CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY

MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2022

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

7:00 PM

Call to Order

Mayor Hough called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The following were present:

Mayor Bryan Hough	Miles Braswell, City Manager
Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Harris	Brian DuPont, Assistant City Manager
Councilman Ivory Craig	Brian Reagan, Deputy Police Chief
Councilman Jeff Meadows	Ryan Baker, Fire Chief
Councilman David Moore	Greg Beal, Planning Director
Councilwoman Christina Pawlish	Tony Walker, Streets and Solid Waste Director
Councilwoman Lauren Shoemaker	Jonathan Wilson, Director of Utilities
Marie M. Anders, City Attorney	Mark Jusko, Recreation Supervisor
Kemp Michael, Assistant City Attorney	Michelle Wood, Finance Director

Invocation

Reverend Mark Massey from True Light Tabernacle led the Council, staff and attendees in prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance

Boy Scout Troop 59 led the Council, staff and attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Set the Agenda

With no changes to the agenda, Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Budget Amendment
    - Utilities Department (Sludge Removal)
    - NCDOT (Widening Project)
2. Approval of Parks and Recreation Commission Appointment (James Harper Johnson)
3. Approval of the Consent Agreement & Schedule of Compliance for A&E
4. Approval of an Amendment to the Joint Access Road Agreement between the City of Mount Holly and Jacob and Nicole Morton

5. Call for a public hearing to consider an application, submitted by Johnny H. Denton, for a text amendment to allow automated car washes with conditions in the B-2 Neighborhood Business District
6. Approval of a Resolution Directing the City Clerk to Investigate a Petition received under GS 160A-31, Approval of the Certificate of Sufficiency and Approval of a Resolution Fixing the Date of the Public Hearing on the Question of Annexation Pursuant to GS 160A-31 for a petition submitted by Dust Stop Filtration, LLC, for a 7-acre tract of land, located at 1214 W. Catawba Avenue Parcel ID#182502
7. Call for a Public Hearing to consider a rezoning application, submitted by Dust Stop Filtration, LLC, for a 7-acre tract of land, located at 1214 W. Catawba Avenue, Parcel ID # 182502, from I-1Gaston County to LI Light Industrial.
8. Approval of a Resolution Directing the City Clerk to Investigate a Petition received Under GS 160-A-31, Approval of the Certificate of Sufficiency and Approval of a Resolution Fixing the Date of the Public Hearing on the Question of Annexation Pursuant to GS 160A-31 for a petition submitted by CATARHYNE, LLC for a 4.94-acre tract of land, located at 1212 W. Catawba Avenue, Parcel ID#221728
9. Call for a Public Hearing to consider a rezoning application, submitted by CATARHYNE, LLC, for a 4.94-acre tract of land, located at 1214 W. Catawba Avenue, Parcel ID#221728, from I-1 Gaston County to LI Light Industrial
10. Approval of Minutes of the May 9, 2022 Council Meeting
11. Approval of Minutes of the May 23, 2022 Council Work Session Meeting

Councilwoman Pawlish made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

Presentations

1. **Introduction of Miss Mount Holly Scholarship Pageant Recipients**
Councilman David Moore

Councilman Moore introduced Anderson Raines, Miss Mount Holly 2022. Anderson Raines stated that she will be leaving to compete in the Miss North Carolina pageant the following week. Ms. Raines stated that her social impact initiative is to educate on the importance of Career and Technical Education in high schools. Ms. Raines would like to see these programs extended to the Middle School and Elementary School programs. Ms. Raines stated that she feels that Career and Technical Education programs reveal a student's passion. Ms. Raines thanked Councilman Moore and members of Council for their support throughout her journey as Miss Mount Holly 2022. Mayor Hough wished Anderson Raines good luck at her upcoming competition.

2. **Presentation of Tuckaseege Road Sidewalk Extension** ***Brian DuPont***

Assistant City Manager Brian DuPont reminded Council that there was a parking lot item from the February 2022 Council Retreat to be brought back before Council with more information. Mr. DuPont stated that the presentation that he will be showing outlines some of the history of the Tuckaseege Road Sidewalk Project which is really an extension of the sidewalk that stops at Tuckaseege Park. Mr. DuPont stated that this started with the 2013 Pedestrian Plan where the community support said that they wanted to extend that sidewalk all the way up Tuckaseege

Road. Mr. DuPont stated that Council adopted a resolution to support that project through the MPO in November 2014. Mr. DuPont stated that the project then became part of the Gaston Cleveland Lincoln MPO process where it was reviewed and approved as part of the (STIP) State Transportation Improvement Plan. Mr. DuPont stated that this project has now come forward and the presentation will give information on the project next steps. Mr. DuPont explained that the project name is EB-5912 (STIP #). Mr. DuPont stated that this project would consist of a 5-foot-wide sidewalk extension (1-side only) from Broome Street, past the entrance of Riverfront neighborhood and up to the intersection of NC 273. Mr. DuPont stated that this project would also include the crossing of Fites Creek within NCDOT right-of way. Mr. DuPont stated that this project was funded through the State Transportation Improvement Plan. Mr. DuPont stated that the 3 (three) phases of this project (Engineering, Right-of Way, Construction) require a 20% local match which was identified in the 2014 resolution. Mr. DuPont stated that the schedule would begin in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2022-2023. Mr. DuPont stated that this is a Powell eligible project. Mayor Hough asked Council if there were any questions. There were no additional questions from Council. Mayor Hough stated that it looked good. Council Meadows asked if Mr. DuPont could put together something similar for the sidewalk coming from Circle K back towards town by Belmont Abbey at some point in the future. Mr. DuPont stated that he would do that.

Public Hearing

1. **Budget Highlights and Public Hearing on the 2022-2023 proposed Fiscal Year Budget and Fee Schedule** ***Brian DuPont***

Assistant City Manager Brian DuPont stated that at the May 9, 2022 Council Meeting, budget documents were distributed to Council, and at that time Council approved a Call for Public Hearing for the proposed budget and fee schedule. Mr. DuPont stated that at the May 23, 2022 Work Session Meeting, a discussion of the proposed budget was held where staff received feedback and direction from Council on that balanced budget. Mr. DuPont presented the Budget Highlights, the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance, 2022-2023 Fee Schedule, and Position Allotments.

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into public hearing. Mayor Pro Tem Harris made the motion to go out of the regular meeting and into public hearing. Councilwoman Pawlish seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

With no one signed up to speak at the public hearing, Mayor Hough entertained a motion to go out of public hearing and back into the regular meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Harris made the motion to go out of public hearing and back into the regular meeting. Councilman Meadows seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

2. **Public hearing on a proposal for the city to provide an economic development grant pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 158-7.1, to Project Rock & Roll. The Mount Holly City Council intends to approve a standard Level IV incentive grant.**

Greg Beal

Mr. Beal stated that the City of Mount Holly proposes to provide an economic development grant NC GS 158-7.1 to Project Rock & Roll. Mr. Beal stated that the Mount Holly City Council intends, subject to public comment at the public hearing, to approve a standard Level IV incentive grant. The grant will be made to Project Rock & Roll, which will expand their manufacturing facility in Mount Holly. Mr. Beal stated that Project Rock & Roll intends to invest approximately $89 million dollars to construct and equip its facility. Mr. Beal stated that the City Council believes that this project will stimulate and stabilize the local economy, promote business, and help retain 100 jobs in the City of Mount Holly. Mr. Beal stated that Project Rock & Roll also intends to create 11 new jobs. Mr. Beal stated that this investment, per the Gaston County resolution, would take place on or before December 31, 2023. Mr. Beal stated the City of Mount Holly and the City Council must first hold a public hearing on the City's proposed grant, which has been properly advertised in the Gaston Gazette, at least 10 days in advance of the stated public hearing. Mr. Beal stated that the City Clerk, Amy Miller, had not received any calls regarding this grant.

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to go out of the regular meeting and into public hearing. Councilwoman Pawlish made the motion to go out of the regular meeting and into public hearing. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

With no one signed up to speak at the public hearing, Mayor Hough entertained a motion to go out of public hearing and back into the regular meeting. Councilwoman Shoemaker made the motion to go out of public hearing and back into the regular meeting. Councilman Moore seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

Mayor Hough asked the Council if they had any questions for Mr. Beal. Mayor Hough entertained a motion to approve the economic development grant to Project Rock & Roll. Councilman Meadows made the motion to approve the economic development grant to Project Rock & Roll. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor (Motion Passes)

Mayor Hough stated that the resolution number for this approved Project Rock & Roll Grant would be 06132022A.

