

**CITY OF JEFFERSON**  
City Council Worksession  
September 8, 2022  
6:30pm

**COUNCILORS PRESENT:** Walt Perry, David Watkins, Dave Beyerl, Keonali Hutley, Bob Rossiter, Mayor Michael Myers  
**COUNCILORS ABSENT:** David Kellogg  
**STAFF PRESENT:** Sarah Cook, CM/R; Jeff Buskirk, PWD; Deanna Donato, Deputy CR; Brianna Hutley, City Clerk; Kyle Ward, Utility Foreman (zoom); Nadia Heinrich, Library Director(zoom)

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and led in the flag salute.

**II. WORKSESSION TOPICS**

**A. City Holiday's: Indigenous Peoples' Day & Juneteenth**

Mayor Myers explained the subject was brought back before the Council at his request as well as members of the staff, and he hoped each of them took time to read the materials thoroughly. He believed both days needed to be recognized, as they had tremendous meaning and importance to the foundation of the country. The Mayor went on to explain how celebration and recognition of various holidays changed over time and with each generation, as did history and beliefs, noting the only one he thought to still be embraced for its original intent was Memorial Day.

Councilor Beyerl wanted to clear up possible confusion from the previous meeting, stating no holidays were taken away, only shifted to a different date. He agreed with Mayor Myers and added that because holiday's weren't celebrated for what they were originally intended for, he'd be content with providing staff with a set number of paid days off, and never mind what it may be commemorating. He felt everybody should be treated the same every day, not just on special days. Mayor Myers was understanding, but saw the holidays as reasons to celebrate, educate, and to raise awareness that would expand over time the recognition that different people went through a level of hell the rest of them never had.

Councilor Watkins noted several states were recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day on October 10<sup>th</sup> and he was aware of attempts in other states to make it a federal holiday; therefore, he thought they should probably move towards that as well. He added that it would give an opportunity to publicize more about the Native American Memorial in town, send out literature, etc.

Councilor Hutley first declared a potential conflict of interest, due to her familial relationship with a staff member and then apologized to staff for not being more prepared at the last meeting, which she said was very emotional for her. She expressed her deep appreciation for all the comments staff submitted on the subject and wanted to support them and their feelings. She preferred for staff to

keep the day after Thanksgiving as a paid holiday and that the City declare that to be the day of recognition of Indigenous Peoples, rather than Columbus Day.

Councilor Perry had prepared a written statement and Mayor Myers complimented him on it, noting it was very thoughtful. Councilor Rossiter did not have a preference, but agreed more with the recommendation of staff and would go with the plan as proposed.

Mayor Myers summarized what he'd heard from Council, indicating it seemed they would continue with the day after Thanksgiving as the paid holiday. Councilor Watkins was concerned about the declaration of a federal holiday on October 10<sup>th</sup> for Indigenous Peoples' Day, to which the City Manager reminded him the Council could choose to recognize, or not to recognize any holiday, and that the City had already been ignoring the federally declared Columbus Day holiday for over a decade. Councilor Perry was concerned it would become squelched by black Friday, and Mayor Myers reminded them staff already had the day after Thanksgiving off as a paid holiday; the change would simply be to give it a name and recognition. Councilor Hutley encouraged the Council to take a look at the people working at the City and notice how important it was for them to show up, submit comments, etc. There was a consensus to keep the day after Thanksgiving as a paid holiday and declare it Native American Heritage Day.

Moving on to Juneteenth, the Mayor spoke about when the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment passed and slavery was abolished, almost 25% of the population was finally allowed to be counted, and for him, the significance of that change was so tremendous that he couldn't think of a more important milestone to be uplifted and celebrated. Councilor Perry agreed, noting the meaning was for the freedom of all slavery in the country, not just black slaves. He felt it was a holiday not about race, but about Americans. The rest of the Council was in support as well and two separate motions were made by Councilor Perry, then seconded by Councilor Hutley, to declare both Native American Heritage Day as the title for the day after Thanksgiving paid holiday, and Juneteenth on June 18<sup>th</sup> of each year as a paid holiday. All in favor: Ayes – 5, Opposed – 0. **APPROVED.**

#### B. Review of Projects & Goals

Mayor Myers noted the extensive packet materials, noting they surely would not get through it all in one meeting. They focused their attention on the list of Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities, adding, moving, or removing items from the various lists. Specific topics noted included the recent closure of the City's only doctor's office, the poor condition of the state highway through town and the potential impact on the City's growth, the need for true affordable housing to keep generations in town, and the renovation and revitalization of downtown. Noting a good place to stop for the night, Mayor Myers asked to continue the review at the October Worksession and for the Councilors to spend time thinking about the City's direction, which way they should be moving toward, and why, in terms of expanding into the UGB, in addition to their opinions on what they'd like to see be developed in those places.

- III. **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE** – Councilor Beyerl moved to approve, seconded by Councilor Rossiter. All in favor: Ayes – 5, Opposed – 0. **APPROVED.**

#### IV. VISITORS

Linda Baker, reported on behalf of the FOL, who was also looking at goals and library accomplishments over the years. She handed out 3-ring binders to all of the Council and staff, noting she would have a series of mini presentations at the next several meetings, where new materials would be provided for them to add to their binders

#### V. STAFF & COUNCIL COMMENTS

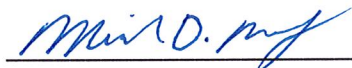
The City Manager reported that the in-house audit had just concluded the day before, though it would be several weeks before a final draft was available, as the auditors would still be collecting and compiling data from their own office.

Jeff Buskirk reported he was obtaining bids for the well located on the 7<sup>th</sup> St. park property and the water project for the end of Church St. and N 6<sup>th</sup> street would go to bid in October.

Councilor Hutley attended the Fire Board meeting and updated the Council on their progress with hiring a new Chief, which was delayed when the job offer was declined by the candidate they had selected. They had 3 new candidate interviews coming up.

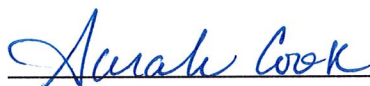
- VI. **ADJOURNMENT** – Councilor Beyerl moved; seconded by Councilor Perry. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

**MINUTES APPROVED** this 27<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2022.



Michael D. Myers, Mayor

**ATTEST:**



Sarah Cook, City Manager/Recorder