past. She stated that the City has never allocated all of the funds toward demolition, which she was aware of. She explained that there are multiple uses for the CDBG funds but the City of Jennings has primarily applied them to three uses: demolition, street improvement, and home repair.

Councilwoman Clower stated that homes 2015 to 2021, the majority of the homes that need to be demolished are in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward. She stated that there are about 300 houses to be demolished in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward. She stated the homes that were torn down in the last report, only one was in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ward. Councilwoman Clower stated that if you look at the environment of the homes that were demolished and published in the newsletter, the area was beautiful. This is how they're doing it; this is how they're doing it. Councilwoman Clower stated that she went to each one of the homes in the newsletter, and the whole environment is beautiful. She stated that she was trying to get the homes torn down in Ward 4 and Ward 3. She asked why they are not put in the fund for the houses to be torn down. She asked why are the people still crying out. She asked why they are saying that people want the money to go to nonprofit organizations.

Kellie stated that on the list 34 properties need to be demolished. She stated that a form was given to the councilmembers, where they can fill in the addresses of possible houses to be torn down and submit the form online. Kellie stated that it will come directly to the Economic Development Department. She stated the verification process upon receipt of the form, before being added to the list of properties for demolition. Councilwoman Clower stated that she had spoken to Myra Randle, Economic Development Specialist, multiple times and submitted a list. She stated that it was on the list but for what year or what demolition it was on, she had no idea.

**Councilman Turner** stated that before he came councilperson, he decided that he would not be a councilperson. He stated that the Holy Spirit told him to sign up. Councilman Turner found out that no one else had run for councilperson for Ward 4. He asked why he was there. He stated that the response he received was that he was accountable to God.

Councilman Turner focused on trying to find out what the City Council was about. He received a Newly Elected Official packet. He stated that council members can take a more involved role in the City. He also wondered about the role of the mayor. He stated he realized if they did what he was scheduled to do, then they needed to do better.

Councilman Turner stated that the council meeting should not be a place where residents and councilmembers bicker, back and forth. He stated that as a resident before he was on the City Council, he never called City Hall for anything. He did call his council members and it would get done. He had not received any calls and he offered his service to the residents.

Councilman Turner stated that he was led by God to pray for those in positions of authority. He stated that one receives authority by being submitted to authority. He stated that he lived in Ward 4 and he could tell residents some stories of how things have changed.

Councilman Turner recommended that residents don't get bent out of shape about what the City of Jennings was doing and not doing. He stated that one must never call God about how big your problems are, always tell your problems how big your God is. He stated that it makes all the difference in the world. Councilman Turner stated that the City, councilmembers, and residents want the same thing.

#### **4. MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Austin welcomed re-elected councilmembers and newly elected, Councilwoman Morton.

Mayor Austin stated that thanks to department heads and all their staff, who have been working very hard. She stated that the City of Jennings is looking for employees in most departments. She stated that the employment opportunities were listed on the City Hall bulletin board and the City website. Mayor Austin asked residents to encourage others to apply.

Mayor Austin reported that there was a pre-bid conference for the new City Hall and Community Center on April 19, 2022. She stated that bids are due on May 3, 2022, at 2 p.m. and the sealed bids will be opened at 2:30 p.m. that day.

Mayor Austin stated that the Easter Egg Hunt hosted by the Recreation Department and Youth Commission on April 9, 2022, was a success. She thanked the Parks and Recreation Director, Willie Brandon. She informed everyone that many jobs need filling in the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mayor Austin reported that on April 26, 2022, St. Louis County essential workers will be celebrated at 10 a.m. at the McDonald's at 8983 Jennings Station Road.

Mayor Austin reported that the City Property Auction list went out that day, April 25, 2022. She stated that the sealed bids will be received until Friday, May 6, 2022, at 3 p.m. She recommended that the City website be consulted for more information. Mayor Austin stated that the auction will be held on May 17, 2022, in the City Council Chambers at 10 a.m. She stated that the City had 37 houses for auction: 3 in Ward 1, 4 in Ward 2, 11 in Ward 3, and 19 in Ward 4. Mayor Austin stated that since the City has been hosting property auctions, 220 houses have been sold between 2018 and 2021, and 54 houses sold outside the property auction. She stated that 274 houses have been sold across the City of Jennings.

