

## BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

### CALLED MEETING

August 22, 2019

The Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) met in a Called Meeting on Thursday, August 22, 2019, at 8:00 a.m., at Town Hall, 123 Boone Street, Jonesborough, TN.

Mayor Chuck Vest called the meeting to order. Alderman Dickson led the group in an opening Prayer, and Fire Chief Phil Fritts led the pledge to the Flag.

Upon call of the roll those present were: Mayor Chuck Vest, Alderman Stephen Callahan, Alderman Virginia Causey, Alderman Terry Counterline, and Alderman Adam Dickson. Also present were: Town Administrator Bob Browning, Town Recorder Abbey Miller, Operations Manager Craig Ford, and Town Attorney Jim Wheeler.

The only item on the agenda concerned a Resolution in support of the proposal to build and lease a new Jonesborough K-8 School to Washington County School Board and the Washington County Commission and any associated preliminary documents involved. Mayor Vest said he wanted to take the opportunity clarify a couple of things. He said we will not be taking any citizen comments today; there will be an opportunity for that when it comes back to the BMA for final approval. Mayor Vest said after the meeting, if anyone has questions for any Board member, the members will be available. He said after the meeting is adjourned, the Board will go into Executive Session where no decisions will be made, only discussion with the Attorneys present.

Mayor Vest said he wanted to thank the Board and staff, the County Commission and the Washington County School Board for their advice and encouragement in moving this project forward. He said it wasn't always public, but behind the scenes there was a small group of people encouraging them to make something happen, and he is really pleased with the BMA for being so supportive and staying focused on this project. Mayor Vest said he also wanted to clarify a couple of minor comments that appeared in the press yesterday. He said he mentioned this last Thursday (August 15, 2019) at the roll-out of the project at the McKinney Center concerning how private this whole process was kept and the reasoning for that. Mayor Vest reiterated his statement, "It was never our intention to not be transparent with all parties and that includes residents and parents, as well, but we had no greater fear than getting the community's hopes up and then realizing our efforts wouldn't work. The people of Jonesborough have suffered enough from that, so that was one of our greatest fears. The privacy was also important to prevent speculators and developers from complicating the success of this project. So we kept it pretty private on the property we were looking at and what our plans were and I think we were very successful at that". Mayor Vest said literally the first day he publicly told somebody about the site and what we were doing was the Thursday of the roll-out. He said he was out at the site meeting

with someone and one of the residents who lives on Thompson Lane came down and started talking to him and was actually discussing something different than what he was there for. Mayor Vest said after talking with the resident, he felt obligated to tell him why he was there and informed the resident that the Town was proposing to build a school for the County on that property. He said the resident's reaction was, "my kids went to school in Jonesborough, and we need a new school in Jonesborough; I live here and it might be changing what I can look at, but we need a new school". Mayor Vest said he explained what was being considered and the resident commented that the school would help this property value. The Mayor said that was encouraging, so he went to the meeting last Thursday night really happy about his conversation with the resident. Mayor Vest said they probably could have done a better job of talking to the five homeowners on Thompson Lane, but it is such a win for our community and for anyone living on Thompson Lane. He said some of their concern is the possible increase in traffic on Thompson Lane, but there should be zero bus traffic or any school traffic affecting Thompson Lane. He explained that there might be emergency vehicle access off that lane and that would be the only reason they would see any additional traffic there. Mayor Vest added that school traffic will be on the northern part of the site far away from where the Thompson Lane residents live, and they will see the lower part of the property which will be the walking trails. Mayor Vest said he talked with Todd Wood, one of the project engineers, and there are some creative things we can do with some low spots on the property such as amphitheaters and outside educational opportunities. He said the Town will be responsible for the landscaping around this school, if the project gets approved, and we will take that burden off Dr. Flanary and the School Board and will make the school more attractive than any other school in this area. Mayor Vest said in discussing the site plan, we looked at where we might have to do buffering and plant trees. He said the design committee, once established, will consider all of this.

