CITY OF MOUNT HOLLY
MOUNT HOLLY CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, May 8, 2023
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	
Mayor Pro Tem Phyllis Harris	Brian DuPont, Assistant City Manager
Councilman Ivory Craig	Brian Reagan, 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
	Michelle Wood, Finance Director

Invocation

Reverend Jared Bromka, Pastor at Calvary Chapel, led 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

Mayor Hough advised that a *Resolution Honoring Edith Mack on her 100th Birthday* will be added as item #2 under presentations and Wes Monroe's swearing in will be moved to #3. With no additional changes to the agenda Councilwoman Pawlish made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Councilwoman Shoemaker seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Budget Amendments
    - South Gateway Corridor Connector Road
2. Approval of Lien for Weeds and Grass
    - 520 Woodlawn Avenue
3. Reappointment of Janice McRorie to the ABC Board
4. Appointment of Planning Commission Member
5. Call for a Public Hearing on the 2023-2024 Proposed Budget and Fee Schedule
6. Approval of a Proclamation in Honor of Public Services Recognition Week, May 7th-13th
7. Approval of a Proclamation in Honor of National Police Week, May 14th – 20th
8. Approval of a Proclamation in Honor of Public Works Week, May 21st – 27th
9. Approval of Minutes of the April 24, 2023 Council Work Session Meeting
10. Approval of Minutes of the May 1, 2023 Special Meeting
11. Approval of Minutes of the May 1, 2023 Closed Session

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

PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation of a Resolution to Tommy Holland recognizing him for 103 years of age

Mayor Hough read the resolution for Tommy Holland honoring him for the young age of 103. Mr. Holland was a long-time resident of Mount Holly and was the owner of Holland Drug in Mount Holly for over 40 years. Mr. Holland's daughter Camilla was present to accept the resolution for her father.

2. Presentation of a Resolution to Edith Mack for 100th Birthday

Mayor Hough presented Mrs. Edith Mack with a resolution in celebration of her 100th birthday. Mrs. Mack was present to accept the resolution.

3. Promotional Swearing In of Captain Wes Monroe

Chief Reagan commented that Captain Monroe has been a Sargant with the Department for over 20 years. He advised that Captain Monroe is part of almost every operation in the Department and it is an honor to promote him to the captain position. Mayor Hough administered the Oath of Office and Captain Monroe's wife and sons were present.

Mayor Hough called for a 5 minute recess.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Three (3) Minute Limit

No one was signed up to speak

OLD BUSINESS

1. Consideration and Approval of an Ordinance to regulate Laying Hens in the City Limits

Mr. Lowe advised that at the March meeting Council directed staff to develop a draft ordinance to bring back at the future meeting. At the March 27th work session, a draft was presented, staff received feedback and is bringing the revised ordinance back tonight for consideration. The proposed document has been reviewed by both the City Attorney and Gaston County Ag Extension. Mr. Lowe advised that staff is recommending a $50 fee to anyone in violation of the ordinance.

Councilwoman Pawlish made a motion to approve the ordinance to regulate laying hens in the city limits. Mayor Pro Tem Harris seconded the motion.

In further discussion, Councilman Meadows commented that he didn't think chickens should be allowed on a quarter acre lot or less and then asked about the enforcement process. Mrs. Anders advised that violations will be addressed as a code enforcement issue. If there are 3 violations the permit will be revoked and the chickens will have to be removed from the property immediately. Mrs. Anders advised that there is also language included in the ordinance that prohibits roosters. Councilman Meadows asked if staff is trained to catch chickens. He commented that he is afraid we will turn into a Key West with chickens everywhere. Mr. Beal advised that Gaston County animal control is not equipped to catch chickens and added that most HOA's do not allow chickens within the subdivisions so the only problem may come into some of the older neighborhoods.

At this time, Mayor Hough called for the vote on the motion made by Councilwoman Pawlish. The motion carried with a vote of 5-1 with Councilman Meadows voting against the motion. Councilwoman Shoemaker and Councilman Craig did not vote, therefore it was an automatic yes vote.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Consideration and Approval of Wayfinding Sign Project

Mr. Beal advised that in 2011 the Council approved and funded wayfinding signage. Since then, things have changed and it is time to give the signs a new look. Mr. Beal gave some options on color and design. Council agreed on the burgundy sign with the logo as the watermark.

2. Consideration and Approval of a Fire Truck Purchase

Chief Baker advised that staff direction from the April meeting was to research the purchase of 2 new fire trucks. He reported that Pierce Manufacturing currently has 2 engines in production with a completion date of July 2024. Pierce has a service and repairs center in Charlotte which is convenient to Mount Holly. Chief Baker advised that if the city gets in line for a custom engine the delivery date is estimated May 2026. He reported that the total cost of the 2 engines that are currently in production with Pierce is $1,784,214.00. The amount includes all the additional equipment and change orders and the customer discounts. Councilman Meadows asked for the fund balance total. Mrs. Wood advised that there is currently $9.7 in fund balance. Mayor Hough commented that when it comes to public safety he does not mind using fund balance to pay for equipment. Councilman Meadows made a motion to move forward with the purchase of 2 new fire engines and take the money from fund balance to cover

the cost. Councilman Craig seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion carried)

3. Discussion of Fire Department Staffing

Chief Baker advised that the departments goal is to raise the standard level of safety and care across the city by adding additional fire fighters to each shift at each station. This would get the staffing level for each shift to the NFPA recommended standards. Chief Baker commented that the current level of staffing could cause employee burnout and fatigue which in turn would makes it difficult to retain employees. Furthermore, Mount Holly has the lowest starting pay for fire fighters in Gaston County and makes it hard to recruit new firemen. The current number of fire fighters also makes it difficult for employees to plan vacations around their regular shifts. Chief Baker also commented that once the salary study goes into effect on July 1st starting salaries for fire fighters will increase and be competitive with other departments in Gaston County. He advised that the Fire Department has applied for the SAFER grant which would help fund 6 of the proposed 12 positions for 3 years. There was discussion in regard to sleeping quarters and Chief Baker advised that the only thing needed will be a few additional lockers in the living quarters at each station. Mayor Hough advised that at the last meeting Council agreed to build a budget around a 39-cent tax rate. If Council choses to add the 12 firemen staff will need to reconfigure the budget and need direction on the tax rate. Mrs. Wood advised that all essential and non-essential operations can be funded along with the additional fire fighters at a tax rate of 41-cents. Mayor Hough polled that Council and they directed finance staff to move forward with building a budget around a 40.5-cent tax rate. Councilman Meadows made a motion to approve 12 new fire fighter positions and management staff look into increasing the hiring rate to coincide the rate in the salary study that will go into effect on July 1st. Councilwoman Pawlish seconded the motion. All Council Members voted in favor. (Motion carried)

CLOSED SESSION

1. Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11 (a) (6)

Councilwoman Pawlish made the motion to enter into Closed Session Pursuant to N.C.G.S 143-318.11 (a)(6) at 8:37pm. Councilman Moore seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

Mayor Pro Tem Harris made a motion to come out of closed session and back into regular session at 8:45pm. Councilman Craig seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion carried)

Councilman Moore made a motion to approve the contract with Mr. Jackson for Interim City Manager. Councilwoman Pawlish seconded the motion. All Council Members voted in favor. (Motion carried)

ADJOURN

With no additional items for discussion, Mayor Hough entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the May 8, 2023 Council Meeting. Councilwoman Pawlish seconded the motion. All Council Members present voted in favor. (Motion Carried)

The meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.