

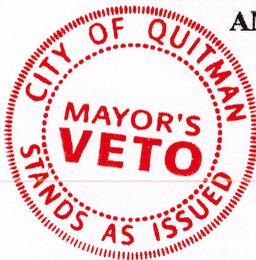
STEVE WATKINS, MAYOR  
NAOMI SHEPHERD, CITY CLERK



ALDERMAN:  
JOE BROOKS, WARD 1  
BRIDGETT M. PETERS, WARD 2  
RONALD HOLLOWAY, WARD 3  
STEVE NEELY, WARD 4  
HARRY WHEAT III, AT-LARGE

Veto Message from the Mayor to the City of Quitman Board of Aldermen  
Date Issued: June 23, 2023  
Veto Message No. 006

**CONCERNING THE MOTION MADE BY ALDERMAN STEVE NEELY  
AND SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN BRIDGETT PETERS  
IN RESPONSE TO:**



**ORDER TO DISOLVE  
THE CITY OF QUITMAN  
MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION**

RECEIVED  
JUN 23 2023  
CITY OF QUITMAN

During the Regular Board of Alderman meeting for June 20, 2023, at the appropriate time of discussion for Agenda Item Number 9.b., I announced to the board that the Quitman Main Street Association was awarded the FY24 Visit Mississippi Tourism Grant, in the amount of \$2,000.00, to be used for the City of Quitman 2023 Ole Tyme Christmas Festival. Alderman Steve Neely then asked the City Clerk how much money remained in the Main Street budget. The City Clerk responded: "About eighty five hundred dollars."

**ALDERMAN STEVE NEELY then made the following motion:**

***"I make the motion to dissolve the Main Street Program and transfer those funds back into our General Fund."***

**ALDERWOMAN BRIDGETT PETERS seconded the motion,**

**and a roll call vote was taken as follows:**

Ward 1 Alderman Joe Brooks	Voted	NO
Ward 2 Alderwoman Bridgett Peters	Voted	YES
Ward 4 Alderman Steve Neely	Voted	YES
Alderman At Large Harry Wheat	Voted	YES

(Alderman Ron Holloway was not present.)

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VETO

**Therefore, I, Steve Watkins, Mayor of the City of Quitman, Mississippi operating under the authority and in accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 21-3-15 et seq. do hereby VETO the above Order issued by the City of Quitman Board of Aldermen on June 20, 2023, concerning dissolving the City of Quitman Main Street Association, for the following reasons:**

In the April 6, 2021 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen the following record was made: *“Alderman James Buchanan offered a motion for the City of Quitman to join the Main Street Association. The cost would be \$500.00 per year. Aldermen Ronald Holloway seconded the motion and all the Aldermen voted in the affirmative.”*

With this vote taken on April 6, 2021, the Quitman Main Street Association was established and is a branch of the Mississippi Main Street Association, a non-profit preservation based economic and development program headquartered in Jackson, Mississippi. The Main Street Approach is a common-sense, community-driven approach to revitalizing downtowns and traditional neighborhood community commercial districts. Establishing the Main Street Program in Quitman was a very positive economic initiative spearheaded by Mayor Eddie Fulton directly benefiting our local business community.

Moving forward to the May 16, 2023 Regular Board of Aldermen meeting, I asked for authorization from the board to apply for the Visit Mississippi Tourism Grant to be used by the City of Quitman Main Street Association for the City of Quitman 2023 Ole Tyme Christmas Festival. Alderman Ron Holloway made the motion to approve applying for the Visit Mississippi Tourism Grant, Alderman Joe Brooks seconded the motion and all the Aldermen voted in the affirmative.

However, at the June 20, 2023 Regular Board of Aldermen meeting, while announcing to the board that our City of Quitman Main Street Association had been selected to receive the \$2,000.00 Visit Mississippi Tourism Grant, several members of the board chose this moment to issue the order dissolving the City of Quitman Main Street Association thus declining the grant. Part of their argument for dissolving the Main Street Program was that, without a current Main Street Director, we do not have a Main Street Program. It is true that we have not found a replacement Main Street Director since Ben James resigned to take care of his ailing mother but, as I explained in that board meeting, you do not have to shut down an entire program while in between directors when you have volunteers keeping the events going in the meantime. Eventually, our advertising efforts will connect with the right person for the job.

The City of Quitman Main Street Association is the only organization in Quitman and Clarke County that exists for the sole purpose of being a catalyst for the preservation and economic revitalization of our downtown business districts in Quitman. As word got out concerning the board’s order to dissolve our Main Street Program, several business leaders have spoken with me concerning the board’s actions towards local businesses. I share their concern.

I deem there is no reasonable explanation for this action by the Board of Aldermen at this time and find that it hinders and harms the economic vitality of those who contribute the most to our city...our local businesses. Therefore, I am compelled to veto the aforementioned order issued by the Board of Aldermen on June 20, 2023.

This VETO message was presented to the City Clerk for proper dissemination on Friday, June 23, 2023.

  
Mayor Steve Watkins