CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

City Council Chambers

Monday, July 14, 2025 at 7:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present

Mayor Becky S. Smith; Council Members Brenda Boyd, Bill Whitmire, Brent Guffey, Nellie Floyd, Donnie Griffin, and Allen Hook were present. City Manager Josh Ross and City Attorney David Smith were also present. A quorum was established.

Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Nick McDonald, Pastor of St. Andrews Episcopal Church led the audience in prayer. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustment and Approval of the Agenda

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the July agenda was approved with no revisions.

Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

Mayor Smith opened the floor for public comment. The following individuals came forth:

- Aaron Grosdider of 517 Costner School Road: Mr. Grosdider addressed the Board regarding the city's use of Flock safety cameras. He questioned the lack of transparency around their cost, lease agreements, and accessibility, noting that he had documentation listing over 1,000 external entities with access to the cameras. He also raised concerns regarding property seizure revenue allocation and the absence of budget line items for code enforcement items. Mr. Grosdider also inquired about numbers on law enforcement and public works vehicles.

Consent Agenda

The following items on the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Brenda Boyd:

1. **Approval of Minutes**: City Council will consider adopting the Meeting minutes of the June 9, 2025 Regular Session.

2. **Approval of Minutes**: City Council will consider adopting Meeting minutes of the June 24, 2025 Work Session.

Brand Presentation

Chelsea Dickey of Motley Inc. presented the city's new community brand. She emphasized the inclusive process used to gather input from over 100 citizens through surveys and workshops. The branding team, consisting of 13 community members, developed a concept that highlights Bessemer City's identity through a new tagline: *"Heartfelt Living"*. This new brand is intended for external communications in economic development, tourism, and community engagement. Brand Committee member, Morgan Smith and Council

Member Allen Hook offered remarks on the collaborative and meaningful nature of the branding effort. City Manager Josh Ross applauded the public engagement and diversity of the committee.

Brand Adoption
By motion of Donnie Griffin and unanimous vote, the following brand and narrative was adopted: For generations, Bessemer City has been known as the City with a Heart-a place built on hard work, strong values, and a deep sense of community. That identity isn't changing; it's growing. As we move forward, we're embracing Heartfelt Living as our community brand. Through a year-long process, we have engaged the community and have landed on a new logo and tagline that best represents our city. This isn't just a tagline-it's a reflection of who we are and how we live. Heartfelt Living is the natural next step, putting action behind our long- standing spirit. It speaks to the warmth of our people, the pride of our businesses, and the way we come together to create a thriving, welcoming community. While City with a Heart will remain a part of our official seal and heritage, Heartfelt Living is how we tell our story today and into the future. It represents our small-town charm, our blue-collar roots, and the way we embrace growth while staying true to what makes Bessemer City special.

This is more than a brand-it's our way of life. Welcome to Heartfelt Living.

Public Hearing –Economic Development Grant (Project Arrival):
Alisha Summey, Assistant Director at Gaston County Economic Development Commission, addressed the Board with some general information about the project, as it is a confidential matter. Gaston County Commissioners have adopted a similar resolution to provide an incentive for a private entity. This economic development incentive program grant request is for property located in Bessemer City. The investment is a total of $56,000,000.00 and set to establish a facility that will bring over 175 jobs. The property would receive a portion of their tax payment back over a 5-year period of paid taxes. The private entity must pay their taxes in order to receive the monies back. The first year they would receive 90% back, the second year they would receive 80% back, and so forth.

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the economic development incentive was opened at 7:27 PM.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the economic development incentive. There was none.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the economic development incentive. There was none.

By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the economic development incentive was closed at 7:28 PM.

Resolution Approving Incentives Pursuant to NCGS §158-7.1 And To Authorize Bessemer City To Enter Into An Economic Development Agreement (EDA) With Project Arrival (Level IV Investment)
By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the resolution for the level 4 investment grant was approved for Project Arrival.

Public Hearing – Petition for Voluntary Annexation (Sunset Ridge)
City Council held a public hearing to hear public comment regarding a voluntary annexation petition from Development Solutions Group (Sunset Ridge) for property located at tax parcels #314878 and #151640 (33.109 acres).

City Planner, Jamie Watkins addressed the Board, stating that the Sunset Ridge project (CD 02-2024), approved last year, includes 93 single-family detached homes on 8,000 square foot lots. Architectural requirements include 50% stone or masonry exteriors, as per Conditions of Approval. At the time of rezoning, it was understood that annexation would occur prior to the start of construction. Development Solutions Group, now partnered with a builder, is ready to proceed with annexation. Parcel ID 314878 (formerly the Kiser property) was recently subdivided to allow the Kiser family to retain a 2.45-acre tract with an existing farmhouse fronting 14th Street. A portion of Parcel ID 314878 is already within City Limits and is not included in this annexation request. The portion retained by the Kiser family that lies outside City Limits will remain unincorporated, at the owners' request. Parcel ID 151640 (formerly the Millwood property) will be annexed in its entirety.

By motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the voluntary annexation was opened at 7:34 PM.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the voluntary annexation. There was none.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the voluntary annexation. There was none.

By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the public hearing regarding the voluntary annexation was closed at 7:34 PM.

Ordinance to Extend The Corporate Limits of the City of Bessemer City, North Carolina
Per NCGS 160A-31, City Clerk Hayes provided a certificate of sufficiency for Council review regarding a petition received by Sunset Ridge. Public hearing notice of the annexation was published in the local newspaper for public inspection ten (10) days prior to public hearing on July 1, 2025.

By motion Bill Whitmire and unanimous vote, City Council adopted an ordinance extending the corporate limits of the City of Bessemer City to include property located at tax parcels #314878 and #151640 (33.109 acres). A copy of this ordinance is available for citizen review.

Resolution - Approving the Sale of Beer & Wine
Council considered a resolution to allow the sale of beer and wine by Cavendish Brewery during the July 2025 Cinema in Centennial Park event on Friday, July 18th, 2025. City Manager Ross expressed support, emphasizing that local control would remain intact.

By motion of Bill Whitmire and a 4-2 vote, with Brenda Boyd and Donnie Griffin in opposition, the resolution approving the sale of beer and wine was adopted.

Resolution Opposing SB 205
By motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, a resolution opposing senate bill 205 which threatens to limit local zoning authority was adopted. City Manager Ross recommended approval, noting the bill's negative impact on local land-use decisions.

Ripple Fiber Agreement
Council heard a presentation from Bobbie Guthrie, Chief of Government Affairs of Ripple Fiber, regarding a $2 million investment to install fiber infrastructure across Bessemer City. Ripple Fiber will use existing public rights-of-way to install a mix of aerial and underground cabling. The agreement outlines the company's responsibility for damage and future coordination with residents.

By motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, the agreement with Ripple Fiber was approved.

Award Bid - Natural Gas System Improvements (Stewart Crossing - Phase 1)
City Council unanimously awarded a bid to Classic City Mechanical for $266,862 to complete Phase 1 of natural gas infrastructure for the Stewart Crossing development, which includes 99 homes. The project will be reimbursed and is not funded directly by the city.

City Manager's Report
City Manager Ross gave updates on several projects:

- Construction of a dog park at Kevin Millwood Park is nearing completion, led in part by an Eagle Scout project.
- Osage Mill is currently at 95% occupancy.
- A recent house fire on Maryland Avenue was quickly managed by the City's first responders, firefighters and police officers
- Implementation of the FY25-26 budget is underway.

Council General Discussion
Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council Member Allen Hook praised city workers for cleanup efforts following recent high winds. Council Member Brenda Boyd commended city employees for their dedication. Council Member Brent Guffey thanked the fire department for their quick response to the house fire and noted citizen concerns regarding construction runoff from Stewart Crossing. Council Member Donnie Griffin acknowledged the Police Department for their service.

Adjournment
Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Brenda Boyd and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

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Becky S. Smith, Mayor Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk