

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANFORD
SANFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

The City Council met at the Sanford Municipal Center, 225 E. Weatherspoon Street, on Tuesday, April 1, 2014, at 7 P.M., in the Council Chambers. The following people were present:

Mayor Chet Mann	Council Member Rebecca Wyhof
Council Member Jimmy Haire	Mayor Pro Tem James Williams
Council Member Sam Gaskins	Council Member Norman Charles Post, III
City Attorney Susan Patterson	Council Member Charles Taylor
City Manager Hal Hegwer	City Clerk Bonnie Davis

Absent:

Council Member Walter McNeil – (Deceased)

Mayor Mann called the meeting to order. He said that tonight we want to honor Council Member Walter H. McNeil, Jr., who passed on Sunday, March 30. Mayor Mann read the following, “Tonight we pause to remember Council Member Walter H. McNeil, Jr. A rose has been placed to honor him where he would normally sit with us. Since 1991, Walter McNeil has served this Council as a representative of Ward 4. He has given us 33 years of service. The first African-American member of the Sanford City Council which he served faithfully. He served three terms as Mayor Pro Tem and was appointed to the North Carolina League of Municipalities Board of Directors for the 2005-2006 years. Walter championed better neighborhoods. He worked with the Police advocating for better public safety. He advocated for and brought about public parks in local neighborhoods. He started our National Night Out Prevention Program in 1993. He more importantly, cared about people. He sought to find a common ground with his fellow council members to do what was right for the people. Walter McNeil did lots of things right for Sanford, but mostly, Walter was a good, honest, kind and compassionate man that all of us call a friend. He will be greatly missed on this Council and in this City. Please join me tonight in honoring the life and service of Walter H. McNeil, Jr., as we take a moment of silence.” Mr. Mann said that there are not enough words to say “thank you” to Walter McNeil.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one requested to speak.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council Member Sam Gaskins made the motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Council Member Norman Charles Post III, the motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Telecommunications and Electrical Utility Audit Services with DavenportLawrence–
(Exhibit A)

OTHER BUSINESS

Council Member Post said that his heart was heavy tonight. He said Walter McNeil, Jr., was a great man and a great City Councilman. Mr. Post extended his condolences and deepest sympathy to the McNeil family and friends. He said that his thoughts and prayers were with them all.

Council Member Wyhof echoed Council Member Post's comments and added that it was hard for her to imagine coming to the Council meetings and not seeing Mr. McNeil. Ms. Wyhof said that Mr. McNeil was very welcoming to her when she became a Council Member and she learned a lot by his commitment to our community and to its citizens and his involvement. She said Mr. McNeil was a great man and she had a lot of respect for him. She said that she knew he would be greatly missed by his family but he would be missed by his City family also.

Council Member Haire said that he believed Walter McNeil was the longest serving member of the Sanford City Council. He said that when the City was chartered in 1874, it was a one-year term and at the turn of the century, they went to a two-year term. He said about thirty-five years ago the City extended the term to four years. Mr. Haire said that all of us were better for having known Walter McNeill. He said Mr. McNeil was like a "great big teddy bear" and you just could not help but love him.

Council Member Gaskins said that many times over the past four years before he proposed anything to Council, either at the budget meetings or Law and Finance meetings, he always ran it by Mr. McNeil first. Mr. Gaskins said that in thirty-three years of service, Mr. McNeil developed a lot of knowledge of local government, of what had been done, and what should not be done. Mr. Gaskins said that Mr. McNeil was a tremendous asset that the City of Sanford has lost.

Mayor Pro Tem Williams said that everything that could be said had already been said. Mr. Williams said that we all miss Walter McNeil, himself in particular. Mr. Williams said that someone needed to speak for the citizens of Sanford, because they all truly loved Walter McNeil. Mr. Williams said that Mr. McNeil always used to tell him that when there was an issue, "That's not the Christian way, boy." Mr. Williams said that he loved him and he was going to miss him.

Council Member Taylor echoed the sentiments of the other Council Members, and added at one of his first meetings as a Council Member he made a motion. He said that he did not remember the motion but remembered the response of Mr. McNeil, which was that he could not do that because he had not been to school. Mr. Taylor said that Mr. McNeil knew a lot about school and that he impacted so many lives from an education standpoint. He said that he had heard stories about Mr. McNeil coaching. Mr. Taylor said that he could not help but think that when we meet our Maker one day, the words we want to hear is, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" and he thought that when Walter McNeil entered the Gates those words were very fitting because Mr. McNeil a good and faithful servant.

Attorney Patterson said that she would miss Walter McNeil. She said she greatly admired and respected him. She said that Mr. McNeil was very intelligent and his experience on the Sanford City Council was invaluable at times because he knew why things had been done and how they had been done, and whether or not they ought to be done again. She said she very much

appreciated his dedicated service to the community and his care and concern for the everyday person; whether the City should make the assets available to everybody, or care and concern over the City employees and hoping they would be valued and respected by the Council. She said that on behalf of the employees of the City of Sanford she expressed to the McNeil family that we express our sympathy and we very much appreciate his service on the City Council.

City Manager Hal Hegwer said that he would miss Walter McNeil greatly. He said that he had many conversations with Mr. McNeil over the years and the one thing that always stood out was his unwavering passion for the City of Sanford. Mr. Hegwer said that when he visited Mr. McNeil in the last couple of weeks he still wanted to know what was going on in the City and what was happening in the Council meetings. Mr. Hegwer said that Mr. McNeil was the unwavering support for the City of Sanford.

Mayor Mann said that he visited Mr. McNeil with Mr. Hegwer and also by himself and every time he visited, with the exception of the last visit when he wasn't able to talk about it, Mr. McNeil wanted to know how the "new kid Post" was doing, how the rest of the Council was doing and what was going on. Mayor Mann said that there was not a better servant than Mr. McNeil. Mayor Mann said that he believed you could sum up Mr. McNeil by saying that he had his priorities right; he believed in this order: God, family and community. He said that this is what Mr. McNeil taught him since he was an eleven-year old kid playing football for him. Mayor Mann said that he could not think of a better role-model. Mayor Mann said that if all elected officials could have the kind of consensus and willingness to compromise in order to get something done for the better of the community, we should look to Walter McNeil for that example and try to uphold this as we move forward as a Council. Mayor Mann said that he believed the Council is doing that and that Mr. McNeil would be proud that Council was agreeing to disagree but moving things forward.

Mayor Mann said that he hoped everyone would support the Block Party. He said that he felt this was important and that it was something Walter McNeil would appreciate. He said this was a great effort and gave credit to the past Council and Mayor Olive for this initiative and that he wanted to keep it ongoing.

Mayor Mann said that he was trying to spearhead a National Day of Prayer. He said this was moving forward and would be on May 1, 2014. He said he would love to see the National Day of Prayer take root just as the Block Party and the National Night Out, and that it will grow throughout many churches and organizations, and at least one day of year we can come together as a City and community and take time to pray for those things that are important. He said that the National Day of Prayer would start in the morning of May 1, 2014, at First Presbyterian Church then at City Hall the noon service. Mayor Mann said that next week there would be a National Arbor Day at B.T. Bullock School.

City Clerk Bonnie Davis said that she worked with Walter McNeil on the first National Night Out event in 1993 and had worked with him for many years on this program. She said that Mr. McNeil had the vision for this program and it had grown over the years. She said that Mr. McNeil will be missed and did a great job.

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Council Member Taylor added that Walter McNeil was instrumental in developing the Flag Program. Mr. Taylor said that Mr. McNeil loved this City and asked if the flags could be put out Saturday on the day of his funeral. City Manager said that he would follow up with staff regarding putting the flags out Saturday.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Sam Gaskins made the motion to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Jimmy Haire, the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

T. CHET MANN, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BONNIE DAVIS, CITY CLERK