

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY OF SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA
SPECIAL MEETING
October 20, 2005

The special meeting of the City Council of the City of Shreveport, State of Louisiana, was called to order by Chairman James Edward Green at 11:14 p.m., Thursday, October 20, 2005, in Government Chambers in Government Plaza (505 Travis Street).

Invocation was given by Councilman Jeffrey Hogan.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Calvin B. Lester, Jr.

On roll call, the following members were Present: Councilmen Lester, Walford, Carmody, Hogan, Green, and Jackson. 6. Absent: None.

The meeting was called pursuant to the following:

PUBLIC NOTICE
SPECIAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Shreveport City Council will hold a Special Meeting Thursday, October 20, 2005 at 11:00 a.m. in the Governmental Plaza Chamber, 505 Travis Street.

The following agenda item will be considered by the Council:

Appointment of an interim member to fill the vacant District D seat on the City Council until a new member is elected;

No other business will be conducted at the meeting.

James E. Green, Chairman

Public Comments:

Councilman Green: We would like to say this is a public meeting and the public has a right to speak and we have some that have signed up. At this time if you would like to speak, feel free. You have three minutes; each applicant will also have five minutes if you choose to speak again. And so what we will do at this time is start down the list and as I call your name you can feel free to come and speak, it is your choice.

Applicant: Artis Cash (Did not speak)

Applicant: Hersy Jones, Jr. (Spoke)

Applicant: Robert Dunton (Did not speak)

Applicant: Donald Sorrells (Did not speak)

Applicant: Cynthia Norton Robertson (Did not speak)

Applicant: Philip B. Serio, Jr. (Spoke)

Applicant: H. Dean Brady, Sr. (Did not speak)

Applicant: Gard Wayt (Spoke)

Applicant: Aubrey Booth Wynn, III (Spoke)

Applicant: D. Scott Hughes (Spoke)

Supporter: Mr. Herbert Lance, Jr. (Spoke on behalf of Dr. Artis Cash)

Supporter: Mr. John Wilson (Spoke on behalf of Philip Serio)

Supporter: Ms. Jackie Moore (Spoke on behalf of Philip Serio)

(Chris Gorman withdrew his application and Robert Dunton was an applicant but he was not present at the meeting and he did not speak)

Councilman Green: Thank you. Thank you that ends our public comments and also that ends the presentation from each applicant. At this time the first nomination will go to Councilman Jeff Hogan.

Councilman Hogan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nothing like being put on the spot, in fact I – was there a comment, Mr. Jackson?

Councilman Jackson: Mr. Chairman, let me –

Councilman Green: Yes sir.

Councilman Jackson: Let me apologize, Mr. Chairman. I didn't know we were going to – I just – I had just some basic comments, I didn't know we were going to --

Councilman Green: Okay, fine. I'm sorry. I didn't know if we had any comments, we'll start with Councilman Carmody.

Councilman Carmody: Very quickly, and I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to say this the other day. I wanted to commend every one of you who is offered yourself to be considered for this position. It's certainly not an easy thing to do. All of you seem to be fine candidates and I would encourage you to consider participation in the fall election for this position. You obviously have a desire to serve your district. My feeling was, is that really the district should have their choice of who they want to serve in a referendum. It's unfortunate that it did not occur that way, but again, I applauded you and as I mentioned to at least one of the candidates, I don't think I could pay my friends to come down and say the things that were said about you by your friends, and that I think is a wonderful thing. So again, thank you all, and please keep Shreveport in your prayers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Councilman Green: Mr. Jackson.