Mayor Austin expressed her concern regarding some individuals that have LLCs, have purchased houses, and have not paid the fee for the Vacant Property Registration to the City. She explained the frequency of the fee payment if someone does not begin work on the houses. She stated that the City has been investigating and has been placing liens on the properties that have not been in compliance. Mayor Austin stated that those individuals that are on that list will not be able to participate in the 2022 Property Auction.

Mayor Austin stated that the City had three (3) community gardens, the Clifton-McLaran Garden, Hodiament Garden, and Belle Garden. She stated that they have been in the City for about 30 to 40 years that these gardens have existed yet there was no documentation for Clifton-McLaran Garden and Hodiament Garden. Mayor Austin stated that a resident began a garden on City

property, known as Belle Garden. She stated that there was a resolution to ensure that the gardens are listed within the City.

Mayor Austin stated that her Administrative Assistant, Verna Charles, acts as a liaison between residents and department heads and is in the office Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

#### **D. MONTHLY DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Clower, the City Council approved the monthly departmental reports. All in favor; none opposed.

#### **E. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**1. Ways and Means & Public Safety Committee** – Councilman Wilson stated that there was a joint committee meeting for Ways and Means & Public Safety and Public Works and Building committees that began at 5:30 p.m. He stated that there was a presentation from Joell Aguirre, Republic Services, who informed the City that there was 80 percent contamination of recyclable materials. He stated that he requested that the residents be informed of the \$0.65 increase. Councilman Wilson stated that as the Chairman he felt that the community needed more time to be educated about recycling and make a change. He stated that there should be more discussion before a fee should be applied to residents.

Councilwoman Fountain Henderson suggested that it be added to the marquee not to add plastic bags in the recycling. Councilman Wilson thanked her for the suggestion. Councilwoman Morton suggested that it also be on the recycling bin.

**2. Public Works & Building Committee** – Councilman Johnson reported that there was a joint committee meeting. He stated that this would be his last report as Chairman. He stated that there was a discussion of the grass-cutting contract. Councilman Johnson stated that the committee has discussed and voted on the forming of a request for proposal for grass cutting services, which is in process. He stated that \$30,000 was allocated for ten (10) yards per ward.

Councilman Johnson stated that the discussion of the residential tree limb service was tabled due to a lack of information. He stated that there was a discussion of the Public Works Director's qualifications. He stated that the committee reviewed the active speed bump list to ensure that the committee was in accord.

**3. Parks & Recreation Committee** – Councilman Stichnote stated that there was no meeting. He announced that there will be a meeting on Wednesday, May 4, 2022, at City Hall. He stated that Ken Keitel, Terraspec, will be present to discuss the satellite park. Councilman Stichnote also stated that the committee would also discuss the dead trees in the park.

**4. Policy and Ordinance Committee** – Councilman Turner reported that there was no meeting.

**5. Municipal League** – Councilman Wilson stated that there was an Executive Board meeting. He stated that he was recommended to serve on the Executive Board for another two terms. He stated that it will be discussed for approval at the next General Assembly meeting which will be Thursday, April 28, 2022, in Overland at 6 p.m. Councilman Wilson invited fellow councilmembers to attend. He stated that the following issues will be discussed at the meeting: the budget, the congressional map, and a bill that exempts food from State and Local sales tax, which could be debated. Councilman Wilson stated that the Municipal League was opposed to the bill.

**6. Planning Commission** – Councilman Johnson stated that there was no meeting.

**7. Economic Development Board** – There was no meeting.

**8. Youth Commission** – There was no meeting.

**9. Senior Commission** – There was a meeting.

#### **F. LEGAL BUSINESS (Proposed Ordinances)**

**1. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROVAL AND EXECUTION OF THE POLICE SERVICE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF JENNINGS AND ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI.**

On the motion for the first reading made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote for Bill #2679. Sam did the first reading of the ordinance.

Councilman Johnson stated that when Lt. Schafer presented the contract at the March City Council meeting, he had made suggestions of something that should be stricken from the contract. He points out where the contract states that the City would receive the same services as unincorporated St. Louis County. Councilman Johnson asked Capt. Mann to explain the meaning of that because unincorporated St. Louis County brings to mind areas like Castle Point and Green Valley. He stated that those areas do not look good.

Sam recalled that the City Council approved the agreements and that evening the City Council was just passing the ordinance. He stated that the terms of the contract had been approved and cannot be changed. Councilman Johnson stated that both he and Councilwoman Clower were told by Lt. Schafer that the contract could be changed. Sam stated that the terms of the contract for the ordinance were already agreed upon. At the time of renewal, if the City would like to go back to the table with St. Louis County, it could be addressed then. Councilman Johnson stated that the contract does not go into effect until June 1, 2022. Sam advised that should the City make any changes now, send it back to St. Louis County, and if they do not agree to the contract change, the City of Jennings could be left without police services. Councilman Johnson asked if the City could amend any ordinance. Sam stated yes if there were enough votes in favor. Councilman Johnson asked if the City could not strike from the contract or amend the nine-year term. Sam advised against such action at that time because the City would risk St. Louis County not agreeing to its terms.

Councilman Fountain Henderson stated that she was under the impression that Lt. Schafer would return to the City Council. She recounted a recent experience with the St. Louis County dispatch where she was put on hold. She was asked by dispatch if she wanted a callback, and she affirmed that she did want a call back. Councilwoman Fountain Henderson stated that she never did receive a call back.

Councilman Wilson stated that at the March City Council meeting when the contract was approved, the contract change should have been made at that time. He stated that they were approving the ordinance only at the City Council meeting.

On the motion made by Councilman Stichnote, seconded by Councilman Wilson, for the second reading. Sam did the second reading of the ordinance.

Bill #2679 became Ordinance #2615 by the following roll call vote of the councilmembers, voting in favor: Allan Stichnote, Terry Wilson, Jane Brown, and Joseph Turner; Yolonda Fountain Henderson and Gary Johnson opposed; Dr. Kimberly Morton and Lorraine Clower abstained.

**2. AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE APPROVAL AND EXECUTION OF THE POLICE SERVICE AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF JENNINGS AND ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI FOR THE DESIGNATION OF A COMMISSIONED POLICE OFFICER TO THE CITY OF JENNINGS FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR.**

On the motion for the first reading made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote for Bill #2680. Sam did the first reading of the ordinance.

Councilman Johnson asked where the funds for the additional police officer were coming from. Mayor Austin stated that the additional police officer contract would be paid from the ARPA funds.

On the motion made by Councilman Stichnote, seconded by Councilman Turner, for the second reading. Sam did the second reading of the ordinance.

Bill #2680 became Ordinance #2616 by the following roll call vote of the councilmembers, voting in favor: Allan Stichnote, Terry Wilson, Jane Brown, and Joseph Turner. Yolonda Fountain

Henderson, Dr. Kimberly Morton, Gary Johnson, and Lorraine Clower opposed. Mayor Austin voted in favor.

## **G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

## **H. NEW BUSINESS**

### ***1. Mayor's announcement of the appointments of Standing Committees***

Mayor Austin announced the appointments of Standing Committees.

Ways and Means & Public Safety Committee: Terry Wilson, Chairperson, Allan Stichnote, Dr. Kimberly Morton, and Joseph Turner.

Public Works and Building Committee: Jane Brown, Chairperson, Yolonda Fountain Henderson, Gary Johnson, and Lorraine Clower.

Parks and Recreation Committee: Allan Stichnote, Chairperson, Jane Brown, Gary Johnson, and Lorraine Clower.

Policy and Ordinance Committee: Joseph Turner, Chairperson, Allan Stichnote, Terry Wilson, Dr. Kimberly Morton.

Council Representative to the Municipal League is Councilman Terry Wilson. Council Representative to the Planning Commission is Councilwoman Kimberly Morton, which must be approved by the City Council.

### ***2. Approval of the Council Representative Appointment to the Planning Commission***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote, the City Council approved the appointment of Councilwoman Kimberly Morton as Council Representative to the Planning Commission. Gary Johnson opposed. Roll call: Allan Stichnote, Fountain Henderson, Terry Wilson, Jane Brown, Dr. Kimberly Morton, Lorraine Clower, and Joseph Turner. Gary Johnson opposed.

