



**CITY OF LEEDS, ALABAMA  
REGULAR SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING  
MARCH 20, 2017**

The Council of the City of Leeds, Alabama met for a Public Hearing and Regular Scheduled Council Meeting on Monday, March 20, 2017 at 6:00PM in the Leeds Civic Center Meeting Room, 1000 Park Drive, Leeds, Alabama 35094.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor David Miller called the meeting to order at 6:03PM with Councilmembers Ryan Bell, Johnny Dutton, Linda Miller, Eric Turner and Kenneth Washington present.

**2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** the invocation was given by Councilmember Eric Turner.

**3. PUBLIC HEARING:** No Public Hearing.

**4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF COUNCIL MINUTES:** March 06, 2017 Public Hearing and Council Meeting. A motion by Turner to approve the minutes as presented with a second by Bell, motion passed with all present voting yes.

**5. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES OR SPECIAL BOARDS:**

**a) Finance Chairperson, Linda Miller.** No Report.

**b) Public Safety Committee, Kenneth Washington.** No Report. A meeting will be held next Tuesday, March 28, 2017.

**c) Public Works and Parks & Recreation Committee, Ryan Bell.** No Report.

**d) Tree Commission: Mr. Eddie Cook, Chairman, announced that the representatives from the Alabama Forestry Commission were unable to attend. Their presentation to the City designating Leeds as a Tree City USA will be rescheduled to April 3, 2017.**

**6. REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

**a) Administration, Mayor Miller.** The Mayor read a letter from Scott Sisk on behalf of the Leeds High School Softball program thanking the city for Mayor and City Council support for the event held at Memorial Park. Mayor Miller also informed everyone of the PEBA (Public Education Building Authority) recently closed school refinancing which saved the citizens of Leeds \$3,442,085.00 dollars.

**b) Fire Department, Chief Parsons.** Report provided in packet.

**c) Police Department, Chief Reaves.** Police Department report included in the Council's packet. Ron Reaves introduced himself as the Active Chief and introduced Lt. Griffen. The Police Department made a large bust and thanked all the officers involved.

**d) Library, Director Carden.** Ms. Carden reported an increase of 2.2% of card holders and a 12% increase of materials checked out. Carden reported tax forms are available at the library for filing federal taxes. Saturday Storytime will begin April 1 at 9:30 am. The Library will be closed Easter weekend (Friday, April 14-Sunday, April 16, 2017). A Public Shred Event is scheduled at the Library Lot on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, from 8am to noon.

**e) Municipal Court, Magistrate Roberts.** Report provided for January and February. Ms. Roberts reports a significant increase in court activity.

**f) Inspection Department, Superintendent Watson.** Also speaking as Planning & Zoning Administrator, Mr. Watson reports information included in Council's packet.

**f) Parks and Recreation Department.** No Report.

**g) Streets and Sanitation Department.** Mr. Johnny Warren introduced himself as the new street and sanitation supervisor.

**7. OLD BUSINESS:**

a) **Resolution 2016-12-11 Consider Revocation Of A Business License.** Attorney Barnett spoke of legal issues being resolved as well as some inspection issues. Motion to deny Resolution 2016-12-11 by Councilmember Washington to deny the Resolution with a second by Councilmember Miller; motion to deny passed with all present voting yes.

**8. NEW BUSINESS:**

a) **Resolution 2017-03-12 Consideration Of City Cost Saving Measures.** Motion to approve Resolution 2017-03-12 by Councilmember Dutton with a second by Councilmember Turner; the motion passed with all present voting yes.

**9. COUNCIL COMMENTS:** No Council comments.

**10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Mayor David Miller addressed the Cedar Grove Cemetery matter and apologized for the actions that were taken at the cemetery. The Mayor read aloud a memo from Mr. Brad Watson which was given to the team members of the Street Department.

