

**Board of Mayor and Aldermen Meeting  
August 19, 2019  
Dyersburg Municipal Court Room**

(1) **Call to Order:** The Board of Mayor and Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, August 19, 2019 in the Dyersburg Municipal Court Room at 7:00 p.m. Mayor John Holden presided over the meeting. The meeting opened with prayer by Alderman Dennis Moody, except Alderwoman Vanedda Webb who was absent.

(2) **Approval of Minutes:**

Mayor Holden called for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 5, 2019 meeting. Alderwoman Mary Claire Hooper made a motion to approve the minutes. Alderman Willie Cole seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

(3) **Unfinished Business:** None presented.

(4) **New Business**

**a. Attorney Invoice.**

Mayor Holden presented an invoice from the City Attorney's office to be approved for payment. The July 1, 2019 – July 31, 2019 invoice totaled \$ 16,158.50. Alderman Dennis Moody made a motion to approve the payment, with a second by Alderman James Baltimore. The invoice payment was approved unanimously by the Board.

**b. Recreation Committee Meeting minutes – August 5, 2019 – Chairman Ricky Hammond**

**Recreation Committee Meeting  
City of Dyersburg**

**Monday August 5, 2019**

**The Recreation Committee** met at 7:10 p.m. Monday, August 5, 2019 in the Dyersburg Municipal Courtroom.

**Committee Members Present:** Mayor John Holden, Meghan Gilbert, Willie Cole, Ricky Hammond.

**Other Aldermen/Alderwomen Present:** Edward Burks, James Baltimore.

**Staff and Others:** Andy Baker, Parks and Recreation Director, Brandon Hutcheson, State Gazette, James Earl Johnson, Retired Recreation Department Director, City of Dyersburg.

Chairman Ricky Hammond called the meeting to order. Chairman Hammond introduced Mr. Johnson who provided a handout discussing his recommendations for the future plans for a walking trail development at the (soon to be demolished) Jennie Bell School site. After Mr. Johnson finished his presentation, the committee agreed to take his proposals into consideration. From discussion, the committee determined that the city should request Purchasing Agent, Greg Williams apply for a BlueCross/Blue Shield “Healthy Place” grant. The grant provides for repurposing and revitalizing government entity owned public spaces promoting community engagement. The application will emphasize creating spaces at the Jennie Bell School site that brings communities together and be free and open to the public. A walking trail and landscape design will be recommended in the application.

Dyersburg Fire Department Chief Brett Sipes requested to use a portion of the city owned property at the Jennie Bell School site for a permanent training location. Chief Sipes noted the need for a training site is required by ISO certification. The committee recommended that Chief Sipes work with the city engineer to develop a design for dual and compatible use for the property.

Alderman Burks asked if these projects could coexist, Recreation Committee member Willie Cole stated, “I don’t see why it wouldn’t.” City Recorder Bob Jones stated, that SSR can come up with a design for both concepts.

Chairman Hammond motioned to approve the application. The motion was seconded by Alderman Willie Cole. The recommendation will be made before the full Board.

***From the reading, Alderman Hammond motioned to approve the application for a BlueCross/Blue Shield “Healthy Place” grant, in addition to asking the city engineer to create a design that would integrate a portion of the city owned property (approximately 2 acres) at the Jennie Bell School site for a permanent training location for the city Fire Department. The motion was seconded by Alderman Willie Cole and fully approved by the Board.***

***Reading continues:***

In additional discussion, Mr. Andy Baker shared information with the committee that included recreational updates since the committee last met in July 2019. The following was noted:

- The Recreation Department will host at least (4) additional summer softball tournaments,
- Discussions continue concerning planning for future sponsorships for all Recreation Department Ball fields. Mr. Baker and the Recreation Committee will finalize sponsorship fees and signage. Chairman Hammond emphasized his desire to promote travel ball tournament play, incorporating the County and DSCC into the opportunities as appropriate,
- Discussed the status of pool repair at the DAC

In final discussion, Andy Baker presented the Born Living Trail which is sponsored by United Way of West Tennessee. It is a series of 10 interactive signs that offer fun, active learning activities for young children and their families. It helps parents, caregivers and communities create quality engagement opportunities when out on a stroll or visiting a local playground. West Tennessee Health Care Dyersburg Foundation will provide all funding to complete the project at Okeena Park.