Public Comment- Three (3) minute limit

There was no one signed up to speak at Public Comment.

Old Business

New Business

1. **Consideration and Approval of the 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance and Fee Schedule**
Michelle Wood

Michelle Wood, Finance Director, stated that she is present for any questions regarding the Budget Ordinance and Fee Schedule. Councilman Meadows stated that regarding the pay adjustments and longevity, he would like to encourage staff to spend some time with staff and explain how this works and exactly what is going on. Councilman Meadows stated that he was disappointed to see the results of the employee survey regarding employees expressing that they are not fairly compensated. Councilman Meadows stated that he hoped that this was simply an education issue since employees had been given raises regularly, and that the City does salary studies looking at the industry as a whole both public and private. Councilman Meadows stated that he would like to see an education program around this and as specific as possible. Councilman Meadows would like employees to be educated around the 401 K process. Councilman Meadows stated that he did not see anything in the budget regarding a Council compensation study. Councilman Meadows stated that he would like input from Council on this topic and would like to see Council compensation studied the same way that the employees are. Councilman Meadows stated that he would like to consider being paid on the same 26 pay period cycle as employees instead of once a month. Mayor Hough discussed Councilman Meadow's questions and comments. Mayor Hough stated that we are a growing city and we have to look at how that compare to other cities. Mayor Hough commented that Council compensation is always political. Mayor Hough stated that the last time that there was an increase was approximately 5 years ago. Mayor Hough agreed that Council compensation studies should be budgeted for and this would put it into staff's hand to make recommendations accordingly. Mayor Hough stated that he thinks that Council's compensation should be automated. Mayor Hough got consensus from Council that they were good with having their pay go from one time per month to the current 26 pay period drafts. Mayor Hough confirmed with Michelle Wood that this change would help staff. Michelle Wood confirmed that this change would help staff since staff was having to manually input Council compensation. Mayor Hough discussed employee compensation and discussed how much the City pays for insurance. Mayor Hough stated that the City pays 100% employee only insurance and 50% dependent coverage. Mayor Hough stated that the total compensation for employees should be covered and explained in detail. Councilman Meadows strongly encouraged staff to have face to face explanation and education on their compensation. Mayor Hough discussed the importance of understanding and appreciating the total compensation to include the percentages paid into the retirement programs by the City of Mount Holly. Councilman Meadows wants to see a study done regarding cafeteria style benefits to ensure that employees who are not receiving the 50% dependent insurance coverage are compensated accordingly. Mayor Hough stated that the insurance broker would be the one who would put that program in motion upon approval. Councilman Meadows stated that we are heading into the 4th year of the water/sewer study and asked if we need to have another study in the coming year? Michelle Wood, Finance Director, stated that it is budgeted to do another water/sewer study this fiscal year to bring to Council for next fiscal year.

Councilman Moore stated that it has been proposed in the budget to roll up the longevity bonus into employee salaries. Councilman Moore stated that Councilman Meadows has suggested communication with the employees regarding other items. Councilman Moore stated that he thinks that the employees should be asked what they would want to do regarding their longevity bonuses. Councilman Moore stated that he has spoken to many employees that wish to keep the longevity bonus as it currently is and not roll it up into their salary. Councilman Moore stated that employees have stated that they use this money for Christmas, taxes and other various items. Councilman Moore stated that he would like to propose a 5% COLA increase for employees instead of the current proposal of a 4 % increase and revisiting an additional increase in December. Councilman Moore stated that we do not know what the inflation will be in December and we might not be able to give employees any additional increase at that time. Councilman Moore stated that our employees are our biggest asset and that he just wants to take care of them. Mayor Hough asked the Council for their individual input. Mayor Pro Tem Harris stated that she has spoken to some employees regarding the longevity bonus and that she would like to leave the longevity alone and keep it as it has been. Councilwoman Pawlish stated that she agrees with Councilman Moore and Mayor Pro Tem Harris. Councilwoman Pawlish stated that she has had employees reach out to her as well stating that they wish to leave the longevity bonus alone. Councilman Craig stated that it is too short of a time to make the move to roll up the longevity bonus into the salaries. Councilman Craig stated that he would like to keep the longevity bonus as it is, study it, and revisit the topic. Councilman Meadows disagrees and stated that he feels as though the employees are being short changed and that if employees were educated on compound interest that they would find out that they would be much better in the long run. Councilman Meadows stated that there would be an increase in pension, 401k and overall base. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that she understands why people would want things to stay the same, but she agrees with Councilman Meadows stating that she would much rather pay less in taxes than get a big tax return at the end of the year. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that she also feels that if Council is fighting an uphill battle and the employees don't want more money than Council can go along with that input. Councilman Meadows stated that Council has not shortchanged employees in anyway. Councilman Meadows discussed the inflation rate and how it has gone up a half percent. Councilman Meadows stated that it is not our responsibility to make employees happy about what is going on, but to be responsible about what revenues are coming in and having the ability to pay employees at all. Councilman Meadows stated the City of Mount Holly has never had to discuss furloughs, layoffs, or reduction in salaries. Councilman Meadows stated that given the current economy, he feels that it is irresponsible to push further in a budget when we are uncertain about the top line revenues. Mayor Hough confirmed that this was Councilman Meadows feed back on Councilman Moore's recommendation to increase employee salaries for 4% to 5%. Councilman Craig stated that the majority of people are not good with money, live paycheck to paycheck, and are not investing. Councilman Craig stated that since most employees are living paycheck to paycheck, that it makes more sense to look at it from the employees' point of view. Mayor confirmed that this was Councilman Craig's comment on rolling up the longevity bonus into the salaries. Councilman Craig had no comment at this time regarding Councilman Moore's proposed increase in salaries from 4% to 5%. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that she did not agree with the proposed 5%

increase by Councilman Moore and that it would be fiscally irresponsible. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that the 4% increase was already a high COLA increase. Councilwoman Shoemaker stated that we are stewards of the tax payers' dollars. Mayor Pro Tem Harris agreed with Councilman Moore's proposed COLA increase from 4% to 5%. Councilwoman Pawlish agreed with Councilman Moore's proposed COLA increase from 4% to 5%. Councilwoman Pawlish stated that when you look at the surrounding cities, she would rather not be at the bottom, but would like to give the employees a little extra now. Councilman Craig voted no to the proposed increase from 4% to 5%. Mayor Hough confirmed that the Council was at a 3:3 tie regarding the increase of COLA from 4% to 5%. Mayor Hough stated that he would like to stay at the current proposed 4% and revisit an additional increase in December as long as we can do it and keep our employment numbers. Mayor Hough stated that he is concerned about our current economy. Councilman Meadows stated that he would like to see a survey go out to employees regarding longevity because he feels like not rolling it up into their salary is doing the employees a disservice. Mayor Hough confirmed that we are keeping the longevity as it has been not as recommended by staff. Mayor Hough confirmed that there was a 4:2 consensus vote in favor of the longevity bonus remaining as it has previously been. Mayor Hough confirmed that we are keeping the proposed 4% COLA increase.

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to approve Budget Ordinance 06132022B for the 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance and Fee Schedule. Councilwoman Pawlish made the motion to approve Budget Ordinance 06132022B for the 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance and Fee Schedule. Councilman Craig seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor.

(Motion Passes)

Closed Session

1. **Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11 (a) (3, 5 and 6)**

Councilman Moore makes a motion to enter into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11 (a) (3,5 and 6). Councilwoman Pawlish seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried) Time was 7:49 pm.

Councilman Craig made a motion to return to open session. Councilwoman Christina Pawlish seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried) Time was 8:36 pm.

Mayor Hough entertained a motion to approve the offer to purchase contract from Ralph Hamilton at the Western end of Piedmont Avenue for $62,500 - #06132022C.

Councilwoman Shoemaker made a motion to approve the offer to purchase contract from Ralph Hamilton at the Western end of Piedmont Avenue for $62,500. Councilman Moore seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

Adjourn

With no additional items for discussion, Mayor Hough entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilman Meadows made the motion to adjourn the June 13, 2022 Council Meeting. Councilman Moore seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor.

(Motion Carried)

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm.