

CITY OF OAK HILL
MINUTES
City Council Special Meeting - April 26, 2022
April 26, 2022 - 5:30 PM

A special meeting of the Oak Hill City Council was held on April 26, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the council chambers of Oak Hill City Hall.

Call to Order

The Mayor called the meeting to order and announced the reason for the special meeting was to consider rescinding the appointment of Don Phillips to the Board of Zoning Appeals and to consider the purchase of the former BB&T building.

Roll Call

The Clerk called the roll as follows:

PRESENT

Mayor Daniel Wright
Councilmember Thomas Oxley
Councilmember Diana Janney
Councilmember David Perry
Councilmember Christa Hodges
Councilmember Charles Smallwood, Jr.
Councilmember Ronald Stephen Hayslette
Councilmember Benitez Jackson

Business

1. Rescind the Appointment of Don Phillips to the Board of Zoning Appeals

Mr. Phillips has been unable to attend BZA meetings due to some family health issues. Councilmember Janney spoke with Mr. Phillips and he stated that he would like to remain on the board.

Gary Harding, Zoning Officer, has asked for Mr. Phillips to be replaced because his absence creates a problem getting a quorum for the meetings.

There was a spirited discussion on rescinding Mr. Phillips' appointment since he was just recently appointed by Council.

Motion - Direct the City Manager to send a letter to Mr. Phillips asking him how long he will be unable to attend meetings and if it is for an extended period, then ask him to resign.

Motion carried 7 - 0.

Motion made by Councilmember Oxley, Seconded by Councilmember Perry.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Oxley, Councilmember Janney, Councilmember Perry, Councilmember Hodges, Councilmember Smallwood, Jr., Councilmember Hayslette, Councilmember Jackson

2. Purchase of the Former BB&T Building.

The Mayor allowed people in the audience to state their opinion on buying the former BB&T building.

Sherry Keffer – Mrs. Keffer spoke in favor of purchasing the building, stating that it would be a perfect city hall since it is in the center of town. She mentioned several activities that could happen if city hall were there.

George Sumner - Mr. Sumner echoed Mrs. Keffer's remarks.

Mike Fox - Mr. Fox believes this is a golden opportunity for the City of Oak Hill and we should take advantage of it.

Kevin Willis - Mr. Willis also thinks that purchasing the building would be a good move.

The Mayor asked for Council discussion on this issue.

Councilmember Perry stated that although the email everyone received about this meeting said that he requested the meeting, but he did not request the meeting. He does not have the standing or authority to do that. He does concur with the reason for the meeting and believes it is time to make a decision either for or against the purchase of this building.

Council member Oxley reminded Council member Perry that in the March meeting Council decided to get cost estimates on three options (new city hall, refurbish old city hall, or purchase the former BB&T building) for city hall before deciding what to do. Councilmember Perry thinks it is time to decide and he advocates purchasing the former BB&T building. Discussion ensued between Councilmembers Perry and Oxley. Mr. Perry gave his reasons for supporting the purchase of the building and Mr. Oxley gave his reasons for his opposition of purchasing the building.

Councilmembers Janney and Hodges spoke in opposition of purchasing building, each giving reasons for their opposition.

Councilmember Hayslette cited his reasons for being in favor of purchasing the building and Councilmember Smallwood voiced his agreement.

Councilmember Perry explained that he had been in contact with Steptoe & Johnson and received advice on how to proceed with the purchase of the former BB&T building.

Motion - Purchase the former BB&T building at 101 Main Street East, Oak Hill, WV for a purchase price of \$675,000, to include closing costs, from Gray Mill Holdings, LLC.

Motion carried 4 -3 by roll call vote.

Motion made by Councilmember Perry, Seconded by Councilmember Smallwood, Jr..

Voting Yea: Councilmember Perry, Councilmember Smallwood, Jr., Councilmember Hayslette, Councilmember Jackson

Voting Nay: Councilmember Oxley, Councilmember Janney, Councilmember Hodges

Motion - Adopt a resolution authorizing the Oak Hill Building Commission to act as the fiscal agent for the purpose of entering into a lease purchase agreement with Gray Mill Holdings for a cost of \$675,000, to include closing costs.

Motion carried 5 - 2 by roll call vote.

Motion made by Councilmember Perry, Seconded by Councilmember Hayslette.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Janney, Councilmember Perry, Councilmember Smallwood, Jr., Councilmember Hayslette, Councilmember Jackson

Voting Nay: Councilmember Oxley, Councilmember Hodges

Motion - Authorize the Oak Hill City Manager and/or Treasurer to make installments payments from revenue generated from the 1% sales tax to the Oak Hill Building Commission on behalf of the City of Oak Hill for said purchase.

Motion carried 4-3 by roll call vote.

Motion made by Councilmember Perry, Seconded by Councilmember Smallwood, Jr..

Voting Yea: Councilmember Perry, Councilmember Smallwood, Jr., Councilmember Hayslette, Councilmember Jackson

Voting Nay: Councilmember Oxley, Councilmember Janney, Councilmember Hodges

Motion - Employ, on behalf of the City of Oak Hill Building Commission, Steptoe & Johnson as the official bond counsel.

Motion carried 4-3 by roll call vote.

Motion made by Councilmember Perry, Seconded by Councilmember Smallwood, Jr..

Voting Yea: Councilmember Perry, Councilmember Smallwood, Jr., Councilmember Hayslette, Councilmember Jackson

Voting Nay: Councilmember Oxley, Councilmember Janney, Councilmember Hodges

The Mayor stated that he only votes in a matter of a tie , however if he could have voted he would have voted in the affirmative. He would like to say this about all seven of the city council members; they are honorable, decent, bright, and very civic minded toward their city. He hopes and prays that this vote on this city hall move will not be a dividing force going forward for the Oak Hill city business. It is too important -- the city's too important.

There being no further business called for this special meeting, the meeting adjourned.

Daniel E. Wright, Mayor

Damita Johnson, City Clerk