



**Minutes of the City Council Regular Meeting**  
**Telemeeting Via Zoom Video**  
**March 27, 2023**  
**Regular Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

The two thousand four hundred and forty-sixth meeting of the Jennings City Council was held on Monday, March 27, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in person and via Zoom Video.

**A. REGULAR MEETING**

**1. Call to Order-** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Roll Call**

**Councilmembers present:** Councilman Stichnote, Councilwoman Wilson, Councilwoman Brown, Councilman Wilson, Councilwoman Morton, Councilman Johnson, Councilwoman Clower, and Councilman Turner.

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

**4. 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.

**5. Copy of Approval of the minutes from the Regular Meeting of February 27, 2023**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote, the City Council approved the minutes from the Regular Meeting of February 27, 2023. All in favor; none opposed.

**B. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONERS, REMONSTRATIONS, COMPLAINTS, AND REQUESTS**

**1. 2023-2024 Proposed Budget Presentation- Deletra Hudson, Interim Finance Director**

Deletra did an overview of the 2023-2024 proposed budget. She stated the highlight of the budget was the salary increase of \$17,43 for part-time administrative positions. The St. Louis County Police contract increased less than 3% from the 2022-2023 budget of \$3,972,761 to \$4,229,170. Due to the depletion of the Economic Development Fund, the General Fund is absorbing some of those expenses. She said they are restructuring the Building Department to eliminate the Director of Housing position and create a Building Department Manager position. She reported the Council also increased Ward funds from \$500 to \$1,500 per council member per Ward. As well as an increase in pay for elected officials from \$600 to \$800 per month equaling a \$2,400 annual increase. She stated the Mayor's pay increased from \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually with a \$5,000 increase effective after the election of each position. She reported the surplus of the General Fund is \$252,921 and the total of all Government funds for the City of Jennings is \$10,577,810. Park Sales Tax is \$562,000, and the Economic Development Sales Tax is \$978,248. The Economic Development Fund is \$50,000, Sewer Lateral is \$309,024, Capitol Fund is \$2,233,771, Bond Fund is \$11,532,004 and the ARPA Fund is \$2,742,177. The total revenues of all funds are \$28,985,034. Total expenses for the General Fund are \$10,324,889. Park Sales Tax is \$547,568, Economic Development Sales Tax is \$450,000, Economic Development Fund is \$44,877, and Sewer Lateral is \$150,000. Capital Fund is \$2,222,152, Bond Fund is \$10,641,866, ARPA Fund is \$2,350,075 for a total of expenses of \$26,731,427, and total of revenues surplus is \$2,253,607.

She reported the Rec. Director and Specialist salary and benefits that were paid from Parks Funds were reverted to General Fund to reduce administrative costs charged to the Park Funds. She stated the new programs added to the ARPA funds are the increased demolition budget and the municipal surveillance cameras, the infrastructure improvement plan budget for street repairs, tree removal, and street lighting. A one-time cost of living incentive pay for employees and the City Center Project broadband technology.

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

**Tammy Wheeler, 9459 Wilson Bridge Dr.**, stated she is a part of the Alexandria's Place HOA. She thanked Councilman Wilson for getting the potholes filled in her subdivision. She asked Sam Alton if there's an ordinance with the City of Jennings that can disband the Homeowners Association for Alexandria Place. She reported after doing some research a plan unit development ordinance was approved by the City of Jennings in 2002. Sam stated the Homeowners Association is an independent entity. He said no ordinance can disband the Homeowners Association. He said it's separate from City Council or the city government. Mrs. Wheeler then stated so there is no plan unit development on file with that ordinance from 2002 with Taylor Morley. Sam stated that was a different question, but he doesn't know. Mrs. Wheeler reported the homeowners signed a declaration with Taylor Morley and since Taylor Morley hasn't existed since 2008, she doesn't recall signing any document with anyone else saying they are responsible for paying HOA fees.

**Freddie Bracey, 7120 Idlewild Ave.**, expressed his concerns about the council being divided. He said nothing is being done about these vacant and condemned houses. He reported 7038 Garesche has a lot of trash, rats, and snakes, and needs to be cleaned up.

**Sharon Stewart 8332 Osborn Dr.**, asked if the city has renewed services with the trash company yet. Councilman Wilson said not yet. She said the city needs to get rid of the trash company. She reported she fought with them last summer about her yard waste. She said she's been fighting with them this year from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the present. She reported she called Mrs. Verna to get some help. She said she has several names and times she has dealt with this company. Mrs. Stewart stated the city needs to get rid of them.

**JoAnne Clay**, expressed many concerns to the council. Mrs. Clay stated they need to get things done in Jennings. She said why is the council thinking about raises when they don't have enough people being offered enough money to work for the city. She then asked if the public could get a copy of the budget.

**John William**, asked if Jennings has transition homes. Mayor Austin stated no. He asked who authorizes taxes on the Fire Department. Councilman Wilson said the Fire District, he said they meet every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at the fire house on Diamond. He said they're a separate entity and they have a board. Mr. William asked why he is paying more taxes for another area when he lives in another. Councilman Wilson reported a few years ago the city annexed into the Fire District. Mr. William asked who gave them that authorization. Councilman Wilson stated it was voted on by the residents. Mr. William then asked who brought it up for it to be voted on in the first place. Councilman Wilson stated they came to several meetings. It was presented on the ballot then it passed.

**Michelle Owens, 9208 Hathaway Dr.**, thanked the City for the Disaster Funds. She reported she attended the First Time Homeowners meeting, and it was very informative. She stated the attendance wasn't that well, but they should have another one.

**Terry Buford, 2601 Kinamore Dr.**, reported 2608 Kinamore Dr. is caving in. She asked if there were any new plans for that address. Kellie stated it was purchased last year after the auction. Mayor Austin asked Kellie to follow up with who purchased the home. Councilman Johnson expressed that this situation doesn't need to go to Kellie, it needs to go to the Building Department. He said it needs to be condemned tomorrow. Councilman Johnson asked Mrs. Buford if the house is beyond repair. She said yes. Councilman Johnson asked Sam what the ordinance says about unrepairable houses. Sam said if it's an emergency the city can condemn the property.

*David Green, 8630 Clifton Ave.*, asked if the elevator issue had been rectified. Mayor Austin stated they needed two parts and only one has come in so far. She said they will check into it tomorrow. Councilwoman Brown stated the Fire Chief is following up as well.

*Nadia Quinn 5246 Hodiarnont Ave.*, stated 5220 Hodiarnont has been reported several times and reported to the Mayor as well. She said it looks like someone overturned a 40-foot dumpster. She said she decided to try to clean it up herself and she realized she was picking up bags of human feces. She said the property needs to be cleaned up. Councilwoman Clower stated she received a letter from Mr. Hopkins regarding that property. She said the response was that the property is under investigation. She said that the property should be listed as an emergency because she has seen that property too. She asked Mr. Hopkins if he could put it in the system as an emergency. He said yes. Councilwoman Clower said Mr. Hopkins is in the position to list properties as an emergency if they are declared as one. Sam went on to explain the emergency abatement process.

*Selona McClellon*, expressed her concerns regarding the elimination of her job position. Sam interrupted and stated her concerns are an employment issue. He said this is a legal employment issue that is not made for public comments. She stated if she wanted to object to the decision that was made can she discuss it, because the change was initially discussed in a public forum. Sam said the only thing that was discussed in the public forum was the position itself being eliminated. He said she is entitled to send something to the council members, and she can also apply for the new position. Councilman Wilson stated it was in the budget a few months ago, it's nothing new. Councilman Johnson asked who proposed the change to the department. Councilman Wilson stated Mayor Austin and Deletra brought it to the committee based on what they analyzed. Councilman Johnson said Mrs. McClellon should have been a part of that conversation. He said the Building Department is the second most important department in the city. He said instead of taking her position away, give her more duties. Councilman Johnson asked Mayor Austin and Deletra what was the process for the decision. Sam stated this is an employment issue and it needs to be discussed in a closed session. Councilman Johnson said he is asking about the process. Sam stated the process is that the Mayor elected to eliminate the position and if he wants specifics, it can be discussed in a closed session. Councilwoman Clower stated there's an issue regarding eliminating Mrs. McClellon's position. She said as a Director, Mrs. McClellon should have been involved. She asked Sam if they could table the decision until it is investigated. Sam stated it is up to the majority of the Council.

*Marietta Beck (via zoom)*, thanked Jim and the Public Works Department for improving Garesche between Helen and Hodiarnont. She asked if any of the Councilmembers had gone through the scanner before the meeting. Councilman Wilson, Johnson, Turner, Stichnote, Councilwoman Brown, Wilson, and Morton went through the scanner. Councilwoman Clower stated she did not go through the front door. She asked what the purpose is when she is an employee and has a key. Mrs. Beck said she wants to feel safe and secure and just because she has a key doesn't equate to not having a gun.

