City of Bowie

15901 Fred Robinson Way
Bowie, Maryland 20716

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, MAY 15, 2023

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the Bowie City Council was held on Monday, May 15, 2023, in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Mayor Adams called the meeting to order at 8:07 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Adams led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

QUORUM:

In attendance were Mayor Adams, Mayor Pro Tem Ndebumadu, Councilmembers Estève, Gardner, Hawkins, Truesdale and Woolfley (arrived at 8:33 p.m.), City Manager Lott, Assistant City Manager Mears, City Attorney Ruff, Carolyn Fifer (for City Clerk Hernandez), and Staff.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

1. Lori Banschbach, Safety Turn – Spoke about Bowie Marketplace.

PRESENTATIONS:

A. The City of Bowie Women Trailblazers Awards – Awards were presented to the Honorable Sheila Tillerson Adams, Ms. Evelyn J. Archie, Ms. Elizabeth M. Hewlett, Esq., Dr. Jacqueline R. Marshall, Ms. Kathleen M. Parker, and Dr. Maggie E. Ray.
B. Approval and Presentation of Proclamation P-11-23 Proclaiming the First Friday of June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day in the City of Bowie – Councilmember Estève presented Proclamation P-11-23 proclaiming June 2nd as National Gun Violence Awareness Day in the City and encouraged residents to wear orange on that day to show their support.

CITY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

A. Appointments/Reappointments/Swearing-In:

1. Councilmember Estève motioned to appoint Shalina Hayes to the Arts Committee for a 2-year term. Councilmember Woolfley second the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
2. Councilmember Estève motioned to appoint Rita Phelps to the Arts Committee for a 2-year term. Councilmember Woolfley second the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
3. Councilmember Estève motioned to appoint Dr. Kelechi Fluitt to the Education Committee for a 2-year term. Councilmember Woolfley second the motion. Motion passed 7-0.
4. Mayor Adams swore in the appointees to their respective committees.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

City Manager Lott stated that City employees continue to seamlessly deliver services to residents on a daily basis without fail.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilmember Estève made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items: A) Approval of Proclamation P-9-23 Celebrating Memorial Day 2023 in the City of Bowie; B) Approval of Proclamation P-10-23 Proclaiming the Week of June 3-11, 2023 as Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week in the City of Bowie; C) Adoption of Resolution R-29-23 Accepting a Bid Proposal for Planning, Design, Engineering, and Permitting Services for New Single Sheet Ice Arena from JLG Architects in the Amount of $1,596,781; D) Adoption of Resolution R-30-23 Awarding a Contract to Hercules Fence of Maryland, Inc. for Bowie Senior Center Bus Lot Security Fence; E) Adoption of Resolution R-31-23 Accepting a Bid Proposal from SFMS, LLC of Bethesda, Maryland in the Amount of $51,653 for the Northview Drive Bituminous Trail replacement Project; and F) Introduction of Ordinance O-7-23 Amending the Adopted Budget for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022 and Ending June 30, 2023, as Adopted by Ordinance O-1-22 and Amended by Ordinances O-5-22 and O-6-23, to Appropriate Funds for Planning, Design, Engineering, and Permitting Services for the City's New Single Sheet Ice Arena. Councilmember Woolfley seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. FY 2024 Budget Ordinance O-5-23, Capital Improvements Program Resolution R-25-23 and Constant Yield Tax Rate - Adoption of Fiscal Year 2024 Budget, CIP and CYTR - City Manager Lott stated that staff and Council have diligently gone through the proposed budget. Staff supports the budget as presented but are prepared to make any requested adjustments.

Byron Matthews, Finance Director provided information on the budget process that began on April 10, 2023 and the budget as presented which includes a $0.05 tax increase. Mr. Matthews discussed the fund balance forecast and the taxes, that the taxes have not been raised in the past 14 years. Mr. Matthews stated that the City finances are very stable but that the fund balance is being used as a fast rate. Mr. Matthews shared that 25% of expenditures must be maintained in the fund balance as previously set by Council and that there will be a fund imbalance if taxes are not raised.

Public Hearing:

1. Sue Livera, Manvel Lane – Spoke about the budget, raising taxes, and asked Council for transparency on their decision making.

Since there was no one else signed up to speak, Mayor Adams declared the Public Hearing to have been held.