Mayor Vest asked the Aldermen if they had any comments. Mayor Vest some of the legal issues with the lease will be discussed further. He said it is a pretty tight lease right now, and there will probably be a few minor things that the BMA, School Board, and Commission will discuss, but he doesn't think there will be any issues that are insurmountable. Aldermen Callahan said he wanted to thank everybody involved; we have great leadership in Jonesborough right now. He said it is a proud moment to have such a great opportunity to push Jonesborough into the future and give our kids the opportunity to have the facilities they need. Alderman Dickson said it was a very exciting time for the Town of Jonesborough, and he is very excited to be a part of a progressive thinking Board; he feels this is innovative and hopes that all involved see the great benefits of this project and move our community forward. Alderman Countermine said he agrees with all that Alderman Dickson stated. Mayor Vest said Alderman Causey was a very important part of this whole process; she has played a very integral role and he thanked her. Mayor Vest asked Alderman Causey if she had anything to share. Alderman Causey said she went to school in Jonesborough; where the elementary school is now located is where the high school was many years ago when she was in school. She said she knows the children of Jonesborough definitely deserve something better, and she looks forward to being part of providing our children

a new school. Mayor Vest thanked the Aldermen for their comments. He said some of the conversations he has had with citizens over the last week or so is about the school costing \$28, \$30, or \$32 million; he added that we are going to drive that number down as much as we can. He said he feels the County and the Town can share some of the responsibilities and lower the Town's cost. Mayor Vest said one of the most important things is to make sure it does not negatively affect the finances of the Town or the Town's bond rating. He said he feels this will enhance the Town's financial strength and the citizens of Jonesborough should be assured that there will not be a tax increase to finance this project and, if anything, it should increase the Town's financial strength. He said we have researched the legality of this project from every angle on how it would affect the Town, the County and the School Board, and we are 100% confident in what we are doing. He said we feel we are going to put together a good lease that protects the Town, the County and the School Board, and it will really be something special when you see three boards here in Jonesborough come together and do something special for the community.

Mayor Vest asked Town Attorney Jim Wheeler if he had anything he would like to add. Attorney Wheeler said he did not other than point out that Attorney Grossman will be advising the Town with respect to the documents and transactions moving forward. Bob Browning said it is a tribute to the extensive homework done on the financial and legal aspects of all of this. He said Abbey Miller, our Town Recorder, responded very well to what we are trying to do even though we are borrowing a lot of money. Mayor Vest said Ms. Miller is an excellent Town Recorder; she is conservative financially, and he felt so confident in what we are proposing that he knew she would be supportive. He said he talked with Operations Manager Craig Ford and he is also very supportive of the project. Alderman Countermine said that when the Board goes into Executive Session, there will be no decisions made; the Board will listen to the Attorneys and have an opportunity to ask questions, but it's not violating any Sunshine Laws; to clarify, it is simply an information gathering session for the Board. Mr. Browning said it is on legal matters. Mayor Vest said the Aldermen and himself can only address their comments and questions to the attorneys and that is it. He said we cannot deliberate with each other.

Mayor Vest read the Resolution heading, "A Resolution authorizing the entering into an agreement with the Washington County School Board and Washington County in which the Town builds and leases to Washington County a new Jonesborough School to be operated by the Washington County School Board subject to final approval by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the Agreement Documents after discussion and approval by the Board of Education and the County Commission". Alderman Countermine made the motion to approve the Resolution authorizing a potential relationship with Washington County and the Washington County School Board in which the Town builds a new school and leases it to Washington County with the final documents reviewed and approved by the County Commission and School Board and coming back to the BMA for final approval. The motion was seconded by Alderman Callahan and duly passed.

Mayor Vest said this was the second win and now we get to send this to School Board, Dr. Flanary and Keith Ervin. He said he is encouraged that the School Board will be supportive of the project, and he is confident and hopeful that we will have a third win come from them.

**INSERT RESOLUTION**

There being no further business Mayor Vest adjourned the meeting, and the Board went into Executive Session.

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ABBEY MILLER, RECORDER

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CHUCK VEST, MAYOR