



**REGULAR WORK SESSION MEETING
TUESDAY MAY 30, 2023 @ 5:30 PM
CHERRYVILLE COMMUNITY BUILDING
W.J. ALLRAN JR. COUNCIL CHAMBERS
106 S. JACOB STREET CHERRYVILLE, NC 28021**

The Honorable Mayor H.L. Beam called the meeting to order. Councilmember's Gary Freeman, Malcolm Parker, Jon Abernethy, and Jill Puett were present. City Manager Brian Dalton, City Clerk Paige H. Green, City Attorney Palmer Huffstetler Jr., Public Works Director Chris J. King, Police Chief Brandon Hunsucker, Planning & Zoning Director Alex Blackburn, Asst. Fire Chief Colby Heffner, and Finance Director Dixie Wall were also present. Michael Powell was present for media coverage.

CONSENT AGENDA APPROVAL:

Councilmember Puett made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Councilmember's Freeman and Abernethy seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

CONSENT AGENDA:

CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARING RE: PROPOSED FY 2023 – 2024 BUDGET

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION OR ACTION:

DISCUSSION OF MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SPOUSES, CITY MANAGER BRIAN DALTON:

City Manager Dalton explained that an employee's spouse, that is on the city medical plan, went to Justice Crews and was asking about coverage that the city has with Blue Cross Blue Shield. The spouse coverage in the past have caused our rates to increase more than employees and children that are covered. It was discovered that as of January 1, 2023, the marketplace plans for health care became available to all city employee's dependents. The most the marketplace plans can charge an individual is 9% and the city's plan is currently costing employees 13% for medical coverage for their spouse. He went on to say that the city received a renewal this year that was 14% higher than last year. After some negotiating, BC/BS agreed to a 6% increase and a credit of \$20,000 in premium credit money. Basically a 2.99% increase for the FY 2023 - 2024.

Currently, the city pays 40% of dependent coverage, and annually the city is spending \$36,858.36 for spouses to be covered on the city's plan. A survey of the clerk's list serve showed that of the 32 cities and towns that responded, only 6 of those pay a percentage of dependent care and only 1 pays 100% of employee and dependent care.

Mr. Dalton explained that we have a broker, that is helping our employees that carry their spouses, choose a plan that is actually saving the employee money. At this time the cost to cover a spouse on the city's plan is \$128.00 a month. Several employees have been able to get coverage for their spouse at no cost.

Mr. Dalton asked council to consider several options moving forward. One, consider if they would like to leave the coverage as is, for employees to cover their dependents. Two, drop the 40% for dependent coverage for spouses and employee pay 100%. Third, drop spouses from the plan all together requiring them to reach out to the marketplace for a plan. We do have employees carrying their spouse and their spouse is able to get health care provided to them from their own employer.

This will be on the agenda for June 12, 2023 for consideration.

DISCUSSION OF CONTRACT BETWEEN CITY OF CHERRYVILLE AND PIEDMONT LITHIUM, CITY MANAGER BRIAN DALTON:

Ms. Erin Sanders, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications and Customer Relations for Piedmont Lithium, approached the podium and stated, "Piedmont Lithium is very pleased to be able to offer a Community Development Agreement to the city of Cherryville to benefit the city and it's residents for many years to come. This agreement is part of Piedmont's plans to support the long-term economic development in this region, and to demonstrate Piedmont's commitment to creating shared valued for communities, where we plan to operate starting with Cherryville. The Community Development Agreement has three primary points. First, it confirms that the municipal water that will be required by the proposed project will be provided by the City of Cherryville and purchased by Piedmont Lithium. That will be detailed in a service agreement to be determined. We will also provide one million dollars to help the city restart a recreation department and fund community recreation projects. We also pledge \$500,000 annually for twenty years, for a total of ten million dollars, to the City of Cherryville to support a thriving community, where all residence including our employees and their families can live and work. This pledge will begin with the first shipment of lithium product, which is expected in 2027. The success of the Cherryville community is vitally important to our proposed operations and our current and future employees. We already have employees who live in Cherryville and once we hire the 420+ positions planned for Carolina Lithium, filled with as many local hires as possible, we hope this investment will help ensure that Cherryville remains a healthy and thriving community, where these employees, their families, and all local residents are happy to live and learn. We thank you for your consideration."

Councilmember Abernethy made a motion to approve the contract that was emailed to Mayor Beam and the council. Councilmember Parker seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

DISCUSSION OF HISTORICAL MUSEUM, CITY MANAGER BRIAN DALTON:

City Manager Dalton explained that the ten-day process is now up. He went on to share that back on April 3, that was the last day to receive a bid. On April 3 we did receive a bid for \$263,000. The \$263,000 ad for an upset bid was suppose to run in the Eagle on April 12. The email was sent to the wrong email, and the ad did not run on April 12. On April 12 we received another bid for \$300,000. The \$263,000 bid ran in the Cherryville Eagle on April 19, so after the

ten days were up, we had another bid for \$300,000. With there being questions about when the tens days started and when it ended, and having talked to legal council, having talked to the School of Government, Mr. Dalton recommended that all bids be rejected at this time.

Councilmember Parker made a motion to reject all bids that have been made for the Cherryville Historical Museum. Councilmember Puett seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Councilmember Parker thanked all city employees for the job they did getting the City of Cherryville through the recent storm on May 17, 2023.

Mr. Dalton shared that the Cherryville ABC Board brought a check to city hall for \$30,000.

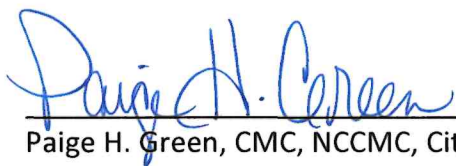
Mr. Dalton also shared that a declaration has been filed with the State and hopefully the city can start filing claims for reimbursement of storm damage.


Councilmember Freeman thanked Patrick O'Leary for sending \$100,000 to the City of Cherryville to help with storm damage.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember Abernethy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Puett seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 6:11 pm.

Adopted this 12 day of June 2023.


Paige H. Green, CMC, NCCMC, City Clerk


H.L. Beam, Mayor

