

**MINUTES**  
**Goshen City Council**  
**January 03, 2023 at 5:30pm**  
**Goshen Community Building, 244 Clark Street**

**Special Meeting Called**

1. **First Order:** Brian Hogue swore in new Mayor, Russell Stroud. All council members repeated oath of office. All members confirmed their date entered into office as well as their office expiration date.
2. **Call to Order:** Mayor Stroud called the meeting to order approximately 5 min after time of recording was stated (5:35pm)
3. **Roll Call:** Paula Anderson, Colton Martin, John Vaillancourt, Birch Wright, and Jamie Van Becelaere were all present. Shawn Mayfield was not present.
4. **Approval of Agenda:** Motion to approve agenda sent through by John Vaillancourt and Jamie Van Becelaere seconded the motion.
5. **Executive Session Discussion:** Protocol on how to open executive sessions and why executive sessions should being called to order - pertaining to city hall employees. Details of conversation led to the final determination that executive sessions, in this instance, may only be called pertaining to specific employees and their termination and NOT procedure or policy. Further discussion about Ordinance 166 pertaining to notification of city council for the employment or termination of any employee(s). Ordinance 166 states that notification of termination or employment of person(s) needs to be sent to council members before actions are implemented. Jamie Van Becelaere stated that the Mayor would be terminating an employee and that executive session needed to be implemented. Mayor Stroud and Brian Hogue agreed. Motion to go into executive session motioned by Jamie Van Becelaere and seconded by John Vaillancourt, motion carried.

\*\*\*\* City Council goes to Executive Session\*\*\*\*

## City Council Returns:

**6. Regards to Executive Meeting:** Jamie Van Becelaere states that discussion was made on a personnel member but that no action was taken.

**7. Ordinance 166:** Jamie Van Becelaere asks for a motion of appeal Ordinance 166, to move control of hiring an employee to City Council for all future employees. All details are to be included in the motion to hire. Also asks that termination requests be sent by the Mayor or department head to City Council, in writing, including all back up documents.

Brian Hogue advises that this must be added to the next meeting agenda and a new ordinance must be implemented. Brian states that this does not include department heads. Council asks Brian Hogue for a breakdown interpretation of Ordinance 166 pertaining to employment. The opinion is that the council has to be notified *prior* to hiring and firing employees. Brian Hogue confirms this.

Mayor Stroud states that Ordinance 171 would need to be amended because of the way the city is run via this ordinance.

Birch Wright states that he is not at city hall every day, does not know what everyone does daily, and states it would be challenging for the city council members to approve or not approve what each job task includes. He repeats part of Ordinance 166 that states city council needs to be informed and that if the language needs to be stronger, so be it, but he does not want to be responsible for hiring and firing an employee.

Council member states why have that done if it is already an ordinance. However, he was not notified of hiring an employee or the potential termination of an employee and asks about ramifications for this.

The Mayor accepts responsibility for misreading the beginning of the ordinance "as desires" instead of the end "shall" in reference to communicating hiring and terminating employees. The mayor agrees to communicate and assures that all proposed decisions will go to the council before the hiring and firing of employees.

Ramifications are questioned again. Brian Hogue states there are no known ramifications.

The city council agrees to confirm and validate city employee applications, but the decision-making authority falls on the mayor or department head unless an executive session is called to discuss it further.

Linda Moore confirms that during executive session the council came back with no decision being made. Linda asks if she is being terminated. Mayor Stroud replies that due to personnel issues with consultation from Arkansas Municipal League attorney and the city attorney and that her termination followed all EEOC guidelines.

Replacement of Linda's position has been filled by KaSeana Williams, to whom a resume has been submitted and is someone who can completely fulfil the duties of Linda Moore. Currently, the hours of the position is unknown.

**8. Further discussing of Lora Nanak's continued employment:** Mayor Stroud states that Lora will be a continued employee. Jamie Van Becelaere states that there was a hostile environment implemented and that Lora was singled out to be the one who was the victim of the hostile work environment. Mayor Stroud explained that he was in the office and was transparent and was there to learn the position and learn what the responsibilities of the city employees were. He was unaware of any hostile work environments for Lora.

Council goes back and forth pertaining to the employment of Linda and the worth she brings to the City of Goshen and her rightful termination as well and Lora's continued employment.

Things are brought back up about the Mayors unfulfillment of Ordinance 166 and the steps for Mayoral resignation. Mayor Stroud accepts responsibility and agrees to go through whatever steps are necessary to update Ordinance 166.

Jamie Van Becelaere stated that Lora Nanak was voted in as a department head, whereas Brian Hogue declined this and stated that the council adopted a form for specific department and that it didn't go into effect for 90 days at which point the position would be filled. Pursuant to the statute the Mayor would elect someone to fulfill that position and that the council could override with that with a 2/3 vote.

Jamie Van Becelaere also asked what would happen if all administrative positions were not there. Mayor Stroud stated that would be most unfortunate, again stated it was not his intention to have Lora leave but if she did resign from her position Mayor Stroud said that he would reach out to the Arkansas Municipal League to replace the position temporarily.

Sharon Baggett was brought up to temporarily fill the position, and Linda Moore asked about her legal standings with the city if it would be a right choice to bring her into the office. Mayor Stroud stated that he would not be bringing her back into the office but would feel safe asking her questions to help run the office smoothly.

**9. Employee Personnel Files:** No written policy on handling access to those. Jamie asked Brian

about writing an ordinance on that. These are the personal files under lock and key. According to the Arkansas Municipal league there is a personnel file ordinance for job descriptions. The council finds that job descriptions would be public knowledge. Brian states that he can bring all the information to write an ordinance on access to personnel files, not just job descriptions.

The council ends with a request for a resume of newest administrative employee "Rikki" so they may verify that she is qualified for the position.

Mayor Stroud agrees to put the City of Goshen's need before his own needs.

**10. Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn made by Jamie Van Becelaere and seconded by John Vaillancourt. Meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.

  
Marjorie Vaillancourt  
Recorder/Treasurer

  
Russell Stroud  
Mayor