

December 2, 2024

5:30 p.m.

Public Hearing

Ripley City Courtroom

Mayor Fitzhugh called the meeting to order and requested Recorder Buckner to issue roll call.

Board members present: Fitzhugh, Chipman, Keeley and Frazier

Board members absent: Long, Alston and Thompson

Also present: Donna Buckner, Attorney Rachel Jackson, Superintendent Johnie Ford, Fire Chief Tracey Worlds and Police Chief Mitchell Turner

Visitors: J.C. Bonds, James Wright, Linda Love and Ron Goforth

- Ordinance of the City of Ripley, Tennessee amending Title 11, Chapter 1, Alcohol

No comment received.

Alderman Keeley asked if there might be exception to the ordinance for special events under permit rule.

Attorney Jackson stated in her discussion with Mayor Fitzhugh it could be an exception to the rule for use at special events under permit and with certain insurance. Suggest forming a committee to look into how other cities allow for this and the safe guards they put in place such as additional police coverage to ensure safety as well as other unforeseen issues.

Meeting adjourned 5:40 p.m.

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Donna Buckner, Recorder

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Craig Fitzhugh, Mayor

December 2, 2024  
5:45 p.m.  
Ripley Power Board Meeting  
Ripley City Courtroom

Mayor Fitzhugh called the meeting to order and requested Recorder Buckner to issue roll call.

Board members present: Chipman, Frazier, Keeley and Fitzhugh

Board members absent: Alston, Long and Thompson

Also present: Donna Buckner, Attorney Rachel Jackson, Superintendent Johnie Ford, Fire Chief Tracey Worlds and Police Chief Mitchell Turner

Visitors: Linda Love, J.C. Bonds, James Wright and Ron Goforth

1. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Keeley to approve November 4, 2024 Ripley Power Board meeting minutes as printed and delivered in agenda package.  
All aye.

Public Comments: none

Mayor Fitzhugh read email sent on his behalf by Recorder Buckner to Superintendent Mike Allmand requesting necessary action items and documents dated November 26, 2024 and Superintendent Mike Allmand's response dated November 30, 2024.

Mayor Fitzhugh announced City Attorney Rachel Jackson's agreement to recuse herself from the Ripley Power & Light issues. The City has consulted with an independent legal counsel already on retainer for the Ripley Power & Light issues.

Meeting adjourned 5:55 p.m.

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Donna Buckner, Recorder

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Craig Fitzhugh, Mayor

December 2, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Ripley Board of Mayor and Aldermen

Ripley City Courtroom

Mayor Fitzhugh called the meeting to order and requested Recorder Buckner to issue roll call.

Board members present: Fitzhugh, Alston, Chipman, Fraizer, Keeley and Long

Board members absent: Thompson

Also present: Donna Buckner, Attorney Rachel Jackson, Chief Tracey Worlds, Superintendent Johnie Ford, Park Director Mike Worlds, Sergeant Herbert Gwynn, Superintendent Scott Nelson and Superintendent Mike Allmand

Visitors: James Wright, Linda E. Love, Ron Goforth, Angela Allmand, Jay Heath, Debby Jenkins, Eunice Jenkins, Dwight Beard and Marcus Keeley

Mayor Fitzhugh reminded the board that normally when we have an ordinance that comes up for passage, we will have a first reading on a certain month and then at 5:30 the evening of the next meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen we will have a public hearing which is what we did tonight. Also, we will have a Ripley Power & Light Board meeting at 5:30 or after the public hearing. We were unable to have that meeting tonight because the superintendent provided a written response and was not present tonight. Thus, we will visit those issues next month.

Mayor Fitzhugh stated as he announced in the prior meeting tonight City Attorney Jackson has agreed to recuse herself from the Ripley Power & Light issues. The City has consulted with an independent legal counsel already on retainer for the Ripley Power & Light issues.

Invocation: Superintendent Scott Nelson

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Frazier to approve November 4, 2024 Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting minutes as printed and delivered in agenda package. All aye
2. Motion by Alderman Alston and second by Alderman Keeley to approve November 2024 financial statement as printed and delivered in agenda package. All aye

Correspondence: Thank you from the family of George Hallock and appreciation note from International Fellows Class of 2025

Public comments: none

Mayor Fitzhugh stated we seemed to have had a thankful holiday season and Christmas is nearly here and appreciate Public Works and all other departments who work so hard to get ready for the holiday.

Department reports:

Chief Worlds stated that retired volunteer firefighter Mr. Gordon King has passed away. Volunteer firefighter Mike Currie has retired with 40 years of service and reserve firefighter Jesse Hudnall has retired with 19 years of service. Letters of commendation have been mailed and also placed in their permanent personnel file at City Hall.

Alderman Chipman, on behalf of Ripley Parks & Recreation, wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

3. Motion by Alderman Long and second by Alderman Chipman to approve department reports as printed and delivered in agenda package. All aye
4. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Frazier to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> reading ordinance of the City of Ripley, Tennessee amending Title 11, Chapter 1, Alcohol. Roll call. All aye
5. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Long to approve resolution authorizing the City of Ripley to participate in the Public Entity Partners Cyber Security Partners matching grant program. Roll call. All aye
6. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Alston to approve 2% Christmas bonus for full-time employees as budgeted. Roll call. All aye

Alderman Long asked upon whose authority was the letter to the department heads sent.

Attorney Jackson stated hers as the city attorney.

Alderman Alston asked if their names were on the letterhead and were they supposed to know before the letter was sent.

Attorney Jackson stated no ma'am. She stated to Ms. Alston that they had already had this conversation and she understood Ms. Alston's need to have it again in public. As replied to Ms. Alston previously, she (Jackson) is appointed by this board to represent the City of Ripley. The city is the entity. The city is her client, not this board, not any individual department, not any individual department head, not any combination of those, but the city. The city is the entity of the municipal corporation. She represents the interests of the municipal corporation. It is not at all unusual, and she understands why she (Alston) wants to make an issue of this in this circumstance, but it is not unusual for her to reach out to various department heads and get their input on an issue. When she feels this board needs to be made aware of the positions of the department heads relative to a given issue, of which, multiple of them have consulted with her in private, then it is not at all inappropriate for her to reach out to them and make their opinions known to this board in writing.

That is exactly what she did in her pursuit of representing the interest of this city. There was absolutely nothing inappropriate about it.

Alderman Alston asked if there was a cost to city to send the letter?

Attorney Jackson stated no ma'am.

Alderman Long stated when he was perusing the October minutes, he just scanned them and moved on. He takes it for granted they are correct and he doesn't believe these are correct and he simply wants them correct. There's no need for a motion or anything like that. He just wanted to point that out so they could be corrected.

Attorney Jackson asked corrected in what way? If Alderman Long makes no indication in how they need to be corrected there is no correction to be made.

Attorney Long stated he believes the city recorder has all the information she needs.

Recorder Buckner stated that information was emailed to her but in order to correct the minutes we would need a motion.

Mayor Fitzhugh stated just as the attorney stated, we would need to know what the correction is. There was an opportunity last month to make any corrections and there was nothing mentioned.

Attorney Jackson stated there is a reason why the board members are put on notice of the contents of the meeting in advance of the meeting from the Friday before the meeting all the way up to the Monday of the meeting. There were no corrections made.

Recorder Buckner stated Alderman Long's request made to her was "correct the minutes of October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding the review of the Comptroller's motion, just as a reminder that motion is on video and the correct wording was sent to you. That motion was read twice, voted on and passed with no amendments or renditions". His motion was read but he did not read the letter and he did not provide us the letter that night. If she's not mistaken, he may have emailed it to her on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Is that correct Alderman Long?

Alderman Long stated he would have to go back and check his notes.

Attorney Jackson stated that the minutes indicate she asked what specifically the letter to the Comptroller was to say. Typically, it would go from her on referral with a letter attached. She hadn't seen a letter. It was discussed that the letter was not available at the time of the meeting. It was discussed on the record and made a part of the minutes.

Recorder Buckner stated if she wasn't mistaken nearly every word verbatim were in the minutes of that meeting.

Mayor Fitzhugh asked Alderman Long what did he want changed.

Alderman Long stated he believed the motion specifically stated there would be a letter sent that he would include. He doesn't understand why the city attorney would have to be the one to send a letter like that to the State Comptroller.

Attorney Jackson stated that because for her 4 terms, she has been the one to draft, even when the letter comes from the mayor, she's been the one to draft the letter. If a letter comes from the board as a whole, she drafts and sends the letters. That's not an unusual practice.

Mayor Fitzhugh stated this is where we do our business, especially, at this level because you can't have committee meetings like other bodies may do at different levels of government. So, if it's not done here then it needs to be passed on to where it can be done or it stands with what happens at that particular time. Otherwise, you go back every time changing things and there would be no continuity of government.

Attorney Jackson stated she tried to clarify at the end of the minutes by asking "I'm trying to clarify is the letter to the Comptroller to require a review of claims made during the election that taxpayer funds were held (discussed to include Ripley Power & Light) at Bank of Ripley as part of normal business operations in non-interest bearing accounts and she asked Alderman Long if he was aware that the Comptroller receives such a report from auditors annually and he said he was aware and requested this be done in addition to that". So, that is exactly what she sent to the Comptroller and the Comptroller has already replied indicating they reviewed all of the accounts of both the city and Ripley Power & Light and there were no irregularities in regard to the types of accounts. That they are all interest-bearing with the exception of the payroll accounts which zero out every month. She doesn't know what the continuing issue is.

Mayor Fitzhugh asked if there was any more business?

7. Motion by Alderman Chipman and second by Alderman Alston to adjourn. All aye

Meeting adjourned 6:55 p.m.

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Donna Buckner, Recorder

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Craig Fitzhugh, Mayor