

ATHENS CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF MEETING

November 26, 2019

The Athens City Council met in called session on November 26, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. with Mayor Burris presiding. The invocation was given by Council Member Pelley; and upon roll call, the following members were present:


Coker, Lockmiller, Pelley, Perkinson, Burris

The following decision was made and ordered made a part of the records of the Athens City Council.

The purpose of the meeting, as issued in the "Notice of Called Meeting" dated November 22, 2019, was read and made a part of these minutes:

NOTICE OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

There will be a special called meeting of the Athens City Council on Tuesday, November 26, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. in the Athens Municipal Building Council Chambers located at 815 North Jackson Street, for the purpose of discussing the funding issue related to the School Board's request for funding the construction and renovation of two schools.

/s/ 
Charles T. Burris, II, Mayor

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NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ON THE FUNDING ISSUE RELATED TO THE SCHOOL BOARD'S REQUEST FOR FUNDING THE CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION OF TWO SCHOOLS

Mayor Burris read the following statement into the record, "For the public's information, called meetings are for emergency or highly irregular situations, where at least two council members or the mayor provide written notice requesting a meeting. Called meetings may only address the issue identified in the notice of the meeting. No other business may be discussed or transacted at a called meeting. Only in the case of public hearing may the public be heard during a called meeting. We are meeting here tonight in a called meeting, requested by Council Member Pelley and agreed to by Council Member Lockmiller. As Mayor, it is my duty to respect the request of my fellow council members and to call this meeting." City Manager Sumner gave a detailed presentation on the history of the project for construction and renovation of two schools and its outlook moving forward. Council Member Pelley stated that he wanted to hold a called meeting because of the timeline for opening the new school. He felt that if the City Council did not approve the funding request as soon as possible, it was going to bump everything down the road. Council members addressed a variety of issues related to project funding, including a potential property tax rate increase, funding for Athens City Middle School improvements, potential building code changes that could affect construction costs, and the possibility of a phased approach to construction. City Attorney Trew explained that most called meetings are held to address an "emergency" situation. Most decisions that are ultimately contested by a citizen group are made during called meetings. It was his recommendation that council act on this issue at a regular council meeting to avoid any legal issues. City Manager Sumner stated the pertinent issue from the School Board's point of view is that they need to be moving ahead with the design. If this is the building, regardless of the whether the City Council and School Board decide to do this project all at once or in phases, the plans are still good, and the design still needs to be made. He believes the Council's intent is to have a building program, the Council will need to discuss an increase in taxes moving forward with a building program as part of the FY2021 budget process, and the School Board should be moving forward as fast as they can on making sure they can make their own timeline. Since the called meeting notice did not include a specific actionable item, Mayor Burris recommended that the Council continue the discussion at its next study session,

scheduled for December 9th. City Manager Sumner suggested the Council could use the intervening time to review the School Board's proposal that they received on November 26th, the day of this called meeting, and get comfortable with it in advance of the study session. He stated that he had spoken to Dr. Melanie Miller earlier in the day and they agreed they were comfortable with continuing the discussion during the next study session rather than holding additional called meetings. **A motion was made by Council Member Coker, seconded by Vice Mayor Perkinson, to adjourn this discussion until the December 9th Study Session.** The motion was approved by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Coker, Lockmiller, Pelley, Perkinson, Burris
NAYS: None

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting and upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.



C. SETH SUMNER, City Manager



CHARLES T. BURRIS, II, Mayor