### ***3. Approval of the Election of the President Pro Tem***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote, the City Council approved the recommendation of the election of Councilwoman Brown as the President Pro Tem. Yolonda Fountain Henderson and Gary Johnson opposed. Roll call: Allan Stichnote, Terry Wilson, Jane Brown, and Joseph Turner. Yolonda Fountain Henderson, Lorraine Clower, and Gary Johnson opposed; Dr. Kimberly Morton abstained.

### ***4. Approval of an appointment to the Planning Commission***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Brown, the City Council approved the recommendation of Rose Eichelberger to the Planning Commission for an unexpired term due to expire in May 2025. All in favor; none opposed.

### ***5. Approval of an appointment to the Board of Adjustments***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote, the City Council approved the recommendation of Cassandra Hunt to the Board of Adjustment for a 3-year term due to expire in April 2025. All in favor; none opposed.

### ***6. Resolution for Community Gardens – Belle Avenue Garden, Hodiament Avenue Garden, and Clifton-McLaran Garden***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Clower, the City Council approved the resolution for three community gardens – Belle Avenue Garden, Hodiament Avenue Garden, and Clifton-McLaran Garden. All in favor; none opposed.

## ***7. Approval of the monthly bills for payment.***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner, the City Council approved the monthly bills for payment. All in favor; none opposed.

## **I. MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS**

Mayor Austin thanked those who attended the meeting in person, those who attended via Zoom, and those who have remained until the end of the meeting.

## **J. CLOSED SESSION, LEGAL AND PERSONNEL (RSMO 610:021-3)**

On April 25, 2022, on the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner, the City Council approved a closed session for Personnel (RSMO 610:021-3) by the following roll call vote of councilmembers voting in favor: Stichnote, Fountain Henderson, Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

Also, present were Mayor Yolanda Austin; Sam Alton, City Attorney; and City Clerk, Deletra Hudson.

PERSONNEL - The following actions were taken:

### **a. Hire Building Department Administrative Assistant II**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Johnson, the City Council voted to approve the hiring recommendation from Schona McClellon, Director of Housing, to hire Maxine Curry as the full-time Administrative Assistant II pending all pre-employment screening tests. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote: Stichnote, Fountain Henderson, Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

On the motion made by Councilwoman Fountain Henderson, seconded by Councilwoman Morton, the City Council voted to approve the hiring recommendation from Schona McClellon, Director of Housing, to hire Le'Shonda Valentine as the Alternate full-time Administrative Assistant II pending all pre-employment screening tests. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote: Stichnote, Fountain Henderson, Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

### **b. Hire Building Department Permit Clerk**

On the motion made by Councilwoman Fountain Henderson, seconded by Councilman Wilson, the City Council voted to approve the hiring recommendation from Schona McClellon, Director of Housing, to hire Brandy Stonecipher as the full-time Permit Clerk pending all pre-employment screening tests. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote: Stichnote, Fountain Henderson, Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

### **c. Hire Recreation Department Administrative Assistant**

On the motion made by Councilman Johnson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote, the City Council voted to approve the hiring recommendation from Willie Brandon, Parks & Recreation Director, to hire Rita Ellison as the full-time Administrative Assistant pending all pre-employment screening tests. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote: Stichnote, Fountain Henderson, Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

### **d. Hire Part-Time Parks Laborer**

On the motion made by Councilwoman Fountain Henderson, seconded by Councilwoman Morton, the City Council voted to approve the hiring recommendation from Willie Brandon, Parks & Recreation Director, to hire Elvis Slayton as the part-time Park Laborer pending all pre-employment screening tests. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote: Stichnote,


Fountain Henderson, Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

e. Hire Part-Time Public Works Laborer

On the motion made by Councilwoman Fountain Henderson, seconded by Councilman Wilson, the City Council voted to approve the hiring recommendation from James Maixner, Public Works Director, to hire James Gordon as the part-time Public Works Laborer pending all pre-employment screening tests. The motion was approved by the following roll call vote: Stichnote, Fountain Henderson, Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

**K. ADJOURNMENT**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Fountain Henderson, the City Council voted by roll call votes of the following council members to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 p.m.: Allan Stichnote, Yolonda Fountain Henderson, Terry Wilson, Jane Brown, Dr. Kimberly Morton, Gary Johnson, Lorraine Clower, and Joseph Turner; none absent; none opposed nor abstained.

Approved:   
Yolanda Austin, Mayor

Attest:   
Deletra Hudson, City Clerk