

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE**

**July 9, 2020
6:00 pm**

The East Ridge City Council met pursuant to notice on July 9, 2020, 6:00 pm at East Ridge City Hall. Mayor Williams called the meeting to order.

Mayor Williams stated we are still conducting meetings via electronic means due to Governor Lee's Executive Order #16, extended by Executive Order #34 until June 30th and again by Executive Order #51 until August 29th.

City Attorney Litchford stated we are continuing to observe these executive orders. He stated the Governor issued Executive Order #16, extended by Order #34 and now by Order #51, and Mayor Williams and City Manager Dorsey issued a state of emergency. As a result, a determination has been made in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens, because of the COVID 19 pandemic, we are conducting this meeting by electronic means.

Rev. Clair Sauer, Jones Memorial United Methodist Church, gave the invocation. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: Mayor Williams, Vice Mayor Helton (remotely), Councilmember Cagle, Councilmember Chauncey (remotely), Councilmember Witt (remotely), City Manager Dorsey, City Attorney Litchford, and City Recorder Middleton

Approval of Minutes June 25, 2020 Council Meeting – Councilmember Chauncey made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Witt, to approve the minutes. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

Communication from Citizens:

Mayor Williams stated that citizens could submit their questions or comments by email to him from 12 noon on Wednesday July 8th through 12 noon on Thursday, July 9th. The Mayor received no emails.

Communication from Councilmembers:

Vice Mayor Helton had nothing at this time.

Councilmember Cagle stated there are potholes on roads leading into Ringgold Road that need to be repaired and asked if the State is responsible. City Manager Dorsey stated he would contact the State to see if they are responsible for these repairs.

Councilmember Chauncey had nothing at this time.

Councilmember Witt stated the Census deadline has been extended through October. She encouraged people to turn in their census.

Mayor Williams discussed the following:

- Governor's Executive Order #54 that provides local governments with authority over requiring face coverings. A Hamilton County Health Department directive was issued and will become effective on July 10, with 13 exceptions. This directive applies to all citizens of Hamilton County. The Small Cities Coalition will adhere to this mandate. There is more information on the City's website under the Covid 19 link.
- The Mayor stated even though we have businesses that sell fireworks, it is still illegal to shoot them in the City. The Mayor thanked the police for trying to control the situation by giving warnings and citations for people shooting fireworks around the July 4th holiday. Mayor Williams stated there was a social media post that he had been shooting fireworks. He stated he did not purchase or shoot any fireworks for this or any other holiday. This is a false rumor.
- The Mayor stated there is also a rumor going around that the City is not reporting its debt accurately. The rumor is that the City has \$30 million in debt when it is only \$17 million. This is a \$929,563 or a 4.93% decrease in debt from last year. He has an analysis of the City's debt, which will be posted on his Facebook page to clear up any miscommunication. He stated that we have yearly audits, and asked Finance Director Qualls to discuss our financial position. She stated the auditors and the Comptroller's office look at the debt. The audit explains our bonds and notes payable, as well as leases. We also have a debt policy which states we can only have up to \$19 million in debt.
- The Mayor asked City Manager Dorsey to discuss the removal of the SRO at the middle school. Mr. Dorsey stated the middle school changed their dismissal time to coincide with the high school, which is about an hour earlier. The students are required to leave campus, so they would come to the city hall/community center area. They would harass patrons and vandalized city hall. There was also an 11-person fight at Pioneer Park. He stated we were the only city that was still funding an SRO. In April, he sent a letter to the Sheriff's office stating we would be pulling the SRO from the school. The person was reassigned to City Hall to take care of issues controlling the students after school.
- Mayor Williams stated this body is open and transparent. He will start the Meet the Mayors event back up. He encouraged citizens to reach out to them rather than spreading miscommunication.
- Blood Assurance will be at Jack's Restaurant tomorrow for a blood drive.
- The Citizen's Academy alumni brought masks to the Community Center to give away. They are in a box outside the door.

Communication from City Manager:

- Mr. Dorsey answered Mr. Cagle's question from last meeting about two East Ridge baseball teams playing in Rossville. He stated that spring sports got delayed and the East Ridge fields had already been rented out for tournaments.
- Mr. Dorsey stated the East Ridge Police Department, with the help of the East Ridge Citizen's Police Academy, has started the Community Cares Program and once a week they check on elderly citizens. If you would like to participate, click on the police tab on the City's website, eastridgetn.gov.

- Update on tax collections: Finance Director Qualls
 - Local Option Sales Tax is only \$11,940 less than this time last year. We budgeted \$2.4 million and have collected \$2.8 million for the year.
 - Property tax collection rate is 94%.
 - Delinquent property tax collection rate is 136%.
- A Hamilton County Health Department Directive begins tomorrow which requires any visitors coming into public buildings to wear a mask.
- There is an effort for a liquor store referendum in the City. Per state law, the City cannot get involved in this issue. Citizens have to get a petition of 10% of the people who voted in the last election and present to the City Council. Council must pass a resolution to get the issue on the ballot.

Mayor Williams stated that Tennessee was third highest in the nation for economic recovery.

Councilmember Cagle stated that anyone over the age of 14 must have a fishing license to fish at Camp Jordan Pond and asked that signs be erected. Mr. Dorsey stated signs are already up.

Old Business: None

New Business:

RESOLUTION NO. 3057 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, TO WAIVE THE FEE FOR USE OF CAMP JORDAN ARENA BY THE RIVER CITY CORVETTE CLUB FOR A FUNDRAISER TO HELP BENEFIT THE EAST RIDGE NEEDY CHILD FUND – City Attorney Litchford read on caption. City Manager Dorsey stated we have waived the fee in the past and part of the proceeds go to the Needy Child Fund. Councilmember Witt made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cagle, to approve Resolution No. 3057. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

RESOLUTION NO. 3058 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, EXTENDING FOR AN ADDITIONAL 180 DAYS A MORATORIUM ON THE ACCEPTING AND PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ANY NEW OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS AND ON THE CONSTRUCTION AND/OR INSTALLATION OF OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS, IN ADDITION TO THE CONVERSION OF EXISTING SIGNS AND POSTER PAPER OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS TO AN ELECTRONIC ADVERTISING OR MESSAGING SIGN, WITHIN THE CITY – City Attorney Litchford read on caption. City Manager Dorsey stated this is a continuation of the current moratorium we did in January of this year. He stated that TDOT had stopped the administration and enforcement of the outdoor advertising program due to some Supreme Court decisions. We are waiting on guidance from TDOT. Councilmember Cagle made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Witt, to approve Resolution No. 3058. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

RESOLUTION NO. 3059 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO ACCEPT A DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,500 FROM HAMILTON COUNTY TO BE USED FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF FUNDS SPENT ON SUPPLIES FOR THE

POLICE DEPARTMENT – Mayor Williams stated we added an addendum to the agenda to accept this donation. City Attorney Litchford read on caption. Finance Director Qualls stated that Commissioner Boyd had previously announced that he was going to make a donation from Hamilton County, and we realized that we never accepted it. Once we accept it, we can get reimbursed by the County. Councilmember Chauncey made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cagle, to approve Resolution No. 3059. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

Discussion of Tentative Agenda Items for the July 23, 2020 Council Meeting

Old Business: None

New Business:

- A. **ORDINANCE NO. ____ - An Ordinance to Change the Disposition of Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue (1st reading)** – Finance Director Qualls stated that currently the hotel/motel taxes go into debt service but can only be used for tourism projects. We would like to change the ordinance to be able to move that money into an economic development fund. Currently, we would have to take out a bond and then pay the money back with hotel/motel tax funds. Mr. Dorsey stated, for example, if we wanted to purchase wayfinding signs for \$40,000, currently we would have to issue debt, but if this was changed, we could write a check out of the economic development fund for the signs. We also have to pay fees, interest, etc. on loans.

Assistant City Manager Custer stated that Animal Services met with someone that would like to donate \$1,000 to the Animal Shelter. We will have a resolution for the next meeting for Council's consideration. He also stated we may need to look at a dollar amount for donations that need to come to Council for approval. He stated he is proud of what Animal Services does for the City.

Councilmember Cagle asked how much the City will receive from the governor's local government grant. Mr. Dorsey stated \$493,000. Mr. Dorsey stated it will be used for IT, laptops, paving, and upgrades to buildings.

Mr. Dorsey stated that for those who are watching the meeting on Facebook, we are working on various issues. We have new cameras and he hopes the picture quality is better.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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City Attorney Litchford stated we are continuing to observe these executive orders. He stated the Governor issued Executive Order #16, extended by Order #34 and now by Order #51, and Mayor Williams and City Manager Dorsey issued a state of emergency. As a result, a determination has been made in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens, because of the COVID 19 pandemic, we are conducting this meeting by electronic means.

Pastor Daniel Beard gave the invocation. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present were: Mayor Williams, Vice Mayor Helton, Councilmember Cagle, Councilmember Chauncey (remotely), Councilmember Witt (remotely), City Manager Dorsey, City Attorney Litchford (remotely), and City Recorder Middleton

Approval of Minutes July 9, 2020 Council Meeting – Vice Mayor Helton made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Witt, to approve the minutes. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

Communication from Citizens:

Mayor Williams stated that he received one email from James Gaither, 5024 Ealy Road. The Mayor read the email in which Mr. Gaither voiced concerns about loud music coming from his neighbor's house during the day. He stated we need to model our noise ordinance after the Chattanooga ordinance. Councilmember Witt stated that more people have voiced concerns about this issue. City Attorney Litchford stated our noise ordinance addresses disturbing the peace and quiet at other times beside 11 pm – 7 am. He will look at this issue further.

Communication from Councilmembers

Vice Mayor Helton had nothing at this time.

Councilmember Cagle asked if we received information about the intersections on Ringgold Road being our responsibility or the state's. Mr. Dorsey stated the State is checking to see where their right-of-way ends.

Councilmember Chauncey had nothing at this time.

Councilmember Witt stated that, because of COVID-19, things are not happening like they should regarding the Census. She did state that we are at 63.5% responses. She thanked the Fire and Police for putting up a sign in front of their building.

Mayor Williams discussed the following:

- The Election Commission has moved the polling locations to Camp Jordan Arena, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Arena can be curtained off in four separate sections. City Manager Dorsey reiterated that Camp Jordan is not an early voting location.
- Craft Axe Throwing will be opening hopefully around Labor Day.
- The Mayor will have a virtual “Meet the Mayor” on July 30th from 7-8.
- The River City Corvette Club Car Show will be August 1st from 9 am – 3 pm. Proceeds go to Hospice and to the East Ridge Needy Child Fund.
- The Red Wolves first home game on their new field will be August 1st. They may have special activities with social distancing.

Communication from City Manager:

- Mr. Dorsey stated he had a good zoom call with Congressman Fleishman, along with others from the Small Cities Coalition, regarding what is going on nationally about COVID-19.
- He thanked Dana Howe for volunteering to be the chairperson of the East Ridge Centennial. It will be held on April 10, 2021.
- He has a FEMA call every Wednesday and staff is working on getting everything to them regarding the storm in April.
- He and staff are working on the Personnel ordinance.

Old Business: None

New Business:

ORDINANCE NO. 1131 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE TO AMEND TITLE 4, CHAPTER 2 OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE MUNICIPAL CODE PERTAINING TO PAID LEAVE (1st reading) – City Attorney Litchford read on caption. City Manager Dorsey stated this ordinance only applies to employees hired on or after July 1, 2012. He also stated that council voted to eliminate the leave buyback for employees hired on or after that date. Mr. Dorsey discussed a sick leave plan that would give employees one day a month sick leave, which will have no cap, but employees will not get paid for their accumulated sick time when they leave the City. Sick leave can be used as service credit toward an employee’s TCRS retirement. The City Manager stated that employees hired before July 1, 2012 would have a one-time opportunity to switch over to this plan. The Mayor added that any vacation hours over 320 will roll over to sick leave. Councilmember Witt made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Helton, to approve Ordinance No. 1131 on first reading. Councilmember Cagle stated he would like to see all employees under one plan. Roll call vote: Vice Mayor Helton - yes; Councilmember Cagle - no; Councilmember Chauncey - yes; Councilmember Witt - yes; Mayor Williams - yes. Motion approved.

ORDINANCE NO. 1132 – AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE EAST RIDGE CITY CODE, TITLE 2 BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, TO AMEND TITLE 2 BY ADDING CHAPTER 2 TO PROVIDE CERTAIN BOARD AND COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS (1st reading) – City Attorney Litchford read on caption. Mayor Williams asked that this be added to the agenda. He stated that boardmember appointments are critical and that boards are extensions of our Council. This ordinance would give us a larger network of citizens to choose from, but it does not prohibit any councilmember from making an appointment. There is an application process which includes, among other things, residency, and attendance requirements. Councilmember Cagle would like to add that one person can only be appointed to one board. We have several citizens that are on two or more boards. He would also prefer that all boardmembers be residents of the City. City Attorney Litchford stated the law does not require residency on all board appointments, but the resident has to be a qualified voter. We cannot make a stricter requirement. Councilmember Chauncey made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Witt, to approve Ordinance No. 1132 as presented. Councilmember Cagle made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Helton, to amend the motion to state that one person could only be appointed to one board. There was discussion regarding the upcoming appointments to the Housing and Planning Commissions. Mr. Litchford stated if this ordinance is approved, the members would not be affected until their term expires. Councilmember Chauncey made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Witt, to amend the motion to state that one person could serve on two boards, but later withdrew their motion and second. Roll call vote on Councilmember Cagle’s amendment was unanimous. Motion approved. Roll call vote on the original motion as amended was unanimous. Motion approved. Ordinance No. 1132 was approved on first reading.

RESOLUTION NO. 3060 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO ACCEPT A DONATION FROM MADELINE ORR FOR THE EAST RIDGE ANIMAL SHELTER – City Attorney Litchford read on caption. City Manager Dorsey stated this donation is for \$1,000 and will be used for the general care and upkeep of the animals. Vice Mayor Helton made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cagle, to approve Resolution No. 3060. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

Grant Consent Agenda:

1. **RESOLUTION NO. 3061 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT THE PUBLIC ENTITY PARTNERS “SAFETY PARTNERS” LOSS CONTROL MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM**
2. **RESOLUTION NO. 3062 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PUBLIC ENTITY PARTNERS JAMES L. RICHARDSON DRIVER SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM**
3. **RESOLUTION NO. 3063 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PUBLIC ENTITY PARTNERS PROPERTY CONSERVATION MATCHING GRANT FOR FY 2021**

City Attorney Litchford read all the resolutions on caption. Councilmember Witt made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Chauncey, to approve the Grant Consent Agenda. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

RESOLUTION NO. 3064 – A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE, APPROVING THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT RELATIVE TO THE LAWSUIT FILED BY THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE, TENNESSEE AGAINST CHATTANOOGA TRUCK CENTER, INC. – City Attorney Litchford read on caption. He stated this is related to repairs on a fire truck that were not done, but the City was charged for. Chattanooga Truck Center has agreed to pay the City \$6,000 to settle the lawsuit. Vice Mayor Helton made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Cagle, to approve Resolution No. 3064. The vote was unanimous. Motion approved.

Discussion of Tentative Agenda Items for the August 13, 2020 Council Meeting (see Attachment A)

- **Old Business:**
 - **ORDINANCE NO. 1131 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE TO AMEND TITLE 4, CHAPTER 2 OF THE CITY OF EAST RIDGE MUNICIPAL CODE PERTAINING TO PAID LEAVE (2nd and final reading)** No discussion.
 - **ORDINANCE NO. 1132 – AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE EAST RIDGE CITY CODE, TITLE 2 BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, TO AMEND TITLE 2 BY ADDING CHAPTER 2 TO PROVIDE CERTAIN BOARD AND COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS (2nd and final reading)** No discussion
- **New Business:**
 - **ORDINANCE NO. ____ - An Ordinance to Change the Disposition of Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue (1st reading)** Finance Director Qualls stated that all hotel/motel taxes go toward debt service. We want to be able to put these funds in separate bank account. The funds will still pay for debts, but we can make purchase without incurring debt. The funds can only be spent on tourism.
 - **RESOLUTION NO. ____ - Request for Proposals for Video Management System & In-Car Cameras** – Mr. Dorsey stated two of the four vehicles we purchased are on the way and two are having cameras installed. The original Request for Proposals had installation of cameras but not the cost of the cameras. IT Technician Josh Love stated each car will have two cameras, one in the front and one in the back with a panoramic view.
 - **RESOLUTION NO. ____ - Appointments to Housing Commission and Planning Commission** – Mayor Williams stated we have two appointments for the Housing Commission and one for the Planning Commission. There was discussion on how approval of Ordinance No. 1132 will affect these appointments. City

Attorney Litchford stated these will be the last appointments before the ordinance takes effect. Mr. Litchford will add language that this will take effect on a certain date.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.