



**JOURNAL of the PROCEEDINGS
of the
CITY COUNCIL**

CITY OF CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

Regular Meeting – Tuesday, January 3, 2023

at 7:00 P.M.

Council Chambers – City Hall – Charleston, West Virginia

OFFICIAL RECORD

Amy Shuler Goodwin
Mayor

Miles C. Cary II
City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER*

The Council met at 7:00 P.M., for the first meeting in the month of January on the 3rd day, in the year 2023, and was called to order by the Honorable Mayor, Amy Shuler Goodwin. The invocation was delivered by Councilmember Overstreet, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Hoover. The Honorable Clerk, Miles C. Cary II, called the roll of members and it was found that there were present at the time:

**ANNIE
CEPERLEY
FERRELL
HOOVER
KERNS
MOORE
PHARR
SALANGO
STEELHAMMER**

**BURKA
COOK
GIANOLA
JENKINS
KING
OVERSTREET
ROBINSON
SNODGRASS
TAYLOR**

**BURTON
FAEGRE
HAAS
JONES
MINARDI
PEPPER
RUBIO
SOLOMON
MAYOR GOODWIN**

With twenty-seven members being present, the Mayor declared a quorum present.

Pending the reading of the Journal of the previous meeting, the reading thereof was dispensed with and the same duly approved.

The Mayor led Councilmembers in a ceremonial swearing-in of the oath.

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Given by Mayor Goodwin:

Members of Council, Madam President, members of this administration, our more than 700 outstanding City employees, community groups, local businesses, our families and friends, and, of course, all citizens of Charleston.

It is an honor and privilege to stand before you this evening—in this City we love—to welcome new members of council and rejoin our incumbent members to explore where we've been and look ahead to the future.

Four years ago, I stood here and made a commitment to work with you—the great people of Charleston—to create a safe, healthy and vibrant city.

I promised new energy and new leadership—a spirit that would instill, not only our city government, but our whole city and its people with a sense that we can do, and will do great things.

While we experienced many challenges over the past four years—we not only endured, but we thrived with that positive spirit, encouraging each other through difficult times, and emerging better than ever.

We challenged each other to do more and to be more.

We didn't always succeed at first, but we weren't afraid to fail.

Through our spirit of optimism, community engagement, and plain old hard work and long hours we are now seeing a vibrancy we haven't seen in a long time, and we are succeeding because we did it together.

This is all because of you—you gave us the opportunity to try.

Four years ago, we started with a vision that became the driving force behind actionable solutions, forward thinking initiatives, collaborative projects, and neighborhood revitalization.

And together...

We put into motion and celebrated new infrastructure projects, new development, new programming, and new policies.

We helped to revitalize parts of the City that desperately needed our attention — including our parks.

Last April, we officially opened City Center at Slack Plaza—just one of many new developments across our city:

We added the splash pad and playground at Dixie Street on the East End.

We built the new Beatrice Street Park, which includes basketball courts and a playground, on the Westside.

We invested in the bike station in Kanawha City

We built the City's first Skatepark.

We are rebuilding Wertz Avenue Park.

We are turfing 10 City athletic fields—including the field at Go Mart Park, home of our Charleston Dirty Birds.

If we are to be successful in the future, it is paramount we remain focused on our youth.

That's why we created the City's first Youth Council and we brought back the Summer Youth Jobs Program.

We created and elevated programming in our community centers so our kids would have fun and engaging places to go after school or on the weekends.

We didn't just give them a seat at the table—we put their ideas into action. For example—the creation of the new Noah Jarrell Monarch Butterfly Waystation at Spring Hill Cemetery—Charleston's 9th waystation.

Investing and supporting good ideas, growth and development is exactly what we did with the creation of the Small Business Investment Grant Program.

We made good on our promise to pave more roads, fix more sidewalks, and create better and more accessible areas throughout Charleston.

We started developing and implementing solutions to make curbside recycling more accessible for all residents and we are creating a more comprehensive recycling program for the entire City.

We tore down—at record pace—close to 400 dilapidated structures and created the Charleston Land Reuse Agency.

With this vision, came an understanding that we also had to ensure our City's continued financial stability.

And it is without question, we've made some changes that have had a significant impact on the City's finances – among them being:

The switch to PEIA –

- saved the City over \$3M in the first year,
- saved our employees over \$900,000 in premiums,
- and gave employees access to Health Savings Accounts.

Just last month, we put \$1M into a new health Reserve Fund to help offset potential PEIA increases on our employees.

