

Minutes
Special Called Council Meeting
Thursday, June 18, 2020
6:00 p.m.

Members present were Mayor Terry Merritt, Council Members Taft Matney, Carol King, Michael Reynolds and Diane Kuzniar. Councilman Dale Back was out of town. City Administrator Brandon Madden was also present.

1. Call to order

Mayor Terry Merritt

- a. Invocation- Councilman Matney
- b. Pledge of Allegiance- Councilman Matney
- c. Welcome- Mayor Merritt

2. Unfinished Business

Ordinances - Second Reading

- a. Consideration and action on an Ordinance to Provide Appropriations for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2020 and Ending June 30, 2021 for Ordinary and Other City Purposes; to Provide for a Levy of Taxes on all Taxable Property in the City of Mauldin for all City Purposes, Including Sufficient Tax for any Principal and Interest on Outstanding Indebtedness Maturing in the Fiscal Year; to Provide for the Expenditure of Said Taxes And Other Revenues Coming to the City During the Fiscal Year.

Chairman Reynolds made a motion to accept the FY 2021 budget ordinance on second reading. Councilwoman King seconded the motion. Chairman Reynolds said there were several budget workshops, and this provides for the future for investment in infrastructure and investments in our employees. He thanked Mr. Madden and Mrs. Abercrombie for their hard work on the budget. Mayor Merritt said this is the eighth or ninth year in which there has been no tax increase. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Standing Committee Items

- b. Consideration and action on a Resolution for the Purpose of Establishing the Mauldin Public Facilities Corporation, Stating its Purposes and Appointing the Members to the Board of Directors of the Corporation

This is a resolution to establish a Public Facilities Corporation and appoint a Board of Directors of this corporation. This board is formed because of the IPRB revenue bond and the board will make bond payments on the City's behalf. This is not a board with influence or administrative responsibilities, it is strictly a part of this bond

for the pedestrian bridge. City Administrator Madden passed out some ballots for voting. There are several names to be considered. The names of the candidates are John Center, Allen Chavis, Jessie Winchester, Cristina Ortiz, Rodney Neely, Diana Gracely.

Each Council Member will choose three members for the board. Diana Gracely was appointed outright and there was a three-way tie with Allen Chavis, Rodney Neely, and Cristina Ortiz. Another vote was cast for two out of those three.

Rodney Neely and Cristina Ortiz were appointed to the board as well as Diana Gracely.

Chairman Reynolds made a motion to accept the resolution as presented. Councilman Matney seconded the motion and the vote was 4-1 with Mayor Merritt dissenting.

3. Public Comment

Derrick Quarles: Good evening. My name is Derrick Quarles. I reside at 182 Bonnie Woods Drive in Greenville. When Mr. Matney prayed tonight, he said that all of us were made in God's image. I hope and pray that is what people believe because we are all made in God's image. One of the members of Council has made some very derogatory comments on his Facebook page that have now gone viral. I am here tonight to speak on that and expressly on the posts he made recently. I would like to share these posts with you in case you have not seen them. I would like to read what I have.

One of the posts said I wondered why this issue of racial inequality was not fixed when we had a black President in office for eight years. He then says, if this symbol represents racism, which is the Confederate flag, then so do these, which is NAACP, which does not, BET, which it is not, Black History Month, which is not, UNCF, Hispanic Heritage Month, and so on and so forth, and the Democratic Party. He then posts how does a statue that has stood in the same place for 100 years suddenly become offensive and men who walk around in public with their ass showing is not offensive? Are people really this ignorant? There is a picture of a statue and a picture of a black man with his pants down.

There are several others and I will not read them, but they were very hurtful to myself and the entire black community I believe, especially with all the racial tension that is happening right now in our nation. I think that all of us have a duty, especially public officials have a duty, to be honorable and respectful to our constituents, regardless of our personal beliefs. What is most concerning to me is that Councilman Black serves on the Public Safety Committee. I believe that committee considers issues relative to law enforcement and crime prevention. It scares me especially knowing he is on that committee to know what advice he gives to law

enforcement especially as it relates to black people. I have absolutely no confidence in Mr. Black's ability to be impartial to his constituents or to any members of the Mauldin community. I realize as public officials there is not much you can do in terms of asking him to resign, but I hope you would encourage him to resign from his office as we will be pushing for at this time. Mauldin has a population of nearly a quarter of blacks here, and I believe I speak for all of them in saying that Mr. Black is incompetent to lead.

Bruce Wilson: Good evening, Council. My name is Bruce Wilson and I am the founder of Fighting Injustice Together based out of Greenville, South Carolina. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. Just as Mr. Quarles had brought up earlier, I am here to discuss Mr. Black, who is a Council Member. Of course, I understand that as an elected position, this body really has no control over who is elected. What this body does have, and I believe the Mayor would have, is the ability to place individuals on certain committees. I understand Mr. Black is on Public Safety, and if I am correct, I think that would have something to do with law enforcement. And we know today what is going on in this country, in this nation, and across the world, and even here in Greenville or Mauldin.

It is sad when we can see a man get murdered on television with a knee on his neck for almost nine minutes. And then to have a Councilman, an elected official who should be speaking for us, standing up for us, not just certain groups of the population, but for the whole population, to have those comments, to put the NAACP, who has done tremendous work for over one hundred years for this nation, in the same category as someone with the KKK. I think we can all say that is not right, and I would hope that racism does not have a place in politics. Those need to be separated.