The Mayor described the plan for the cemetery cleanup. Some mementos were destroyed and Mayor Miller expressed his deep regret for the actions taken. The Mayor further stated that the current policies will be reviewed and looked at common sense laws. The Mayor recognized the people who would like to speak and gave direction as to how the process would be handled. Mayor Miller also stated that a city employee misinformed people about what was acceptable to be placed in the cemetery and apologized for that misinformation.

**Jennifer Freeman, Odenville,** stated her mother is buried in the cemetery. Freeman spoke of the measures taken as unacceptable. Freeman described a bench valued by the family which was destroyed.

**Katie Chew, Ashville.** Ms. Chew stated she saw the post of what was going to happen in the cemetery on Thursday and discovered the bench at her daughter's grave site had been removed. Ms. Chew spoke of hopefully this experience will be a lesson to help other cemeterys to avoid this pain she is experiencing from happening to other people. Chew described the regulations as confusing as to what is allowed and not allowed.

**Mr. Jonathan Hayes, Leeds,** stated his brother is buried at Cedar Grove Cemetery. Ms. Hayes spoke of being at a previous Council meeting. Hayes asked if there is a Facebook page where citizens can obtain information about the cemetery and offer input. The Mayor indicated the address of the Leeds Facebook page (Everyone Leeds). People were also referred to the Cemetery Committee to ask questions and make suggestions.

**Ms. Devoris Ragland Pierce, 8624 Cedar Springs Circle.** Ms. Pierce commented that the city approved the new rules and asked if the rules were not reviewed before they were approved. Pierce asked if there will be reprimands for the employees that destroyed property and if there is any type of reimbursement for the items and for the pain and suffering. Mayor Miller indicated a form for complaints on the city website. Ms. Pierce commented that a mailing should be done when rules have changed. The Mayor agreed there should have been a letter sent; however the Mayor also spoke of the difficulties of keeping current addresses as lots could have been given, traded or sold to other entities. Mayor Miller commented that the cemetery has been there a long time and there are periods of bad records.

**Marsha Matson, 1104 Beech Street.** Ms. Matson spoke of four generations of family buried in the cemetery. Matson commented on the cemetery being an eyesore and spoke of the streets in Leeds not being an eyesore. Mayor Miller spoke of

comments from several people that the cemetery was an eyesore. The Mayor commented on the bad streets and the 40 years of neglect, which the City is working to resolve.

**Rebeca Peek**, stated her sister was buried in the cemetery. Ms. Peek provided a picture showing the grave site was driven over and the ground has shifted causing the headstone to shift. Mayor informed Ms. Peek to inform the Street Department to repair the headstone.

**Attorney Brunson** stated that the city's employees are protected by the PBJC (Personnel Board of Jefferson County). Any disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the PBJC rules.

**Judy Powell**, spoke of burying Mr. Powell 19 months ago. At this date there is no grass growing on the site and no flowers. Ms. Powell questioned why a bird bath and rose bush in close proximity to her husband's grave site remained. Ms. Powell spoke of removing her husband and parents from their graves and selling her property to move out of Leeds. Ms. Powell spoke of putting grass seed and hay on her husband's gravesite.

**Jimmy Hayes, 7705 Michael Circle**, distributed pictures to Council. Mr. Hayes' son was buried there six years ago and Mr. Hayes placed a rose at the grave site. Hayes brought attention to the disrespect for the people's items and of the city employees not showing any respect while he was looking through the pile to locate items that were removed from the cemetery.

**Ms Freeman** asked to put a halt any further action to decide what will be acceptable to be placed in the cemetery. The Mayor indicated that is exactly what is going to happen.

Mayor spoke of a records search to update property owners.

**Charlotte Carley, Alabama Avenue**, stated that she saw the postings and was told at City Hall to ignore the sign posting.

Unidentified speaker asked when the rules would be posted again.

**Debra Stubblefield, Cullman**, stated her mother and sister are buried there. She asked if the employees are loving and stated her opinion that an angel is not ugly. Mayor Miller again expressed his apologies.

**Ray Middlebrook, 1308 Rosa Parks Circle**, indicated that he attended the city council meeting when the rules were adopted. Mr. Middlebrook asked when the letters were sent out with the Mayor responding that is the problem. Mr. Middlebrook advised against punishment of the employees for doing their job as the rules were approved without sufficient time to pass the message to the people. Mayor responded that would be taken into consideration.

**Debbie Hayes, 7705 Michael Circle**, stated her son is buried there. Ms. Hayes asked if cleaning the cemetery was to save costs, with the mayor saying the rules were not implemented to save costs. Hayes states the cemetery looks an abandoned cemetery and not nice at all. Mayor Miller advised following the existing guidelines until they are revised.

**Hobart Thomas, 8576 Dover Drive**, stated that the Mayor keeps repeating that the employees will be held accountable. Mr. Thomas asked if the Mayor has knowledge of who gave incorrect rules and that person should be held accountable and should be terminated. The Mayor stated that the City will abide by the PBJC rules to deal with the matter.

**Katie Pearson, Leeds**, stated her father is buried in the cemetery. Ms. Pearson reported calling to seek approval for flower vases to be located at the gravesite. Ms. Pearson spoke of not being able to afford what would be acceptable.

**Heather Kelly, 2196 Moss Avenue**, spoke of her family being buried in the cemetery and asked what rules were being followed. Ms. Kelly spoke of the city not showing any heart and that the cemetery looks like a ghost town.

**Lisa Pelham, 8723 Cedar Springs Circle**, spoke of moving to Leeds from Florida as her daughter would like to graduate from Leeds High School. Ms. Pelham's mother is buried there and stated she saw the flier at the cemetery. Ms. Pelham spoke of her daughter purchasing grave markers and that she followed the rules for the markers.

**Councilmember Linda Miller** spoke of having relatives buried in the cemetery. Ms. Miller commented that her family had donated the land for the cemetery. Ms. Miller apologized for the action that was taken and spoke of finding a way to bridge the gap and asks for forgiveness and work to a solution.

**Jr. Kelly, 2196 Moss Avenue**, spoke of respect and also asked how the reimbursement will be handled. Mr. Kelly commented that some city employees do not have respect for the dead and don't have pride for their work. Mayor states the city is working on that matter.

Mayor Miller stated that nobody instructed the employees in the manner in which the action was taken.

**Jimmy Hayes, 7705 Michael Circle**, asked if what is left in the cemetery should be removed. The Mayor said to leave what is there and there will be a notice sent to addresses on record once the rules are revised.

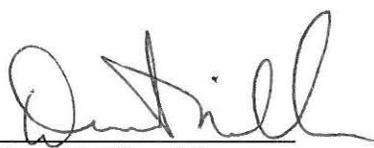
**Butch Adams, Leeds**, spoke of being raised in the Kincaid Quarters with a cemetery behind the cement plant. Mr. Adams asked what has happened to the black cemetery as the white cemetery has been moved. He has been at the site and states the graves are not there. The removals were done in 1941 for the white cemetery. Mayor deferred this matter to the City Attorney to investigate the matter. Mr. Adams also asked if some asphalt had been installed on a street and why it was stopped in the Kincaid area. Mr. Adams and the Mayor set an appointment for Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00AM to go for a ride.

**Unidentified Person** asked about owning a deed and the rights with that deed. The City Attorney responded that the deed holder has interment rights into perpetuity.

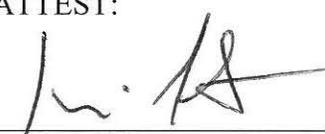
**Councilmember Washington** stated that the action taken by the City employees was not the way it was supposed to be done. The intention was to clean it up. Washington spoke of being asked in the council meetings to clean it up. Washington spoke of instructing the young workers to do the work and they do not have the same respect as some older folks. There was a lapse of supervision to help educate the employees to show respect at the cemetery. Washington spoke of the supervisor's responsibility to teach the respect which should be given.

Mayor Miller stated his appreciation of the large group of people that came to show their opinion and the orderly fashion in which the meeting was conducted.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:32PM.

  
David Miller, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Kevin Fouts, City Clerk