*Alderman Hammond motioned for the Board to accept the recommendation as approved by the Recreation Committee to create a Born Living Trail at Okeena Park, provided the West Tennessee Health Care Dyersburg Foundation will provide all funding. The motion was seconded by Alderwoman Mary Claire Hooper and was unanimously approved by the Board.*

On a motion by Alderman Willie Cole, and a second from Meghan Gilbert, the committee voted to recommend the project to the full Board.

With no other business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

**c. Dyersburg Police Department – 2018 Annual Report – Chief Steve Isbell**

Chief Isbell presented an overview report of the Dyersburg Police Department. The annual report was lengthy and very extensive in data comparisons between years 2017 and 2018. The overview highlights included the following:

- CALEA accreditation
- Traffic incident statistics
- Department staff overview
- Risk management analysis
- Crisis and psychiatric calls including welfare checks
- Community Changers Cookout successes
- Equipment and simulation training, including multipurpose canines' usage, and
- Crime report

No actions were taken following the report.

**d. Public Safety Committee Meeting minutes – August 7, 2019 – Chairwoman Vanedda Webb**

*In the absence of Alderwoman Webb, Mayor Holden presented the minutes before the Board:*

**Public Safety Committee Meeting**

**City of Dyersburg**

**August 7, 2019**

The Public Safety Committee met Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. in the City Hall Conference Room.

**Members Present Included:** Mayor John Holden, Ricky Hammond, Vanedda Webb, Wille Cole.

**Other Alderman Board Members:** Edward Burks

**Staff and Others Present:** Brandon Hutcheson, State Gazette, Steve Isbell, Dyersburg Police Department, Greg Williams, Purchasing, Steve Anderson, Treasurer, Neel Durbin, Dyersburg City Schools Director, Community Citizens, various Dyersburg City School Board members.

Chairwoman Webb opened the meeting to discuss a proposed grant application for SRO officers in the Dyersburg City Schools.

Mayor Holden asked the Chairwoman if he could present some information before the main topic proceeded. From a group message sent to him the prior evening, he read aloud a group message from a school employee whose name he had redacted.

“John Doe found out about a meeting at City Hall tomorrow (Wednesday) morning about the need, lack of need, for SROs/police at our schools,” “There’s a secret effort to get a large number of people to show up. This effort cannot be coordinated by school people. There are grants for it, but some officials are questioning whether they are necessary and may want to take away some instead of adding. Meeting is at 8 a.m. at City Hall second floor. If anyone is available and feels passionate about police presence at all our schools please send them. John Doe will be there.”

Mayor Holden specifically stated: “I assure you that has never been said,” “It just bothers me, quite honestly, that misinformation gets out there. I know Neel cannot control what his people say or whatever, but this board has always been committed to the school system. I got this late last night, and I stayed up until 2 because it bothered me. I called the chief (Steve Isbell) last night. It bothered him. I sent it to Neel early this morning. We can’t combat what people say on social media and what’s out there in the stratosphere. Two years ago, we picked up an additional \$400,000 in payments so the school system didn’t have to pay them – the debt service fund. The former board did, and this board has done it. I’ve been here 13 years, and we have never not approved a budget Neel has brought to us. Two years ago, I authorized a half-million dollars to go to the school system for the indoor facility, the improvements of the girls’ softball field, and got my brains beat out by former members of this board and got my brains beat out in the last election. I say this to say this – please don’t doubt our commitment to the Dyersburg City School System. We support them, and will continue to support them.”

Following Mayor Holden, Mr. Durbin presented information concerning the grant application. He noted that On February 2, 2019, Governor Lee proposed an additional \$30 million in 2019 and \$40 million in 2020 to increase the number of SROs in schools statewide, to assist potentially 500 schools that didn’t have SROs. He said Governor Lee doubled the reoccurring funds for school safety. Mr. Durbin discussed the various attributes and value to have SROs.

Mr. Durbin further stated that SROs are assigned to DHS, DMS, and the College Street Campus and may serve as traffic safety personnel and part-time security for special events.

Mr. Durbin stated: “Dyersburg City Schools funds our SROs with our safe schools’ funds, that are provided by the state, as well as additional general-purpose funds. The school system has applied for the grant, and we think we can cover the cost of this grant at no cost to the City and to the police department. Dyersburg has submitted our application to the state, and the application would be complete upon contingency of the city approving that.”

When asked about SRO numbers in the schools by Chairwoman Webb, Mr. Durbin felt the numbers could increase; especially, if two more were added to the Intermediate and Primary schools.