*State Rep. Yolonda Henderson*, expressed her concerns about the Ways and Means meeting. She said the pay increase isn't necessary. She said the resident's concerns should be a top priority. She said to fix what the residents have been complaining about. She said Deletra and the Mayor have a key position, but Jim is constantly saying he needs help on the streets. She stated instead, they are lining their pockets with more pay. She said they're demoting a worker and taking those funds and lining their pockets. Mrs. Henderson said the Mayor is putting the City in a deep hole. She said the Mayor should have been at the debate so the people could hear from her. She said she found out the Mayor is asking for a \$5,000 increase to her already \$25,000 salary. She said the councilmembers pay is going from \$600 a month to \$800 a month.

### **3. Councilmember's Reports (Reports are limited to 5 minutes. See Decorum Ordinance.)**

*Councilman Turner* reported to Jim, 2220 Switzer is bad and needs attention. He said the dumping needs to be picked up again. He stated he turned in his resident's concerns to Mr. Hopkins. He also thanked the Police Department for their availability.

*Councilwoman Clower* stated the raise increase was presented two months ago and she doesn't agree with it. She said there are other important issues within the City of Jennings. She said the pay increase is unfair to the residents. She thanked the people who came out to the Mayor's debate. She said it went well and all the candidates were invited but Mayor Austin didn't show up. She

stated she received a letter from St. Louis County about tax increases of up to 15%. She said it is terrible and sad. She encouraged everyone to keep coming out to voice their concerns. She said when it comes to hiring, the council makes the decision based on the recommendations. She stated there are 3 inspectors and the report shows Mr. Hopkins has only done 8 citations. She said the other inspectors are doing the work. She said if they are short-staffed then why isn't Mr. Hopkins out there doing the work. She said his position needs to be reviewed. Sam interrupted Councilwoman Clower and stated the Council should never discuss or refer to an employee in an open meeting, ever.

**Councilman Johnson** thanked Jim for his work, as well as Captain Mann. He thanked MCU for the invitation to the debate. He stated 2608 Kinamore was on the demolition list and now it's no longer on it. He said whoever owns it needs to figure out how it got off the list. He referred to stop signs and speed bumps. He said not to put any more speedbumps by the stop signs because people are rolling right over them. He said it's not effective at all. Councilman Johnson explains to Captain Mann that Garesche is a drug one-stop shop. He went on to express his concerns about the division of the council. He said there is no transparency. He stated the property assessors are out and in May-June, you can appeal it. He stated it is a process. Councilman Johnson stated next week April 4<sup>th</sup> is the election. He stated if you are concerned come out and vote to change how the city looks.

**Councilwoman Morton** thanked MCU for the debate. She reported she went to a community meeting at Monument of Faith to encourage people to get out and vote. She also stated she went to the Koffee Co. opening, and it was very nice. Councilwoman Morton asked Jim if he could give a timeline on the streets. Jim stated he and Dianna have been working on the RFP. He said as soon as the budget is passed, they're going to put it out for bids. Councilwoman Morton asked Kellie, where's the city on the demolition timeline. Kellie explained there were 24 buildings left on the demolition list and both contracts had been issued. She said right now they are doing preliminary background work. She said the City is waiting for the contract from the demolition company to move forward. She stated she expects the work to be done by late April or mid-May. Councilwoman Morton asked what is the timeline for the auction. Kellie stated they do not have an auction currently that she's working on but has plans for future auctions.

**Councilman Wilson** stated he may not agree with everything a council member says but he can pick up the phone and call them if need be. He went on to say that any calls received from his Ward, get a response and a follow-up. He stated if he doesn't have the answers, he finds someone who does. He stated that he hopes State Rep. Henderson is working on some type of legislation that'll bring money and other things into the City of Jennings. He thanked the residents who took advantage of the First-Time Homebuyer's event. He said it went well and that won't be the last one. He reported he attended the grand opening of the new coffee company. He said it's a nice place and encouraged people to check it out.

**Councilwoman Brown** stated everyone should keep the families in their prayers from the devastating tragedy in the southern states. She thanked Councilman Wilson for putting together the team for the First Time Homebuyers Event. She reported the ones that attended, you could tell that they were very interested and appreciative.

Councilwoman Brown yielded the rest of her time to Councilman Wilson.

Councilman Wilson stated he wanted to give a big shout-out. He said when the City of Jennings first joined St. Louis County for contracted services their first Captain was Captain Troy Doyle. He reported he and Councilwoman Brown got an opportunity to see him sworn in as the new Chief of Police for the City of Ferguson. He stated that's a great thing for Ferguson and North County as a whole.

**Councilwoman Wilson** stated her update is the report of the loose dog. She stated she spoke with Darnell 3 times this past month. She said she couldn't get a description of the dog to contact animal control, but if anyone sees him again make sure they contact her. She reported the Youth Commission had its March Madness Event and it was well attended. She said some people donated food and other things. She reported their new event in April will be their Easter Egg Event. She said it will be held in two places. Wards 3 and 4 will be at Epps Park and Wards 1 and 2 will be at Sievers Park, Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. You can contact the Rec. Center if you need more information.

*Councilman Stichnote* reported the Building Department is having residents and contractors bring in the deeds to their houses before they issue permits. He said to Sam that he couldn't find a city ordinance on that. Sam stated the code doesn't require that and he has notified the Director. Councilman Stichnote thanked Jim for his work across from 8805 College and the potholes on Sharidge. He reported the Senior Bingo is Thursday, 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Civic Center. He reported on May 6<sup>th</sup> the Youth Commission is having a Ward 1 & 2 clean up and they will need a few volunteers from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. He then asked Captain Mann if they were still writing tickets for expired tags.

#### **4. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Austin thanked the Department Heads and their staff. She thanked Captain Mann for finding out that police can ticket cars in driveways. She reported for February they have towed 3 vehicles, 27 vehicles were tagged and 24 vehicles have moved since being tagged. She stated they get 48 hours to move their vehicle after the police tag their car.

Captain Mann stated Officer Davis is their Neighborhood Policing Officer. He reported they're seeing a decrease in participation in their Neighborhood Watch Meetings. He stated they are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 5 p.m. at Gary Gore. He said a lot of concerns and questions can be answered at the meeting. He said to Councilman Johnson that he is aware of the drugs on Garesche. He stated that the area is under investigation and there were two busts last week. He mentioned to Councilwoman Wilson that he was appointed to the Animal Care Control Board for St. Louis County, and he will bring issues and resources in Jennings to the Board.

Mayor Austin encouraged residents who have cameras to make sure they register their cameras voluntarily with the Jennings Police Department. She thanked those who participated in the Curb Appeal Contest. She thanked some of the council members as well for participating. She reported there's a form for residents or Councilmembers to fill out regarding houses they would like to see added to the demolition list, they can contact Kellie Shelton. She stated she hears the residents cry about the trash issue, and they will consider all concerns.

#### **C. MONTHLY DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner, the Council voted to approve the monthly departmental reports. All in favor, none opposed.

#### **D. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

*1. Ways & Means and Public Safety Committee-* Councilman Wilson stated they had their last meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. He said the agenda items were to propose the budget. He stated they discussed the ARPA and salary adjustments.

*2. Public Works & Building Committee-* Councilwoman Brown reported they met Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. She said they had 5 agenda items for discussion. She stated Kellie gave an update on the Curb Appeal contest. She reported the task force meeting was held on Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. She said the participant count was 30 residents. She said they look forward to choosing a winner.

*3. Parks & Recreation Committee-* no meeting.

*4. Policy and Ordinance Committee-* no meeting.

*5. Municipal League-* Councilman Wilson shared there was a meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and it was held in Ferguson at the Ferguson Community Center.

*6. Planning Commission-* no meeting.

*7. Economic Development Board-* no meeting.

*8. Youth Commission-* see packet.

*9. Senior Committee-* see packet.

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

### **1. AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JENNINGS, MISSOURI, AUTHORIZING THAT THE INTERSECTION OF WILSON BRIDGE DR. AND PICKFORD PL. BE DESIGNATED A “THREE (3) WAY STOP INTERSECTION” AND THAT “THREE WAY STOP SIGNS BE PLACED AT THE INTERSECTION.**

On the motion for the first reading made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner for Bill #2698. All in favor, none opposed. Sam did the first reading of the ordinance.

On the motion for the second reading made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner for Bill #2698. All in favor, none opposed. Sam did the second reading of the ordinance.

Bill #2700 became Ordinance #2635 by the following roll call vote of the councilmembers voting in favor: Councilman Stichnote, Councilwoman Wilson, Councilwoman Brown, Councilman Wilson, Councilwoman Morton, Councilwoman Clower, Councilman Johnson, and Councilman Turner.

*(Upon discovery after the meeting, we found that Bill #2698 and Ordinance #2633 were previously assigned. Therefore, the new Bill #2700 and Ordinance #2635 were assigned to this legal business.)*

### **2. AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JENNINGS, MISSOURI AMENDING ORDINANCE NUMBER 2113 WHICH IS AN ORDINANCE FIXING THE COMPENSATION OF THE ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF JENNINGS, MISSOURI.**

On the motion for the first reading made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Brown for Bill #2699. All in favor, none opposed. Sam did the first reading of the ordinance.

On the motion for the second reading made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner for Bill #2699. All in favor, none opposed. Sam did the second reading of the ordinance.

Bill #2699 became Ordinance #2634 by the following roll call vote of the councilmembers voting in favor: Councilman Stichnote, Councilwoman Wilson, Councilwoman Brown, Councilman Wilson, and Councilman Turner. Councilwoman Morton, Councilwoman Clower, and Councilman Johnson opposed.

## **F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

## **G. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Approval of Proposed 2023-2024 Budget**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Brown the council voted to approve the proposed 2023-2024 budget. Councilman Johnson, Councilwoman Morton, and Councilwoman Clower opposed.

By the following roll call vote of the councilmembers voting in favor: Councilman Stichnote, Councilwoman Brown, Councilman Wilson, and Councilman Turner. Councilwoman Morton, Councilwoman Clower, and Councilman Johnson opposed. Councilwoman Wilson abstained.

Councilman Johnson stated he is for the budget, but he wants to take out the Building Department restructuring decision. He said he wants to make a motion to amend the budget.

On the motion made by Councilman Johnson, seconded by Councilwoman Clower, the Council voted to amend the budget, to add back in the Director of Housing position that was eliminated in the original budget, and to remove the new Building Department Manager position.

*V. A.*



By the following roll call vote of the ~~councilmembers~~ *Y, H* voting in favor: Councilwoman Morton, Councilman Johnson, Councilwoman Clower, and Councilman Turner. Councilman Stichnote and Councilman Wilson opposed. Councilwoman Wilson and Councilwoman Brown abstained.

Councilman Johnson asked Mayor Austin if she was going to veto ~~the~~ *Y, H* motion. Mayor Austin stated yes, she is going to veto the motion.

## ***2. Approval of placement of NO LITTERING SIGNS***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Johnson the council voted to approve the placement of No Littering Signs. All in favor, none opposed.

## ***3. Approval of the placement of the HANDICAP PARKING SIGN***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Brown the council voted to approve the placement of the Handicap Parking Sign. All in favor, none opposed.

## ***4. Approval of the line item transfers for the Park Funds***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner the council voted to approve the line item transfers for the Park Funds. All in favor, none opposed.

## ***5. Approval of the purchase of the City vehicle for Parks***

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote the council voted to approve the purchase of the City vehicle for Parks. All in favor, none opposed.

## ***6. Approval of the Appointment of a Youth Commissioner***

On the motion made by Councilwoman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote the council voted to approve the appointment of a Youth Commissioner. All in favor, none opposed.

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

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilwoman Clower the council voted to approve the monthly bills for payment. All in favor, none opposed.

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

Mayor Austin thanked those we are in attendance as well as via zoom.

## **I. CLOSED SESSION (RSMO 610:021-3)**

On March 27, 2023, on the motion made by Councilwoman Clower, seconded by Councilman Johnson, 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, A. Wilson, T. Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

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

PERSONNEL - The following actions were taken:

### **a. Approval recommendations for hire**

Part-time Parks Laborer and Part-time Public Works Laborer

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Stichnote, the City Council voted to approve the following hiring recommendations by the following roll call vote of councilmembers voting in favor: Stichnote, A. Wilson, T. Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining:

Willie Brandon, Parks & Recreation Director, recommended to hire Aamir Slayton for the Part-time Parks Laborer position, pending the pre-employment screenings and background checks.

James Maixner, Public Works Director, recommended to hire Harold Lipson for the Part-time Public Works Laborer position, pending the pre-employment screenings and background checks.

**APPROVED**

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

On the motion made by Councilman Wilson, seconded by Councilman Turner, the City Council voted by the following roll call of councilmembers in favor of adjourning at 9:24 p.m.: Stichnote, A. Wilson, T. Wilson, Brown, Morton, Johnson, Clower, and Turner; none absent; none opposing nor abstaining.

Approved:

  
Yolanda Austin, Mayor

Attest:

  
Deletra Hudson, City Clerk