



MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL

April 1, 2024

Ronnie Thompson, Mayor

Sally W. Sandy, City Manager  
Louis E. Vinay, Jr., City Attorney

Wendy Cato )  
Christopher Hawkins ) Council  
Chris Jernigan )  
Butch McSwain )

Interpreters  
Danette Steelman-Bridges  
Ernest Williams, IV

- I. Call to Order in the Council Chamber at City Hall - Mayor Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
- II. Public Comment – Mayor Thompson stated the guidelines for public comment and said speakers were to be called in order of sign-up for those who appeared in person. No speakers or other comments via email, U.S. mail or hand-delivered letters were received.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag – Councilmember Cato led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Invocation: City Attorney Louis Vinay, Jr. gave the invocation.
- V. Introduction of Council – Mayor Thompson introduced councilmembers and staff.
- VI. Public Advocacy Issues and Strategies
  - A. Recognition: Mayor Thompson introduced Chief Jason Whisnant. Chief Whisnant recognized LEAF (Law Enforcement Assistance Foundation) 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award – Inv. Hannah Lail, Morganton Public Safety. He stated that she is a 7-year officer with Morganton Public Safety and is one of six officers nominated for this honor. He reviewed the statistics that lead to her nomination and stated that she has a servant's heart with a dedication to her community. Chief Whisnant advised that Inv. Lail received the award at the annual LEAF banquet.
  - B. Sharon Jablonski, Director, Department of Cultural and Creative Development, came forward to announce Morganton's Main Street Champion for 2023. She stated that each year at the Main Street Conference a person is nominated as a Main Street Champion. She announced that Julia Mode was chosen as the recipient of Morganton's Main Street Champion for 2023. A video submitted at the conference was shown to the Council. Sharon presented the award to Ms. Mode. Ms. Mode stated that she has enjoyed working with the staff at the City of Morganton and amazing volunteers. She looks forward to new projects and new ideas.

- C. Mayor Thompson read a proclamation recognizing April 18, 2024 as North Carolina Lineworker Appreciation Day.

Councilmember McSwain presented the proclamation to Brooks Kirby, Director of Electric Services. Director Kirby stated that he is very proud of his team of linemen.

- D. Mayor Thompson read a proclamation designating the month of April 2024 as Community Appearance and “Every Litter Bit Hurts – A Beautiful Morganton Starts Here” Month in Morganton. Councilmember Jernigan presented the proclamation to Cheryl Gratton, Chairman, Community Appearance Advisory Commission. Ms. Gratton accepted the proclamation. She stated that she hopes this campaign will create an awareness of how beautiful Morganton is and how litter can change that beauty. She stated that it is important to set a good example to our next generation getting them established in good trash disposal.

- E. Mayor Thompson announced the following Upcoming Events:

- **Public Safety**

**Coffee with a Cop** – Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at Little Guatemala.

**Kids Bike Rodeo** – Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Greenlee Ford Soccer Complex.

- **Parks & Recreation**

**Baseball/Softball Opening Day** – Monday, April 8, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., Catawba Meadows.

- **Downtown/City Hall**

**Art Crawls are Back!** – The third Thursday of April, May, June, August, September and October. Join us on April 18<sup>th</sup> for umbrellas and florals installations, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**IMAGINE Morganton 2040 Community Workshops:**  
Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 5 – 7 p.m. and Thursday, April 11, 2024, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Art in the Hall:** April/May 2024 – Quilts by Tina Sclarandis and Dianne Kolb – Tina and Dianne’s love of quilting manifested itself over the years of grandmother-hood. The finished quilts displayed represent many hours of work with loving thoughts of family. They are leaving a legacy for their families to cherish.

**Pop-Up Spring Farmers Market:** Saturday, April 6, 2024, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 111 North Green Street.

**Basket Case Spring Chase Scavenger Hunt:** Saturday, May 4, 2024, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. – Sponsored by the Downtown Development Association – The scavenger hunt will lead participants through participating downtown businesses where there will be activities and tasks with opportunity to win Downtown Bucks.

- **CoMMA Performing Arts Center**

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.  
**Les Ballet Trockadero de Monte Carlo**

Friday, April 19, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.  
**Alfreda Sings Aretha**



VII. North Carolina Municipal Power Agency Number 1 Update – City Manager Sandy stated that there is no report, except that the budget is currently in process.

VIII. Consent Agenda – City Manager Sandy advised that all items listed below are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member, staff member or citizen so requests. In the event a request is made, the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered under Item XI.

City Manager Sandy presented the Consent Agenda. Mayor Thompson asked if any items should be removed. No request was made.

Upon motion by Councilmember Jernigan, seconded by Councilmember Hawkins, and unanimously carried, the Consent Agenda was approved and each individual item adopted as stated, those being as follows:

A. Consideration of Approval of Minutes – Approved minutes for a City Council Workshop held on February 23, 2024 and a Regular Meeting held on March 4, 2024.

B. Consideration of February 2024 Tax Releases in the Amount of \$2,065.19

Approved tax releases for the amount of \$2,065.19.

C. Consideration of Adopting a Resolution to Designate an Official to Make Recommendations to the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (ABC) on ABC Permit Applications

Adopted a resolution (Resolution 24-10) designating Chief Jason Whisnant, Director of Morganton Public Safety, as the official to make recommendations to the North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (ABC) on ABC Permit applications.

D. Consideration of Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the North Carolina School for the Deaf (NCSD) and Morganton Public Safety (MPS) to Establish Roles and Responsibilities

Approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU 2024-22) between North Carolina School for the Deaf and Morganton Public Safety to establish roles and responsibilities that will improve safety at NCSD for students and/or school safety training.

E. Consideration of Award of Contract for Comprehensive Sidewalk Condition Assessment

Awarded contract for comprehensive sidewalk condition assessment to Precision Infrastructure Management for \$39,335 for up to 50 miles of sidewalk and to authorize the Mayor and/or City Manager to execute such contract and any other necessary documents. This amount has been included in the current budget.

IX. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – No item was removed.

X. New Business

A. Other Business

1. Consideration of Award of Contract (Task Order #2) Providing Design Verification, Electrical Improvements, Bid Phase Services and Construction Contract Administration for the Water Treatment Plant Sedimentation Improvements Project



Brad Boris, Water Resources Director, advised that the upgrade project would address the need for infrastructure rehabilitation in the coagulation, flocculation and sedimentation processes at the water plant. Automated sludge removal and plate settlers will increase plant detention time allowing for improved water quality and disinfection.

The proposed cost to complete design verification, electrical improvements, bid phase services and construction contract administration from the start through permitting, ready to bid and construction, is \$476,700.

Highfill Engineering has provided a scope-of-work that would cover all the steps to complete all of the work for a fee not to exceed \$476,700.

City Manager Sandy advised that the project would be paid for with a portion of the \$13 million State funds that were discussed last month.

Upon motion by Councilmember Hawkins, seconded by Councilmember McSwain, and carried unanimously, the Council approved and authorized a contract -Task Order #2 (Contract 2024-23) with Highfill Engineering to complete design verification, electrical improvements, bid phase services and construction contract administration for the Water Treatment Plant Sedimentation Improvements Project not-to-exceed the amount of \$476,700.

2. Consideration of Award of Contract for Fencing, Demolition, Excavation, Backfill and Pavers for "Hardware Alley" Located at 100 Block of West Union Street and Approval of Associated Budget Amendment

City Manager Sandy advised that City staff recently received a proposal from D.H. Griffin Wrecking Co., Inc. to perform fencing, demolition, excavation, backfill and pavers in the "Hardware Alley", which is next to and behind the 100 block of West Union Street located in the City of Morganton.

After close review, City staff recommend awarding the contract to D.H. Griffin Wrecking Company, Inc. (DHG). DHG provided the best overall proposal. The contract amount is \$125,315.

A budget amendment to appropriate \$84,315 in fund balance and to accept receipt of a restricted contribution from the property owner, located next to the alley, of \$41,000 is requested.

Upon motion by Councilmember Jernigan, seconded by Councilmember Cato, and carried unanimously, the Council approved a contract with D.H. Griffin Wrecking Co., Inc. (Contract 2024-21) for fencing, demolition, excavation, backfill and pavers in the Hardware Alley located in the City of Morganton in the amount of \$125,315, and approved a budget amendment (Ordinance 24-19) in the amount of \$125,315 to appropriate fund balance and accept receipt of a restricted contribution from the property owner of the property next to the alley for this project and to authorize the Mayor and/or City Manager to execute such contract and any other necessary documents.

3. Consideration of Award of Contract for the Upgrade and Replacement of the Sewer and Stormwater Infrastructure for "Hardware Alley"

City Manager Sandy stated that City staff recently received a proposal from Chad Sigmon Construction, LLC to perform the upgrade and replacement of the sewer and stormwater infrastructure in the "Hardware Alley" located in the City of Morganton. This will include four connections to the existing services, down spout drain system and the installation of the sock drain system.

After close review, City staff recommend awarding the contract to Chad Sigmon Construction, LLC (CSC). CSC provided the best overall proposal. The sewer system is quoted at \$15,800, the downspout drain is quoted at



\$10,824 and the flex drain is quoted at \$9,000. The total contract amount is \$35,624. This will not require a budget amendment.

City Manager Sandy stated that there will be other improvements in this area, primarily electric and CoMPAS. These will be done “in-house” and will not require budget amendments.

Upon motion by Councilmember Cato, seconded by Councilmember Hawkins, and carried unanimously, the Council approved a contract with Chad Sigmon Construction, LLC for the upgrade and replacement of the sewer and stormwater infrastructure in the “Hardware Alley” located at the 100 block of West Union Street for the amount of \$35,624 and to authorize the Mayor and/or City Manager to execute such contract and any other necessary documents.

4. Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing a Grant Application from the North Carolina Department of Commerce Rural Downtown Economic Development Grants for the Green Street Streetscape Improvements Project

City Manager Sandy advised that the City of Morganton is intending to start the North Green Street Streetscape Improvements Project to improve water and sanitary sewer, replace and bury electric lines, replace cable and internet lines, improve sidewalks, improve storm drain, replace mast arms and improve crosswalks on North Green Street. The City estimates that the North Green Street Streetscape Project will cost \$4,135,617.15. The North Carolina Department of Commerce Rural Downtown Economic Development Grants assist local governments in developing projects that will provide significant economic and community development opportunities for communities in our region with funding up to \$850,000.00.

The City has committed to providing local matching funds for the project of \$2,535,617.15, which includes \$42,500 for the 5% match for this grant. The City has already secured other grant funding of \$750,000 for this project. City Council must approve a resolution authorizing the grant application.

Upon motion by Councilmember McSwain, seconded by Councilmember Hawkins, and carried unanimously, the Council approved a resolution (Resolution 24-09) authorizing staff to apply for a \$850,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Commerce Rural Downtown Economic Development Grants for the North Green Street Streetscape Improvements and to spend \$42,500 in matching funds.

5. 30-Day Notice Boards and Commissions

- a. Human Relations Commission – Mayor Thompson announced the following:

Due to upcoming expiration of terms, vacancies will exist on the following Boards and/or Commissions.

- Human Relations Commission – Expiring term:

Rev. Wayne A. Johnson, Sr., term expires 5/3/2024

- Human Relations Commission – Vacancies:

NCSA Representative

If you have an interest in volunteering for one of these vacancies, applications for *Request for Appointment to City of Morganton Boards and Commissions* are available during business hours from the Clerk's office or on the City website.

XI. Other Items from City Manager and City Council Not on Agenda

A. Consideration of Award of Contract to Enter into a One-Year Agreement with JSCM Group for Cyber Security Management

Greg Branch, Director of IT/CoMPAS, advised that in an increasingly interconnected digital landscape, cybersecurity has become a necessity as part of doing business. Cybersecurity management is essential in assisting us in protecting sensitive data, protecting against cyber threats and protecting our business continuity, among many other things. We have spent several months researching and interviewing several companies that offer cyber management. Staff believes that JSCM Group offers the services we need and that they will be a good fit with our staff. JSCM will offer the following as it pertains to security: Endpoint Protection Software, Endpoint Detection and Response, Endpoint Response Management, Identity Threat Protection, Remote Monitoring and Management, Network Device Management and Patch Management.

The total cost for one year is \$89,559. This was appropriated in the current budget.

Upon motion by Councilmember Hawkins, seconded by Councilmember Cato, and carried unanimously, the Council awarded a one-year contract with JSCM Group (Contract 2024-20) to provide Cyber Security Management to the City of Morganton for the amount of \$89,559 and to authorize the City Manager and/or Mayor to execute such contract and any other necessary documents.

XII. Reports – No reports were given.

XIII. Adjournment – Mayor Thompson adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Preparation of Minutes. These minutes were prepared by Renee C. Carswell, City Clerk. Prior to including them into the official minute book, the minutes have been read and approved by the City Manager and the City Attorney, then distributed to each member of the City Council for further review and final approval, at a subsequent Council Meeting.



Ronnie Thompson, Mayor



Renee C. Carswell, City Clerk

