



City of Bowie

15901 Fred Robinson Way
Bowie, Maryland 20716

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023

CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

The Regular Meeting of the Bowie City Council was held on Monday, November 27, 2023, in Council Chambers at City Hall. Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

QUORUM:

In attendance were Mayor Adams (virtual); Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley; Councilmembers Estève, Rogers, Brady, Truesdale, and Ndebumadu; City Manager Lott; Assistant City Manager Mears; City Attorney Ruff; Assistant City Clerk Hartig; and Staff.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

1. Rhonda Billington, Durham Dr – Congratulated newly elected Councilmembers and encouraged Council to pursue responsible development in District 4 that addresses traffic and infrastructure issues.
2. Les Kaunitz, Rambling Ln – Encouraged Council to “bury the hatchet” now that the Election is over.

COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Truesdale thanked City staff for their work in putting together the City Council Swearing-in Ceremony.

Mayor Adams thanked City staff for putting together the City Council Swearing-in Ceremony. He commented that he looks forward to working together with the Bowie citizens and newly elected Council members.

Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley informed Council and viewers about Senator Ron Watson and County Councilwoman Ingrid S. Watson's crime forum taking place at Bowie State University on November 28, 2023. He encouraged the public to attend.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

City Manager Lott commented on Public Works' progress on leaf collection within the City.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilmember Esteve motioned to approve Consent Agenda items: A) Approval of November 20, 2023 Swearing-in Ceremony Minutes; (B) Adoption of Resolution R-63-23 Accepting a Bid Proposal for Bowie Golf Course Tree Removal; (C) Adoption of Resolution R-66-23 By Two-Thirds Vote Waiving of Bidding Requirements of Section 61 of the City Charter to Authorize the Purchase of Security Camera Equipment; (D) Adoption of Resolution R-67-23 Awarding a Contract to IMACS, Inc. for the Assembly, Installation, Construction Services and Integration of City-Purchased Equipment for Phase III of the SCADA Control System for the Wastewater Treatment Plant in the Amount of \$342,409.70; (E) Adoption of Resolution R-68-23 Awarding a Contract to Vanguard Utility Service, Inc. for the Removal of Nine (9) Touch-Read Water Meters and the Installation of Nine (9) Large City Supplied AMR (Automated Meter Reading) Meters at Various Locations in the City; (F) Adoption of Resolution R-69-23 Waiving the Bidding Requirements of Section 61 "Purchasing and Contracting" of the City Charter, for Good Cause Shown, to Allow the City to Enter into a Contract with Emergency Services Consulting International, Inc. (ESCI) to for Police Department Testing Services; (G) Approval of Letter to County Executive Alsobrooks re: Mitchellville Road Project. Councilmember Brady seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. City's Traffic Calming Policy Discussion – Assistant City Manager Mears recapped the previous discussion on October 2, 2023, about traffic calming measures and then entertained questions from Council. Assistant City Manager Mears highlighted that the major concerns are making sure that the measures are good from an engineering standpoint, not knowing what the unintended consequences will be, and what the financial costs will be.

Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley thanked Assistant City Manager Mears for speaking.

Mayor Adams questioned when we will begin to see the effects of the additional speed cameras recently installed, and if that data will be used when determining what other measures are needed. Assistant City Manager Mears said that it will be months before we have data on effectiveness.

Councilmember Rogers questioned what the net effect of these measures will be and asked for a clarification of costs. Assistant City Manager Mears responded that there may be safety issues that arise as an unintended consequence.

Councilmember Brady requested Council write a letter to County Executive Alsobrooks regarding the issue. He would like Race Track Road to be looked at closer. He questioned whether state highway should be brought in regarding the congestion on Rt. 301. Councilmember Brady asked if stop signs are an effective measure. Assistant City Manager Mears responded that placing stop signs in places where people don't expect increased accidents in those areas. Councilmember Brady requested a copy of the study that was done on traffic calming measures, and highlighted that community buy-in is important. Councilmember Brady mentioned that he would like more live speed signs and that residents should not be aware of the locations of the speed cameras.

Councilmember Estève agreed with Councilmember Brady. Councilmember Estève would like to see more four (4) way stops and encouraged staff to come back with more traffic calming options. Would like to keep the conversation going.

Councilmember Ndebumadu inquired about the status of Peach Walker Drive and Mount Oak Road. Staff said they will follow up on this. Councilmember Ndebumadu asked what the short-term approach is. Assistant City Manager Mears said that the FY2025 budget will plan to include more

funding for this issue, and that education and awareness can be done in the meantime, and that a long-term policy change is needed. Councilmember Ndebumadu asked what the cost of striping is. Assistant City Manager Mears responded that it varies. Councilmember Ndebumadu requested an update on areas that have already been mitigated and which ones still need to be addressed. Councilmember Ndebumadu questioned the goal of education and awareness, and Assistant City Manager Mears responded that it tends to have a low effect. Councilmember Ndebumadu asked to update our request for project planning study from state highway.

City Manager Lott stated that the purpose of this conversation was to just discuss current traffic calming measures within the City, and to further provide recommendations, we need money and a professional to look at the policy. City Manager Lott commented that we can do striping and speed cameras with the current budget, and that a more extensive course of action can be included in the next budget. City Manager Lott stated that the discussion has been done and now staff needs an assignment from Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley commented that the list of roads that need to be addressed is not comprehensive. Assistant City Manager Mears responded that only 3 out of 7 councilmembers submitted roads. Mayor Pro Tem asked to add Tulip Grove Drive & Trinity Drive, Kendale Lane, Kembridge Drive, Kinderbrook Lane, Brunswick Lane & Beaverdale Lane, and Felter Lane to the list. Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley asked to add 197 to the letter to the state and add High Bridge Road by High Bridge shopping center to the county letter. Mayor Pro Tem commented that at Stonybrook Drive & Superior Lane we know there is a problem, but the studies show not to do anything, and he stated that we need greater access to initiating traffic calming measures.

Council met consensus to send letters to Prince George's County and the State of Maryland.

Councilmember Ndebumadu asked what the cost of a professional study is, whether there are left over cameras, and if there are federal grants available. Assistant City Manager Mears responded that a study can cost between \$10,000-\$100,000+ and cameras typically cost \$3,000. Assistant City Manager Mears said that to qualify for federal grants, there need to be fatalities and serious injuries, and in Bowie, there is more of a perception of speeding. Councilmember Ndebumadu commented that Bowie should pursue grants for proactive measures.

Councilmember Rogers commented that the City has to look at what it is doing now, how the policy needs to be changed, and what the funding needs to be.

Councilmember Truesdale thanked staff for their presentation. He commented that District 3 seems to want a greater police presence. Assistant City Manager Mears responded, again, that there is more of a perception of speed than there is actual speeding, and that having officers present does not solve all issues.

Councilmember Estève would like to add Whitehall Drive, Chapel Forge Drive, Overbrook Lane, and Yorktown Drive to the list of roads to be looked at. He stated that cost effective measures should be taken to address the speeding issue.

City Manager Lott commented that the traffic calming policy is Council's, not staff's. He added that the City Engineer can lower the standards to implement traffic calming measures, and then Council can give their approval of those changes.

Councilmember Estève requested a short report from staff with their initial recommendations for the December 4, 2023, meeting. He would like more expertise before moving forward.

Mayor Adams suggested marking up the policy in increments.

Councilmember Brady commented that perception is reality. He requested a copy of Council's policy on traffic calming. Assistant City Manager Mears responded that the policy is on the website, but staff will send it still.

Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley thanked staff for their work in getting more cameras added, and he urges the City to continue to use them. Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley would like staff to recommend policy changes and determine what budget changes are needed.

Council met consensus to instruct staff to provide their recommendations. Assistant City Manager Mears said that a timeline will be put together.

B. Online Pilot Job Training Program – Grants Writer Kay Starr presented findings of the survey sent to Coursera users. Starr recommends that the City does not pursue offering Coursera again. The grants office takes the position that Prince George's County's program – Employ Prince George's – offers the same and more, and the City should pursue and promote that instead.

Councilmember Ndebumadu requests that this report be sent to County Councilmember Ingrid S. Watson.

Council suggested that an "Employ Prince George's" section be added to the Bowie Spotlight, and that resources for veterans should be included.

Councilmember Rogers concurred with the Grants Office's recommendation.

Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley thanked staff for their efforts.

Before moving onto New Business, Mayor Adams shared that Greenbelt Councilmember Rick Gordon passed away, and Mayor Adams extended support and condolences from the City of Bowie.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Bowie Boys and Girls Club Baseball Field Allocation Discussion – Brandon Bowers, an 11u baseball coach for the Bowie Boys and Girls Club (BBGC), advocated for a softball field at Jerico Park to be converted to a field that has the proper measurements for 11u and 12u baseball teams. Mr. Bowers shared that currently, there is no field within the Bowie City limits that is the size they need. Also, Mr. Bowers says that the smell of marijuana in the park is a concern. Mr. Bowers urged Council to invest in the future.

Councilmember Estève thanked Mr. Bowers for his presentation.

Acting Director of Community Services Nick Spurgeon shared that there is only one 70 foot diamond in the community and it is owned by MNPPC, and that past Councils have sent letters to MNPPC before to have fields at Foxhill converted to the dimensions Mr. Bowers is asking for and have had no luck. Mr. Spurgeon shared that the pitching mound renovation would be \$8,000 - \$10,000 and irrigation, \$5,000 - \$10,000; looking at a \$15,000 budget. Mr. Spurgeon stated that field allocation would be an issue.

Councilmember Estève asked for a budget request for this item. He encouraged Mr. Bowers and Mr. Spurgeon to exchange information. Councilmember Estève asked for the new council members to be briefed on the current cannabis laws in the City and what our enforcement is.

City Manager Lott commented that staff will press the enforcement issue with Park Rangers and the Police Department, as no smoking is allowed in the park.

Councilmember Estève commented that rangers need to know their enforcement power and that maybe tag readers could be used to ban people from the parks that have been caught smoking there before. City Manager Lott said that rangers are to call the police if there is an issue with a marijuana smoker.

Mayor Adams requests more signage about smoking be placed in the parks. Mayor Adams also emphasized that the City does not want to create an issue with field allocation and cause a domino effect. Mayor Adams thanked Mr. Bowers for speaking and said the City will work with Park and Planning to address these concerns.

Councilmember Rogers suggested contacting the Bowie Baysox to see if they have resources to help with the field size issue. Mr. Spurgeon shared that the marketing manager for the Baysox – Adam Poole – would be a good contact, and that the MLB has programs for funding. Mr. Spurgeon shared that he will take the initiative to find other ways to help Mr. Bowers.

Councilmember Ndebumadu asked for letters to be written to the Bowie Baysox and Monumental Sports for help.

Councilmember Brady inquired about the timeframe Mr. Bowers is hoping for; Bowers responded Spring 2024 would be the goal. Councilmember Brady stated that we should not disrupt the budget process for this issue.

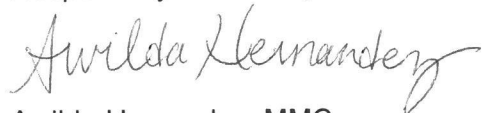
Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley summarized that in the short term, staff will work with Mr. Bowers for field scheduling and will explore how the existing infrastructure can be used. Long term, there is an opportunity in the upcoming budget cycle to address this issue. The City will look into alternative funding, while considering how other members of the community would be affected by this.

Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley thanked Mr. Bowers for being there and for his dedication to the community. Mayor Pro Tem Woolfley also thanked Councilmember Estève for bringing Mr. Bowers before the Council.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Estève motioned to adjourn. Councilmember Rogers second the motion. Motion passed 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

 - MKH

Awilda Hernandez, MMC
City Clerk