Councilman Jackson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Councilman Carmody has basically said what my comments were going to be which is in regards to the encouraging those who are here not to let the flames of your desire to serve wane between now and next October. I hope that there is this much interest in the position when it means you got to give your full time and effort to going out to find out what the people who live in the district think, because of the democratic process, I would suggest to you, we have been placed in a very precarious position. You know, I wish, like many of you, that we would have gotten it done Tuesday, but we are here today on Thursday and we have to operate, this council does, as a unit. While I may have disagreed with ending the meeting I also

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pledged not to talk publicly about whether or not I was disappointed and we are not mercenaries, political mercenaries who go out there and run solo and do things that we want to do as some kind of political mercenaries or long rangers, if you will. We have the struggle of trying to operate as a unit. One of the real major, at least in my opinion, issues that municipalities have is, we have districts, and so, because we have districts we almost have forsaken the Charter in many instances because the Charter says nothing to use about representing districts. The Charter says we ought to represent the City of Shreveport and that's a challenge to all to lose a lot of our parochial mentality that says, you know, it's about my area of town and that's what matters. Those lines have not become just lines of distinction to distinguish where our districts were but they have become lines of division to suggest that I'm territorial and these are the areas that are important to me and we have been forced into that thought process, every person up here, me, I can speak for myself, "guilty" of having said I want to find out what's important to District "G". Well you know I felt like that's what the people elected me to do and the people from District "G" to some degree have that same mentality; however, those of us who accept this responsibility, generally we were talking earlier about the responsibility that we accept, we accept the responsibility of upholding the Charter.

This happens to be one of the nuances in the Charter that does not happen regularly, and thank God it doesn't happen regularly. This is one of those scenarios that is an exception to the things that we do and yes, it's hard but it's not impossible and that's the difference between leadership and the lack thereof; the difficult will do, the impossible we strive for. Those of us who suggest that we have given ourselves to leadership whether it is the governor or this body, someone other than that the constituents of District "D" have been asked to substitute their judgment for the will of the constituents and I would suggest that's always a precarious situation. I'm not intimately knowledgeable of all those things that people in District "D" perhaps have as issues, so it puts me in a position of having to make a decision -- that whether we want to call it or not become purely a decision of politics at this point. Not many people will say it but at the end of the day that is what it comes down to because whoever is elected from that district, they're elected.

The last councilman who was elected from that district did not -- was not the overwhelming choice of everybody who was in that district, because when you had a primary, 70% of the people said that he was not their candidate and then when you reduced it down to two people then the people say well we got to find whoever we think will serve us best out of these two. Seventy percent of the people have to say that's not my candidate but we got to go with that and we got to accept that leadership.

We've been put in that same position now trying to select people and my fear is that we select folks and those folks will be now beholding to the people who elected them. That's what a district is about, you're beholding to the folks who elect you. In this situation the question becomes the person being beholding to the person who appoint them or elect them. It's a tough situation whether the governor were to do it, or whoever. No, I don't want to abdicate our responsibility to the governor and it has nothing to do with the fact that she's busy doing other stuff, to me that is not even important. I think leadership suggests that we have a tough job to do, but that's why you elect people. You don't elect people to come and do the Pledge of Allegiance -- anybody can do that. You don't elect people to come and answer the role call -- anybody can do that but, between the role call and the adjournment there's some difficult issues that we have to face and we have to do so like adults and as leaders. It's tough but it's not something that's impossible for this council to do and any suggestion otherwise I think is a mischaracterization of what this council can do.

I have confidence in every one of these gentlemen who happen to serve with me and I look forward to serving with whoever else will come.

We all got different reasons of why we support different candidates, sometimes in politics it's never what it looks like and so I would suggest to you that it is our -- we are indebted to the citizens of this city to make this decision not one, I will tell you on record publicly, not one I want to make. Not one I think I'm appropriately or adequately in my opinion qualify to make in the sense that this is really about representing some geographic area to which I have no intimate knowledge of; however, it is our responsibility. I don't shirk it nor do I desire to have it but I do not shirk it and I do think that we will make a decision and I hope that those of you who are here can appreciate that perhaps if you were sitting in this seat it may seem easy to you but everything is not always what it seems like and I want to applaud these gentlemen on this council who have each individually and I might add collectively, had some conversation and probably not to your surprise don't agree about a whole lot of the candidates or different issues or all of those things, but I think we got a frame work of responsibility that suggest to us we have to make a decision today or to abdicate it to someone else particularly to the governor in this instance in my opinion, would exhibit ineptitude on this council's part an impotence that would be embarrassing to this city. So, I encourage you to just let us go through the process and I think that when it's all over we would have done what is our responsibility to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Councilman Green: Thank you. Mr. Hogan.