I could care less what your politics are, but I do care if you are a racist because I am a black man and I have black children in this country. Tomorrow we celebrate Freedom Day, Juneteenth, but yet I am standing here in 2020 in front of this body asking you to censor one of your own because of racial comments. Because of bigotry and racism that was posted. I am hoping this is a wake-up call to this body. I have never had to come before this body, but I assure you that Mauldin will be in the forefront of any activities I pursue. I hope you understand this is serious. Anytime we see racism rear its nasty head, we plan to get rid of it, to cut it off. It is a cancer and we cannot continue in today's age to allow it to grow. I thank you for the opportunity to speak and I hope this body takes this matter seriously, because we are taking it seriously. Thank you, Council.

Patrick Tate: Thank you. My name is Patrick Tate. I am a Pastor, and I live in Greenville, South Carolina. Mr. Madden. My reason for coming today, first and foremost, as the gentlemen just spoke about earlier, is having a heart of love. I graduated from Mauldin High School in 1982, and I still carry Mauldin in my heart. I was here when Chief Sherbert was here. I coached his son. I taught at the high school and I served my country in the Navy for 13 years. I served under a flag that had no color. I was in a war and when we went on the ship, all we knew was one body, one mind and one heart.

It was very offensive for anyone, no matter what color you are either, for the climate that is going on at this particular time. What I was taught is, how I trained in the military was to be a leader and to serve as a leader. This Council Member has been elected to serve as a leader and he has failed at that. To toe the line, as we would call it, to stand up before your constituents, to which he is not today, to say I am sorry, I apologize, and I was wrong. I missed the mark, something.

You have a community who is looking upon you, because I have followed this community since 1986 when I graduated. A beautiful community. I still give to my high school. I am still a Maverick. I coached two of these young men in here and they held me accountable. Today I am still held accountable to them because of who I am. I have five children, the youngest being 22, and what they know from their father is, do the right thing at the right time. Do not just do the right thing, do it when it is right. He has not done it.

The reason you see the people here today, and I applaud them, is they are freedom fighters. What they are saying is enough is not just enough, it is time out for the comments. If you have that in your heart, you should not be serving people who you say come together commonly for one cause under your roof to say the Mayor doesn't stand for it, the Council doesn't stand for it, and your City Manager doesn't stand for it because he looks like me. At the end of the day, every time something like this comes up, it does not matter if it is Tyler, Texas, this is what the response will be. And it will be out of respect. I bring love as a Pastor to say I cannot hate, that is not my calling, however, I can tell you he needs to stand forth and toe the line and account for his words, what he says, and what he believes. Thank you Mayor and Council.

Mr. Chandler: Good evening Council. I grew up on Old Mill Road in Mauldin. I want to tell you a little story. This is the best way to put it to you why I am here tonight. When I was ten years old, I do not know if you remember, but Toys R Us put out a kind of pogo ball. You put your feet on both sides of it and bounced up and down. My dad would not let us go to the road, but I happened to bounce down really close to the road and my sister followed me. A big white pickup truck pulled up with a Confederate flag on it. A white gentleman yelled at me and said that was not made for you n words.

I went and played at Mauldin High School. I remember when the Chambers kids went and spray painted the n words all over the walls and Kevin Garnett and the guys older than me got in a fight with them and you know the history behind that. So, to see how this representative from where I grew up, post or re-post anything on that matter, is very hurting to me. And then the fact that he works out in the gym where I work out at and my mom and dad, is very, very disturbing to me.

My worry is that birds of a feather flock together. That is my worry. I have a daughter and I have to drive through this town. Everyone knows this town is famous for if you speed through this town you are going to get a ticket. So, what I am asking of you is, it takes a lot of gumption to tell on a friend and put them in jail. It

takes a lot of cohunes as someone would say to use another word. Tell him he needs to resign. For every day that I am living, till I pass away, I am going to work to get him off of this board. Even if I have to run for Councilman here. Because I will be damned if I have to worry about my daughter. Do I want her to have that experience that lasted me the rest of my life? I am forty years old now and that is what I remember.

I remember jogging on the track at Mauldin High School and the Chambers kid again rode around and yelled the n word again and drove off. And now we are here again with this same mess. I did not choose to be black. I was born that way. But I choose to love everybody and have respect for everybody. If you feel that way, that is fine. I am not in the business of changing your heart. But you should not be an elected official having to serve a diverse community as Mauldin is growing to be. We have more black hair salons, black businesses and black restaurants, Asian businesses, Indian businesses, all this stuff coming to Mauldin and then we have this foolishness going on by an ignorant person.

I challenge him and you all to have the gumption to do something with him. I challenge him to sit down and have a conversation about the Confederate flag, how the Confederacy lost the war and the flag was put away. The flag did not come back out until the Civil Rights movement started because they wanted to let it be known that we are the knee on your neck, that you do not have equal rights. Tell them to come talk to me. I will leave my number. I left my number on his answering machine. I challenge you. I am going to hold you all accountable. If you all do not do it, I am going to run against each and every last one of you to get you out from up there. Thank you for your time.

4. Council Requests- None

5. Adjournment- Mayor Merritt adjourned the meeting at 6:31p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cindy Miller
Municipal Clerk