



**VISION STATEMENT:**  
"The Magic City: A diverse,  
welcoming community  
where people prosper and  
business succeeds."

**WORK SESSION  
SUMMARY**

**January 2, 2024**

**5:30 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**220 N. 27<sup>th</sup> St.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Cole

**Present:** Councilmember Gulick, Ward I  
Councilmember Jennifer Owen, Ward II  
Councilmember Neese, Ward II  
Councilmember Denise Joy, Ward III  
Councilmember Daniel Tidswell, Ward IV  
Councilmember Mike Boyett, Ward V  
Councilmember Tom Rupsis, Ward V  
Mayor William Cole

**Absent/  
Excused:** Councilmember Kendra Shaw, Ward I  
Councilmember-Elect Bill Kennedy, Ward III  
Councilmember-Elect Scott Aspenlieder, Ward IV

**Staff**  
**Present:** Chris Kukulski, City Administrator  
Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator  
Gina Dahl, City Attorney  
KC Williams, DES Coordinator  
Debi Meling, Public Works Director  
Jennifer Duray, Public Works Deputy Director

**Public Comment:**

- **Steve Simonson, Billings Association of Realtors**, asked for the status of the water quality study.

Debi Meling - study is for ground water on west end. Results in the next 6 months.

**1. Oath of Office – Swearing in Ceremony**

Judge Kolar swore in Councilmembers Boyett and Neese.

**2. DES Emergency Management Update.**

KC Williams, DES Coordinator, presented information on current DES issues and grant awards and applications. Everbridge Mass Notification System rolling out soon. Can continue using CodeRed for travel. Large population still uses CodeRed.

Council discussed reasoning for discontinuing CodeRed and how Everbridge would differ.

**Public Comment:**

None

**3. Water and Wastewater Modifications**

Debi Meling – reviewed proposed ordinance changes to BMCC Chapter 26. She spoke of changes to the: stormwater, annexation terminology, definitions, billings, rules and regulations, reimbursement agreement, ditches, backflow prevention She reviewed the proposed changes made by the Budget and Finance Committee.

Council discussed a section indicating “reservoirs banned for swimming” but swimming had been discussed at the West End Reservoir. Ms. Meling stated she would investigate that section.

Council spoke of developer costs for reimbursement, terminology about customers receiving water from the City “directly or indirectly”, manually testing water, stormwater and ditch closures.

**Public Comment:**

None

**4. Storm Fees**

Jennifer Duray reviewed the proposed change to move fees from property taxes to utility bills. She gave an overview of the proposed changes, surveys of other cities, pros and cons, and estimated storm reserve requirements. She spoke of how the change would affect renters, disabled veterans, and not-for-profit entities. She reviewed the next steps to move storm fees to utility bills, and City Code revisions.

Council discussed how this would affect taxpayers, how the City would be lowering the costs for operations, holding reserves. Ms. Duray explained how the billing process would work, and that investing in the storm system rather than holding in reserves would offset inflation increases. Council questioned plans to bring down reserves, timeline for implantation,

Ms. Duray indicated costs would be based on impervious area with equivalent residential area so all residential would be considered the same.

Council questioned a system that would credit houses that were helping to reduce storm water costs.

Mr. Kukulski spoke of businesses with a lot of asphalt/concrete and how the costs would work on monthly billing versus yearly.

**Public Comment:**

**Pam Ellis, Heights resident**, spoke against the change.

**TJ Smith, Heights Task Force**, voted unanimously against the change.

Councilmember Neese - motion to not have staff move forward, Tidswell 2<sup>nd</sup>

Councilmember Rupsis - substitute motion to direct staff to proceed, Joy 2<sup>nd</sup> (Approved 7-1, Neese opposed)

**5. Highlight Upcoming Agenda Items of Council Interest.**

Chris Kukulski, City Administrator highlighted the following items for Council: January 8<sup>th</sup> packet items, upcoming zone changes regarding Avenue B and parking tied to Stockman Bank, and electing Deputy Mayor Pro Tempore. He reminded Council of the January 16<sup>th</sup> Work Session focusing on crime prevention at Library.

Councilmember Owen – asks CA to highlight items further out, and would like update on injunctions, housing regulations, etc.

Councilmember Neese – City participating in legislative bills on recode, swearing in time/location, public safety meeting leaders of additional organizations.

Councilmember Joy – recognition of Paul Reeder passing at next Regular business meeting.

**Public Comment:**

None

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-AGENDA ITEMS".** Speaker Sign-in required. (Restricted to ONLY items not on this printed agenda. Comments are limited to 3 minutes or as set by the Mayor. Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)

**ADJOURN:** 7:21 pm