Councilman Hogan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of words, I would like to echo what has already been said. A lot of sacrifices have been made for people to be here today. There were important meetings for people to go to. There are a lot of other things that were responsibilities of people and I appreciate everyone here today, the comments that have been made and the majority of the candidates remaining are here today. And I just like to say also in reference to -- someone said about the prayers -- that I appreciate the opportunity and the privilege that we have to pray. I hope it is something that we will never lose, no matter who sits in these seats or who sits in the state legislator or who sits in the White House. I believe the men that formed this country believed in prayer, that they were men of prayer and they practiced praying. In fact, I have read in our history books that at times it would be a special meeting, say the House of Representatives and the men were known to pray for three hours before the meeting or before a vote and so I appreciate personally and publicly the privilege of prayer and I have experience the power of it in my own life. You know and if we indeed believe in the God of this universe -- in fact each of us up here, Mr. Green made a reference a moment ago to pray to our God, I believe I can safely say that what he meant was praying to the one true God, the creator of heaven and earth. And if we indeed believe that, I would like to say that we trust in the word that says, we know that all things work together for good, to those who love the Lord, to those who heard the call according to his purpose. And so I would like to

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say that – remind us of that verse that, you know, we didn't understand what was going on Tuesday but we are back today and I feel certain as Mr. Jackson just said a moment ago that we will indeed reach a decision today. Thank you.

Councilman Green: Mr. Lester.

Councilman Lester: Thank you Mr. Chairman, Members. I would take just a moment to disagree with one thing Councilman Hogan said, the last thing he said. I understood exactly what I was doing Tuesday, others may not have. The fact of the matter is we have been given a list of fine folks that have presented themselves for the position of City Councilman for District D. We had an opportunity to review their resumes'. We had an opportunity to speak to them, those of us that took the opportunity. We had the opportunity to call them. We had the opportunity to sit with them. We had the opportunity to review their references, their friends, their neighbors and we listened to the presentations that were made dutifully and yet we didn't make a decision, some of us did, some of us didn't. To criticize our chairman because he ended the meeting abruptly, I think that is a bit unfair because at the end of the day, he asked for nominations. We knew what we were coming here for. We didn't come to the meeting to decide where we were going to do lunch. We came to the meeting to decide who we thought was going to be the best councilman for District D and I would assume and I would hope that I'm not assuming that all of us had done our homework. The Chairman asked for nominations, there was a nomination. He asked – that one didn't pass. He asked for another nomination. That one didn't get a second and then before he closed the meeting he said, are there any more nominations and there was a hush that fell across the crowd. So what was he to do? Obviously, he had voted and expressed himself. Those that wanted to express themselves for the candidate that they thought was best had expressed themselves and so rather than to waste our time or more importantly the citizens time, he says, well evidently this council is not ready to make decision and he adjourned the meeting and said lets come back at another time. So I think this idea that he ended the meeting abruptly, I think that is a bit unfair because everyone had an opportunity to listen, voice their opinion, some people did, some didn't.