We created new inventory requirements.

We implemented new purchasing policies.

We created a robust and effective online bidding system to ensure fairness and accountability.

We created and maintained, over the past four years, the largest rainy day fund in the City's history—growing it from \$4M to nearly \$19.4M.

These are significant financial success stories for our City—and they should be recognized, along with our team and the council members who helped make this happen.

During the past four years, we have worked hard to implement sustainable solutions while also addressing immediate needs of those in our community suffering with mental illness, homelessness, substance use disorder through our CARE Office.

Our CARE Team has grown to include a:

- Homeless Outreach Coordinator,
- a Mental Health Coordinator,
- a Community Outreach Coordinator,
- and a Quick Response Team (QRT) Coordinator.

Their shared lived and learned experiences help them meet people where they are, foster trust and build rapport – with the goal of connecting each individual with the appropriate services and support.

What our CARE Team has accomplished in the last four years – and what our CARE Team continues to do every single day to help people in our community – is work that we can all be proud of.

If you want to have a good understanding of what we do—meet with our team, walk with our team, and let us show you what we do—and what we have done.

While we have accomplished much over the last four years, we cannot rest.

With that same spirit, we must continue to bring good ideas to the table and put them into action. It is without a doubt we will work as hard these next four years.

In the Fall of 2021, we joined the dynamic ACT Now Coalition led by the Coalfield Development Corporation.

Our goal—to create new opportunities for our region and ensure our economy remains vibrant, growing and diversified for many years to come.

- Our State's two largest municipalities—Huntington and Charleston;
- Our two largest universities—Marshall University and West Virginia University;
- Our state's leading community and economic development organizations;
- And private companies all partnered together for a once in a lifetime opportunity to make something big happen—and it did!

The ACT Now Coalition was chosen for a U.S. EDA grant totaling \$62.8M — of which \$13M will be used to transform the Kanawha Manufacturing site into the Learning, Innovation, Food & Technology [LIFT] Center—with room to grow!

We continue to believe that strong infrastructure throughout our City is the best way to achieve business growth, increase tourism activities and create a more safe and vibrant place for our residents to live.

It should be easy to get from the West Side to the East End, or from the East End to Kanawha City, or from downtown to South Hills — whether you're walking, driving, or biking.

One of the most exciting infrastructure projects we have in the works is the Capitol Connector Project.

Last year we were awarded a \$1.75M RAISE Grant to get this transformational infrastructure project shovel ready.

The Capital Connector Project is going to be a game changer for our riverfront — not only for the folks who live and work here every day, but also for those visiting Charleston.

City Hall was built in 1922 to house all City operations — including a fully-equipped fire station, police station, municipal court, and the general administrative departments of city government.

A lot has changed since then — which has led to inefficient operations, accessibility issues and other challenges.

That is why we are conducting a comprehensive feasibility study to help us build a public safety center.

And while we have increased the salaries of every City employee including Police, Fire, and EMS—we will work with Council with the goal of making sure there isn't any employee in the City of Charleston making less than \$15 an hour.

We need to continue to help provide critical services in the City.

Last year, the CARE Office responded to nearly 500 mental health-related calls in 2022. That's quite an accomplishment, but it shows we have more work to do.

I will ask City Council to work with members of the CLRA to identify and renovate 5 properties, over the next two years, that can be provided to mental health professionals at low or no cost if they agree to come and work in our city in areas of critical need: children and teenagers with trauma due to violence, our unsheltered population, those recently housed, and seniors.

We want to build back our neighborhoods by using the Vacant Structure Registry and in coordination with the Charleston Land Reuse Agency, over the next four years, to build 25 new single family housing units on the West Side and East End.

While we must continue to focus on the backlog of structures that need to be demolished, we must start to rebuild our communities at the same time.

By working with the CLRA and area nonprofits, we can keep costs down and create affordable housing.

And we will be forward thinking in our approaches to building and growing opportunities for our City.

Working with our County Commission we are going to make the Capital Sports Center a reality. This project will be a significant investment in our local economy, our region, and our young athletes.

But we will always be center focused on helping improve the lives of everyone who lives and works in our community—and that's through our focus on critical services—services that only local government tackles daily, like supporting our police and fire, paving residential roads, trash collection.... taking care of our kiddos at our recreation centers after school.

This is at the heart of what we do.

And now, over the next four years, we have the privilege of working with 10 new council members, a new judge, and a new city treasurer who each embody the spirit of moving forward, of working together to build an even more vibrant Charleston.

