

MINUTES OF A WORK SESSION
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF CLARKSTON, GEORGIA
HELD IN-PERSON AND BY TELECONFERENCE, ZOOM AUDIO/VIDEO
IN SAID CITY ON THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2023

On the 25th day of July 2023, at 7:00 p.m., the City Council of Clarkston, Georgia met in a Work Session in-person and by teleconference, Zoom Audio/Video in said City. Mayor Beverly Burks called the meeting to order. The following members of the City Council were present: Vice Mayor Debra Johnson; Councilmembers Awet Eyasu; Jamie Carroll (virtual); Yterenickia Bell, Susan Hood and Laura Hopkins. Absent: None. The following City staff were present: Shawanna Qawiy (City Manager); Dan Defnall (Finance Director); Christine Hudson (Police Chief); Dorothy Jackson (Chief Court Clerk); Tomika R. Mitchell (City Clerk); and Stephen Quinn (City Attorney).

NOTE: Items appearing in these minutes are in the order they were discussed, not necessarily in the order they appeared on the agenda.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Burks called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL

All members of the Council were present.

Councilmember Hood made a motion to amend the Work Session agenda for July 25, 2023, to add an item for discussion of a means to accommodate citizen comments on current affairs in the city, which would take place prior to the next scheduled City Council meeting of August 3, 2023. Councilmember Carroll duly seconded the motion.

The Council briefly discussed this item.

Mayor Burks called for the vote and declared the motion approved (6-0).

Councilmember Hopkins made a motion to add to tonight's agenda to discuss the four outstanding contracts (three public relations contracts and one contract for city cameras) that were not presented to the Council in open session, were not vetted by the City Attorney, and did not get put out to bid; and add a cease and desist on acting on and moving forward with those contracts until they are properly vetted by the Council. This motion failed due to no second on the motion.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Burks read the Resident Comment Policy.

4. PRESENTATION/ ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

There was no discussion under this item.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business to discuss.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. To discuss increasing police force compensation.

Councilmember Carroll gave a brief overview of the recent timeline regarding the police officer compensation and the staffing crisis at the Police Department. He also presented the salaries for police officers at neighboring municipalities.

Councilmember Carroll suggested increasing the police compensation base pay from \$52,000 to \$55,000 but would rather move it up to \$60,000 to be competitive with the surrounding jurisdictions, to be able to recruit and retain officers. He also stated he would like to move up the compensation for the other officers, accordingly, increasing the existing officers' salaries by \$8,000.

The Council briefly discussed this item.

City Attorney, Stephen Quinn clarified the process of setting the officers salaries and amending the budget.

Finance Director, Dan Defnall stated he would need at least a week to conduct a budget review and projection.

The following citizens presented comments pertaining to police force compensation: Brian Medford, Glory Kilanko, Kim Ault, Robyn Sands, Omar Sheakley, Robert Winfrey, Achmed Hasan, Nijnyyah Qadriyyah, Pastor C.O. Adams, Jr., Nasir Warsama, Andrew Stanley, Debra Gathmann, Renita Knight, Sarah Zagami, Maritza Nunez, Katie Jones, Joshua Deaton, Mayor Emanuel Ransom.

The next time was added to the agenda, per the motion at the beginning of the meeting.

B. To discuss public comments on current city affairs of the city.

Councilmember Hood gave a brief overview of why she recommended adding this item to the agenda stating the Council has an opportunity to hear more from the citizens on other topics.

The Council briefly discussed this item.

City Attorney Steven Quinn stated there are matters that cannot be discussed by the Council at the Town Hall Meeting and the Council knows what those matters are, but that doesn't mean the Council can't hear from the community.

Councilmember Eyasu recommended the meeting be conducted as a Town Hall Meeting.

The Council further discussed this item and Councilmember Hood recommended allowing the citizens' comments on current affairs of the city. A Town Hall Meeting will be scheduled for this Thursday, July 27th at 7:00pm based on location availability.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

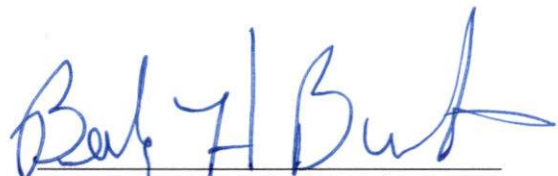
8. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Eyasu made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Bell duly seconded the motion. Mayor Burks called for the vote and declared the meeting adjourned (6-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

ATTEST:


Tomika R. Mitchell
City Clerk


Beverly H. Burks
Mayor