I have gotten a number of e-mails – before I address that, let me say this, one of the hardest things and one of the most difficult things any person can ever do is hold himself out for public office. There is no more personal thing that you can do because you are offering yourself. The best of you, the worst of you, whatever it is that you are, you are offering yourself to a group of people and when you are accepted it's the greatest thing in the world and when you are rejected it is the worst thing in the world but I wanted to echo the comments that had been made previously to those folks that have said, you know what, I want to answer the call and I want to give some leadership to my particular area. There is nothing but honor in that. I have gotten a number of e-mails from folks in advocacy of different candidates and appreciate all of them and I read all of them. But then I have gotten a number of e-mails that are unfortunately filled with sophomoric, racial undertones and it has disappointed me because it tells me that even today, even today we still have some of those issues going on and we say that we want to have a better Shreveport. We say that we want to move forward but then we can say because a person has a certain hue to their skin that they are not qualified or they have a certain hue to their skin that is different from someone else and they are less then qualified, in the 21st century. Shreveport has got to grow up. You know, I think it was Peter The Great who was the Czar of Russia that said he was going to drag mother Russia into the, I think it was the 19th century even if he had to do it kicking and screaming. And so at a certain point some of us are going to have to bring the City of Shreveport into the 21st century. Unfortunately, it is going to be with a lot of kicking and screaming but it has got to happen if our city is going to truly move forward. At the end of the day, I think the citizens expect certain things of us on this council and I think they have a right to. I think they have a right to expect that we are going to come up here prepared. I think they have a right to expect us to listen. I think they have a right to expect for us to use our best judgment and I think they have a right to ask us and expect us to make decisions and not to pass and not to kick it to the governor or kick it to the Mayor or say, you know, I simply refuse to do this. At a certain point you got to get beyond race, you got to get beyond politics, you got to get beyond ideology and make a decision based on your best judgment. And if people support that decision, they will and if they don't like that decision, they will. But the one thing that I think our citizens deserve is for us to govern and if we are going to govern we are going to have to reach a consensus even if it means, Mr. Chairman, we have to get there kicking and screaming. Thank you.

Councilman Walford: One thing about being last over here is everybody has been very eloquent in making their comments and there is no point repeating every thing. One thing I think both the City of Shreveport and the citizens of District D are very fortunate that we have such a long list of qualified and more important, willing applicants for the position. Unfortunately, that makes our job all the more difficult to narrow that down and come to a consensus but I applaud each and every one of you for taking the interest and the willingness to serve and you have heard in several comments that it is not always easy to be up here and unfortunately sometimes the media isn't real nice to you. Is that a good way to put it Mr. Lester? You and I have experienced that. But I do, I applaud the willingness to step forward and I assure you that I will give each and every one of you my serious consideration and I hope that we can move forward and come to a decision that will benefit District D and will benefit the City of Shreveport. I feel like it was wrong for the district to be so long without representation but as Mr. Jackson I believe said, that wasn't our fault. That is not something that we can do anything about. So now we are here and I'm confident that with some effort we can vacate the chambers by, what time Mr. Chairman, 2:00 o'clock? We will do our best. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Councilman Green: I would just like to say on Tuesday that I was very aware of what I was doing. I was not lost. I run a tight meeting, council meeting. They don't last too long unless there is something that over powers us but I was well aware. I talked to Mr. Thompson before and got instructions from him that if in fact we did not get a person on Tuesday, when was the last day and of course the last day is today. So, once I asked for the nominations and nobody nominates then it's time to go home. I would like to commend all of you. You have done a great job. I wish I could select each one of you but that's not possible. Today, what we will do is we will appoint "a" person. District D will select "the" person in the next election. I was in hopes that we will have an election in April but for whatever reason that's not going to happen. But today we will make the appointment for "a" person. After we make that appointment for a person you will in turn make he or she "the"

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person on next year when the vote is called. "The" person for "the" district will be selected. And again, I would like to commend all of you for applying and at this time we are going to make ready to move to nominations and after the nominations Judge Scott is here to swear "a" person and that will become "the" person. Judge Scott, are you here? Okay. And if in fact anybody gets out of line then he will charge you with contempt (*laughter*) and I just want to make that perfectly clear. And the reason that I had offered the nomination to Councilman Hogan is because he was the first person who talked to me about nominating someone. So today is "the" day to make "a" selection.

Councilman Hogan: Thank you Mr. Chairman, and with that I would like to nominate Mr. Aubrey Booth Wynn, III.

Councilman Hogan nominated Aubrey Booth Wynn, III to fill the vacant District D Seat, seconded by Councilman Carmody. The nomination failed by the following vote: Nays: Councilmen Lester, Walford, Green, and Jackson. 4. Ayes: Councilmen Carmody and Hogan. 2.

Councilman Walford: Mr. Chairman, I nominate Mr. Phil Serio.

Councilman Walford nominated Philip Serio to fill the vacant District D Seat, seconded by Councilman Jackson. The nomination failed by the following vote: Nays: Councilmen Lester, Walford, Hogan, Green, and Jackson. 5. Ayes: Councilman Carmody. 1.

Councilman Green: Are there any other nominations?

Councilman Hogan: Mr. Chairman, I would like to nominate Mr. Gard Wayt.

Councilman Hogan nominated Gard Wayt to fill the vacant District D Seat, seconded by Councilman Walford. The nomination failed by the following vote: Nays: Councilmen Lester, Carmody, Green, and Jackson. 4. Ayes: Councilmen Walford and Hogan. 2.

Councilman Lester: Mr. Chairman, I nominate Hersy Jones.

Councilman Lester nominated Hersy Jones to fill the vacant District D Seat, seconded by Councilman Jackson. The nomination failed by the following vote: Nays: Councilmen Walford, Carmody, and Hogan. 3. Ayes: Councilmen Lester, Green, and Jackson. 3.

Councilman Jackson: Mr. Chairman, I would nominate Ms. Cynthia Norton Robertson.

Councilman Jackson nominated Cynthia Norton Robertson to fill the vacant District D Seat, seconded by Councilman Green. The nomination was approved by the following vote: Ayes: Councilmen Lester, Walford, Green, and Jackson. 4. Nays: Councilmen Carmody, and Hogan. 2.

Councilman Green: She has shocked the world. Come on up Ms. Robertson. She is looking at the score as to say, am I looking at that right?

Ms. Robertson: I would like to thank the Council, thank all of the candidates and everyone that is here. I may call you for advice.

Councilman Green: Whatever comments you would like to make at this time and then –

Ms. Robertson: I'm kind of surprised. I'm just standing in shock but I'm really ready to get started and start looking at some of the issues and getting District D back in the seat, get it going.

Councilman Green: Ms. Robertson, before you make any other comments I would like to say this, that miracles do happen and what I would like to do as Chair since we have made a selection, I would ask that we would call for the vote again. That if in fact the vote would go down 6/0.

Councilman Walford: Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a motion for reconsideration of Ms. Robertson. So we are first voting on the vote to reconsider and I would urge a yes vote.

Councilman Green: You are still going to be it. Just wait until we get the vote right.

Motion by Councilman Walford, seconded by Councilman Jackson for reconsideration of Ms. Robertson. Motion approved by the following vote: Ayes: Councilmen Lester, Walford, Carmody, Hogan, Green, and Jackson. 6. Nays: None.

Councilman Walford: Mr. Chairman, at this time I would make a motion for Mrs. Robertson.

Motion by Councilman Walford, seconded by Councilman Carmody for Mrs. Cynthia Norton Robertson to fill the vacant District D Seat. Motion approved by the following vote: Ayes: Councilmen Lester, Walford, Carmody, Hogan, Green, and Jackson. 6. Nays: None.

Councilman Green: You have any comments?

Councilwoman Robertson: Shreveport is ready to start.

Mrs. Cynthia Norton Robertson was administered the Oath of Office by Charles R. Scott, Chief Judge, First Judicial District Court of Caddo Parish, Louisiana

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at approximately 11:55 a.m.

James Edward Green, Chairman

Arthur G. Thompson, Clerk of Council