

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE ELSMERE CITY COUNCIL**  
**MARCH 12,2024**  
**6:30 PM**

**LOCATION:** Elsmere City Building

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE:** The invocation was given by Councilman Malcolm Daniels, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** The following members were present: Mayor Marty Lenhof, Councilwoman Maria Vogt, Councilwoman Joanne Barnett Smith, Councilman Malcolm Daniels, Councilwoman Gloria Grubbs, Councilwoman Serena Owen, and Councilwoman Missy Tester.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Councilwoman Vogt made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2024, Student Government Council Meeting. Councilwoman Grubbs seconded the motion. All members present voted aye. **Motion carried and so ordered.**

Councilwoman Owen asked that her emailed report be included in the meeting minutes as was read by her student at the meeting. Ms. Hehman explained that the minutes were prepared in summary form and the full report could be made available with a copy of the minutes in the minutes book. Councilwoman Owen made a motion to attach a copy of her report to the February 13 Meeting Minutes in the record book. Councilman Daniels seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All members present voted aye. **Motion carried and so ordered.**

Councilwoman Barnett Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2024, Caucus Meeting. Councilwoman Vogt seconded the motion. All members present voted aye. **Motion carried and so ordered.**

**PRESENTATION:** Mayor Fette spoke about the mural project that was brought to her by Jake Ryle at KYTC and the Dixie Heights High School Art teacher and students. She stated this is a chance to work together as multi-jurisdiction cooperation. The location of the proposed mural is a concrete retaining wall on Turkeyfoot Road in Elsmere, along the state right-of-way, and directly across from Brightleaf Blvd., in Erlanger. The project is being driven by Dixie Heights Art students. Gray Vaillancourt, a senior at Dixie Heights High School, explained the importance of community engagement through this project. The project was designed to be inclusive to students of any artistic ability. Mayor Fette stated that the City of Erlanger will join an Interlocal Agreement to address the ongoing maintenance costs of the mural and maintain the wall. The City of Erlanger would also take responsibility for cleaning, preparing the wall and maintaining it. Mayor Fette stated that part of the project includes fundraising and figuring out the expenses for the mural, as well as community building.

Councilman Daniels asked Ms. Cierra Bevins, Art Teacher, to explain the design and story the mural tells. Ms. Bevins explained that it is designed to be paint-by-numbers style and invites the community and students of all abilities to participate. Councilwoman Owen asked if there were any other options to consider that may represent the connection between the different jurisdictions. She asked if a train or something more representative could be added to the mural to connect all jurisdictions involved. Ms. Bevins explained the entire learning process has been a great learning experience for everyone involved. Councilwoman Barnett Smith expressed her concern with the bright colors and stated she would like to see the mural more focused on the community and Elsmere. Councilwoman Grubbs agreed that she would like to see more of the design incorporate more design relating to the history of the cities. Mayor Lenhof asked how long the project will take. Ms. Bevins estimated it would take about a month from start to finish.

Councilwoman Owen asked if a train could be added to the mural, as the train/train tracks are prominent parts of the branding for both Elsmere and Erlanger. Mayor Lenhof suggested using the images that were used by the Police Department to help design the new department badges. Mayor Lenhof and Councilmembers agreed that the blank wall is ugly and would like to see something on it.

Ms. Vaillancourt stated that art is a process, and they are excited to come up with something to satisfy everyone.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

**Code Enforcement Officer Chris Preston & Zoning Administrator Rich Aliff** were not in attendance but submitted written reports to Council. There were no questions.

**City Attorney Greg Voss** – Mr. Voss stated he had been working with Mr. Bartlett addressing processes and procedures that need updating. He has reviewed litigation that involved the City.

**Public Works Director Chris Zerhusen** – Mr. Zerhusen reported the street sweeper is being repaired and hopes to see it back on the road soon. The slide at Woodside Park was set on fire and removed. They will begin putting down mulch at the parks in the next few weeks. The dump truck that was ordered last year, in May, is finally in production. The snow/ice equipment has all been put into storage for the year. The City Building Step Project is waiting on pricing from contractors. Several downed trees have been identified to be removed on Woodside.

**Police Chief Russ Wood** – Chief Wood stated that filling vacancies within the department remains his highest priority. A conditional offer has been extended to Adam Markesbery. He has experience with military law enforcement, unfortunately he will still have to attend the DOCJT Academy for training. Officer Perry has completed his in-house pre-Academy training. He will begin attending the Academy with a 4-week virtual training beginning March 17<sup>th</sup>. All department internal audits have been completed, including approximately 100 policies that have been reviewed, modified, or created. A new record-keeping system has been developed and will standardize the internal record keeping. The cruisers have been delayed 3-4 weeks. Employee evaluations have been submitted to Mr. Bartlett and Mayor Lenhoff. Chief Wood was selected to serve on a state panel for the FBI Youth Leadership Program.

**Parks and Recreation Director Denise Donahue** – Councilwoman Barnett Smith announced the Easter Egg Hunt will take place at Woodside Park on March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11 am. The rain date is March 30<sup>th</sup>.

**City Clerk Katie Hehman** – Ms. Hehman stated payments for outstanding property taxes and code enforcement liens were processed. Ms. Hehman and Mr. Bartlett attended the KLC Personnel Summit in Lexington. Councilwoman Barnett Smith asked about setting up a guest Wi-Fi.

**City Treasurer Jessica Lucius** submitted a written report. There were no questions.

**Community Center Director Carol Cope** submitted a written report. There were no questions.

Councilwoman Owen made a motion to approve the Administrative Reports. Councilwoman Barnett Smith seconded the motion. All members present voted aye. **Motion carried and so ordered.**

**The Mayor's Report** – Mayor Lenhof and Chief Wood attended a Career Fair at Tichenor Middle School. Mayor Lenhoff and Chief Wood also worked with 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Howell Elementary to identify an issue facing the City. The students will present their solutions to the issue. Mr. Bartless has been working with staff on presenting a new budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

**City Administrator's Report** – Mr. Bartlett stated that his primary focus remain preparing the budget to be presented. The financial position of the City remains strong. The focus will be on services to the citizens, including parks, roads and giving back to the community. The unfilled Deputy Clerk position will be posted and advertised. The RFQ for City Engineering Services will be advertised.

**GENERAL ITEMS:**

**Ordinance 1831-2024 Second Reading Regulating Backyard Chickens.**

Attorney Voss conducted the second reading of the ordinance. Councilwoman Owen made the motion to adopt the ordinance as presented. Councilwoman Owen seconded the motion. Councilwoman Owen made the motion for approval. Councilwoman Barnett Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Lenhof called for a roll call vote.

Councilwoman Barnett Smith – **Aye**, Councilman Daniels – **Aye**, Councilwoman Grubbs – **Aye**, Councilwoman Owen – **Aye**, Councilwoman Tester – **Aye**, Councilwoman Vogt - **Aye**  
**Motion carried and so ordered.**

**Ordinance 1832-2024 First Reading Adding Code Enforcement Liens to Property Tax Bills.**

Attorney Voss conducted the first reading of the Ordinance.

**Municipal Order 5-2024 – Accepting the Agreement between the Commonwealth of Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and the City of Elsmere for the Edwards Road Sidewalks.** Ms. Hehman conducted a reading of the municipal order. Councilwoman Grubbs made a motion to approve the municipal order as read. Councilwoman Barnett Smith Seconded the motion. Mayor Lenhof called for a voice vote: All members present voted aye. **Motion Carried and so ordered.**

**Deputy City Clerk Job Description** – Ms. Hehman worked to prepare a job description for the position of Deputy City Clerk. Councilwoman Barnett Smith made the motion to accept the job description for Deputy City Clerk. Councilwoman Vogt seconded the motion. Mayor Lenhof called for a voice vote. All members present voted aye. **Motion Carried and so ordered.**

**COUNCIL REPORTS:**

**Councilwoman Serena Owen** – Councilwoman Owen attended the Kenton County Soil and Water District Conservation Board Education Committee meeting. She reported there are several ongoing projects: one at Miles Elementary and another for funds to learn about the history of urban forestry and conservation. A think tank focus group will be held by PDS at First Baptist Church to get input on the upcoming comprehensive planning, on Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 pm.

**Councilwoman Missy Tester** – No report.

**Councilwoman Maria Vogt** – No report.

**Councilwoman Joanne Barnett Smith** – Councilwoman Barnett Smith reminded everyone of the Easter Egg Hunt on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Historical Society is hosting a Civil War presentation at 7 pm at the City Building on Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Councilman Malcolm Daniels** – reported that he had received an email KLC regarding HB 687, this bill would require cities to enter an interlocal agreement with the county to subsidize costs of lodging person who are arrested in the city boundaries. Mr. Voss explained the email had been sent to all elected officials.

**Councilwoman Gloria Grubbs** – Councilwoman Grubbs stated that originally, she had been totally against allowing chickens in the City. Councilwoman Grubbs presented Mr. Bunzow with a chicken welcome sign. She stated as an elected official it is the responsibility to listen to the citizens and said she was convinced to change her opinion.

Mayor Lenhof stated that he is working to get a date for the City Building Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. There are a few issues left to address before a date is selected.

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**ADJOURNMENT:**

Councilman Daniels made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Tester seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

  
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Mayor Marty Lenhof

Attest:

  
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Katie Hehman/City Clerk