Police Chief Steve Isbell noted to add 2 additional new hire SROs would amount to \$35,368, this is not including salaries. He gave members of the committee a new hire employee cost sheet. Chief Isbell mentioned those amounts do not include the cost for a patrol vehicle. He noted:

- A timeline for hire is unknown, national struggle, due to lack of applicants.
- The department has 7 active-duty military members, creating significant scheduling problems.
- Staffing the streets in critical operations (such as narcotic and gangs) is a priority, in addition to school safety.
- Provided an historical description of the creation of SRO’s in the Dyersburg schools to present date.
- Recent historical data on gang & drug violence.

The committee discussed that these costs were not provided for in the City’s 2019-2020 budget period. Mayor Holden noted that budget adjustment would have to be made, if approved for the grant. It was noted by Mr. Durbin that as funds were spent the state would reimburse the school system, which in turn would reimburse the city.

“After the 2 years when the grant goes away, what will we do then?” asked Mayor Holden.

Mr. Durbin stated: “Our safe schools funding is reoccurring funds. It will reoccur every year,” “We have hardened our targets to where we feel like we’re not going to have major capital improvements or program improvements cost-wise, so we can take those funds to defer the cost of the SROs in every school. We’ve done the math, and we know we have the funds to do this for a number of years.”

Chief Isbell noted that it will be a significant challenge to increase the DPD strength, and especially challenging hiring 2 new individuals (requiring significant and lengthy certification training) He also noted he would have to identify someone already in the department who would apply for the posted positions and successfully complete the interview process. He further noted that the department cannot place an officer into an SRO position from outside the Department, even if certified, because the Department requires officers complete 12 weeks of training. If

successful, then, they must complete at least a year of on the job training with the department before applying for the SRO position. Chief Isbell stated that the requirements meet the CALEA standards for officer training.

Alderman Willie Cole stated that from his career experiences in the City Schools he firmly supports having SROs in the Primary levels.

Mr. Durbin requested a letter of commitment form the City allowing the School system to complete the grant application.

Mayor Holden reiterated the City's understanding of the importance of SROs in the school system. He made a motion, accepting the proposed funding source support to pay all costs associated with 2 new SRO's noted by Mr. Durbin, to pursue the grant, with a second from Alderman Ricky Hammond. The motion passed the committee and will be recommended before the full board of Mayor and Aldermen.

No further actions were taken.

No further business was presented before the Committee which adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

*Upon the reading conclusion, Alderman Willie Cole made a motion, accepting the proposed funding source support to pay all costs associated with 2 new SRO's noted by Mr. Durbin, and to pursue the State SRO grant, followed by a second from Alderman James Baltimore. The motion was unanimously passed by the full board of Mayor and Aldermen.*

**e. Bids – Greg Williams, Purchasing Agent**

The following bid was pre-approved in the overall approval of the 2019-2020 City budget by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The following were awarded:

1. Department: Police  
Item: Patrol Pursuit Tires  
Purpose: Open P.O. for FY 19-20  
Budgeted: Yes  
Notification – State Gazette, direct to 3 vendors  
Bids: Lake Rd Service Center                      \$25,100.00  
          51 Downtown Service Station            \$21,392.00  
          Triple T Tire                                      \$20,893.40

The bid was awarded to Triple T Tire, Dyersburg Tennessee at \$20,893.40

**Reports from the Aldermen Board:**

**Alderman James Baltimore:** No report.

**Alderman Edward Burks:** No report.

**Alderman Wille Cole:** No report.

**Alderman Meghan Gilbert:** requested the Mayor convene a Cemetery Committee meeting. Mayor Holden responded that he would contact the committee members for a meeting.

**Alderman Ricky Hammond:** expressed his concerns and disappointment with the recent controversy associated with unwarranted social media criticisms toward the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and City Schools officials related to the recent Public Safety Committee discussions for SRO's in the city Schools. He noted that the Board and City Administrators were working together to provide the best communication and safety for the students and staff at the schools. He stated the negative criticisms were very disturbing to him, and wanted the public to note the positive and collaborative work taking place between the Board and the City school administration.

**Alderman Mary Claire Hopper:** No report.

**Alderman Dennis Moody:** No report.

**Alderman Vanedda Webb:** not present.

**Communications from the Mayor:** No report.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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John Holden, Mayor

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Robert C. Jones, City Recorder