Because more than ever—that's what we need. We need to continue to create and work on ideas that will elevate our communities and our families.

Keeping our positive momentum is going to take vision, collaboration, continued dialogue and hard work—and it's going to take all of us.

I know we can do it because over the past four years we stepped up and did it during the most difficult times in our lives.

We navigated a global pandemic.

And, most importantly, we worked together and developed a vision for the people of our Capital City.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Mayor for a second term;

I am excited about the projects we have already set in motion and the year ahead and the Regatta;

And, I am optimistic about the future of our great City and the direction in which we are moving—with just a tad bit more energy than I had four years ago.

Thank you.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS

1. Jack Hoblitzell – From the Kanawha Valley Trail Alliance, spoke in favor of Resolution No. 755-23.

CLAIMS

1. A claim of Chelena McCoy, Sumerco, WV;
alleges damage to vehicle.
2. A claim of Edward Reed, Charleston, WV;
alleges damage to vehicle.

PROCLAMATIONS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Councilmember Jenkins, Chair of the Council Committee on Finance, submitted the following reports:

1. Your committee on Finance has had under consideration the following resolution, and reports the same to Council with the recommendation that Resolution No. 755-23 be adopted.

Resolution No. 755-23 - Authorizing the Mayor or City Manager to enter into a contract with Tri-State Company, Inc., in the amount of \$453,282.96 for the construction of a recreational trail system within the Herbert & Gloria Jones Woodlands, a 65.14-acre property donated to the City of Charleston pursuant to Resolution No. 271-19.

Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Council of the City of Charleston, West Virginia:

That the Mayor or City Manager is authorized to enter into a contract with Tri-State Company, Inc., in the amount of \$453,282.96 for the construction of a recreational trail system within the Herbert & Gloria Jones Woodlands, a 65.14-acre property donated to the City of Charleston pursuant to Resolution No. 271-19, where the purchase price was determined through a competitive bidding process. The Mayor or City Manager is further authorized to increase the overall contract amount by up to 10% of the initial contract amount pursuant to one or more documented change order requests recommended by the City Engineer.

Councilmember Jenkins added that there will be a 3.5 mile stacked-loop trail system within the 65 acres that was donated to the City for this purpose.

Councilmember Pepper spoke in favor of the resolution as it gives more access to park lands. He added that people should be within a ten-minute walk of a park from where they live.

Councilmember Solomon stated that since funding for this project will be paid from ARPA funds, he would invite Council to be as giving for marginalized communities as well.

Councilmember Kerns asked what the maintenance and upkeep for the park will be. Hoblitzell replied that the community members would be maintaining the park, as already happens at Cato Park, Kanawha State Forest, etc. The City would be keeping brush back from the trail a few times a year, inspecting the trail for damage after storms, etc. City Engineer, Chris Knox, added that the City will add a parking lot for the area, which will be maintained by the City.

Councilmember Cook spoke in favor of the resolution, adding that she is confident that the community will maintain the park that they will be using. Additionally, parks like this can lead to improved physical and mental wellbeing.

Councilmember Jenkins moved to approve the resolution. Councilmember Ceperley seconded the motion. With members present recorded thereon as voting in the majority as affirmative, with at least one (1) recognized Nay from King, the Mayor declared Resolution No. 755-23 adopted.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

None

NEW BILLS

None

MISCELLANEOUS/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

REMARKS BY MEMBERS

1. Councilmember Snodgrass thanked the members who voted for her for Council President, and congratulated Councilmember Ceperley for winning. She added that she wants everyone on Council to have an equal voice.
2. Councilmember Moore stated that a long-standing business is leaving Ward 4, and there is a possibility that apartment buildings will replace it. The residents of that neighborhood are against that.

ADJOURNMENT

The Clerk, Miles C. Cary II, called the closing roll call:

YEAS: Annie, Burka, Burton, Ceperley, Cook, Faegre, Ferrell, Gianola, Haas, Hoover, Jenkins, Jones, Kerns, King, Minardi, Moore, Overstreet, Pepper, Pharr, Robinson, Rubio, Salango, Snodgrass, Solomon, Steelhammer, Taylor, Mayor Goodwin

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

At 7:43 p.m., by a motion from Councilmember Ceperley, Council adjourned until Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 7:00 p.m., in Council Chambers at City Hall.

Amy Shuler Goodwin, Honorable Mayor

Miles C. Cary II, City Clerk