Mayor Adams provided feedback and asked Council to be transparent in their decision making. Each Councilmember shared their reasoning behind their position to raise or not raise taxes. Mayor Adams, Mayor Pro Tem Ndebumadu, Councilmembers Woolfley, Hawkins, and Truesdale were each for keeping the tax rate the same for this year, while Councilmembers Estève and Gardner shared specific reasoning why the tax increase should not be pushed off for another year.

Councilmember Woolfley made a motion to adopt the FY2024 budget as presented with an amendment to maintain taxes at the current $0.40 level. Mayor Pro Tem Ndebumadu seconded the

motion.

Mayor Adams and Councilmember Gardner asked City Manager Lott to confirm that his understanding was correct, that the City would not be taking away any services as presented in FY2024 budget if the taxes were not raised. City Manager Lott confirmed that to be correct. City Manager Lott stated that for next year, to maintain services without raising taxes will have expenditures be under the 25% limit, will likely affect the City's bond rating, and that a much larger tax increase will be needed next year.

Councilmember Estève shared that when a tax rate increase was first proposed several years ago, the tax rate increase would have been 2 cents. This year it is a 5-cent proposed increase. By 2029, it would need to be a 10-cent increase.

City Attorney Ruff advised Council and clarified for them that the numbers and tax rate in the presented budget would change if the tax rate increase was not approved. They can make a statement about the tax rate but the proposed budget with the updated numbers would need to be brought before them again at the first meeting in June for approval.

A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed 5-2 (Gardner, Truesdale voted no.)

City Attorney Ruff clarified the Council's intent of their motion. She restated that the FY2024 budget numbers will change and cannot be approved as presented if Council wishes to not approve the tax increase.

Based on City Attorney Ruff's guidance, Councilmember Woolfley made a new motion to move forward with the 40-cent tax rate for Fiscal Year 2024. Mayor Pro Tem Ndebumadu seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 6-1 (Gardner voted no.) The amended Ordinance O-5-23 will come back before Council for a vote at the first meeting in June with updated numbers based on the vote to maintain the current tax rate.

B. Adoption of Ordinance O-6-23 Supplemental Appropriations for the Annual Budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2023 – Mr. Byrom Matthews, Finance Director, presented that Ordinance O-6-23 was a supplemental budget appropriate to update audio visual technology at the Bowie Senior Center, remove/replace 16 rooftop HVAC units at the Kenhill Center, and a change order requesting additional funding to install miscellaneous grills and dampers to allow free venting of the IT related equipment. $96,500 will be used from the fund balance for the capital project program.

Mayor Adams asked Mr. Matthews if the funds are available for Fiscal Year 2023 to which Mr. Matthews replied that they were.

Public Hearing:

Since there was no one signed up to speak, Mayor Adams declared the Public Hearing to have been held.

Councilmember Woolfley made a motion to adopt Ordinance O-6-23. Mayor Pro Tem Ndebumadu seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0 (Gardner did not vote.)

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Plastic Bag Ban - Council will discuss a letter of support for CB-32-2023 County Better Bag Bill – Councilmember Estève presented on Prince George's County Council Bill CB-32-2023 which

introduces a plastic bag ban in Prince George's County. Councilmember Estève spoke with sponsors of the bill, stated that it has the support of Maryland retailers, and stated that the ban is very straightforward and found to be effective in other counties. Councilmember Estève requested that City Council send a letter of support to Prince George's County Council supporting the bill.

Councilmember Gardner asked about the monies collected that go directly back to the retailers and asked if that is true for similar programs that exist in other jurisdictions. He also asked about the program in DC. Councilmember Estève stated that he believed in DC the money funds employee wellness and that in other Maryland jurisdictions the program is similar to what is being proposed in Prince George's County.

Mayor Pro Tem Ndebumadu asked how the ban contributes to sustainability, and if the bag ban can be tied back to Bowie sustainability goals. Councilmember Estève stated that the bill reduce single use plastic bags in local streams.

Mayor Adams commented that they should pay attention to the City doing its part for the environment.

Councilmember Estève made a motion for Council to adopt the letter of support for Prince George's County Council Bill CB-32-2023. Councilmember Gardner seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-1 (Ndebumadu voted no.)

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Pro Tem Ndebumadu motioned to adjourn the Regular City Council meeting. Councilmember Estève second the motion. Motion passed 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Fifer/ah

Carolyn Fifer, CMC
for City Clerk Awilda Hernandez