



## Blakely City Council Minutes

Work Session

August 19, 2021, City Hall, 5:00 P.M.

- I. The City Clerk informed the Mayor and Council that this is the time of year that the millage rate for property taxes need to be approved. She went over last years rollback. She then went over the current years five-year tax levy history stating that if left at the current millage the City would be taking a loss of \$22,063. She then went through several option for millage rates from 4.20 to 4.40 stating that there were losses on each incremental increase except 4.40 which would just break even to last year. She then informed the Council that if left at 4.20 the Mayor and Council would only have to have the meeting to set the millage rate. She went through the steps if the Mayor and Council choose to increase the millage and added that depending on when the Council wanted to set the rate an extension request would need to be asked for from the Dept of Revenue. Councilmember Davis questioned if any of the Cares/ARPA funds could be used to offset the loss on property taxes to which the City Clerk stated that she was not aware that these funds could be used for this. The Mayor and Council discussed the different options and what taxes have been used for in the past. The Mayor brought up the increases by the County. He felt that due to the time line of adoption and so as not to hurriedly inform the public to leave the millage the same this year and look at a possible increase next year with hopefully being able to take more time to inform the public if increased next year. Councilmember Jarrett questioned how an increase would affect a tax payer. There was then discussion about small incremental increases. The Mayor and Council was in agreement to leave the millage the same as last year. There was then discussion about the meeting date to set the millage and the Mayor and Council asked that an extension be requested to set the millage at the next regular meeting.
- II. The Mayor discussed with the Council the up coming LOST percentages preposed by the County. He stated that the County had a meeting to discuss leaving every city at the same percentage they are currently which is 40%. The Council was in agreement to not dispute and stay at the same percentage.

The Mayor updated the Council on the surplus sale and requested the Council consider donating the furniture if not sold in the GovDeal auction. The Council was in agreement to donate seeing as the City would not be taking a loss.

The Mayor discussed with the Council allowing the Fire Dept to do a controlled burn as a training on a dilapidated house. The Mayor stated that the City can come up with a program to get rid of dilapidated houses. He stated that at the current location, being discussed, the customer has already done everything that needed to be done for a burn. He informed the Council that this had started with the previous administration. He informed the Council that once the house is burned and the lot cleaned up the customer has a mobile home and the City

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would then gain a utility customer where the City is not currently. The Council was in agreement to move forward with the current burn option and working on the program, that the RC if working on, for the City to be able to do more. There was discussion about the current zoning and the program opportunity for the City. There was also discussion about new items added by EPD regarding burning and that Chief McDonald was getting all the information together.

The Mayor gave the Council updates on the COVID cases 2021 compared to 2020. He stated the time line increases. He spoke of the lack of places to transport affected people. He informed the Council of the number of employees on quarantine either directly affected or encounter someone affected. He stated that E911 had been mostly affected at the present time. The Mayor asked for discussion on the currently mask policy. Councilmember Clenney questioned the currently mask policy. The Mayor spoke on if masks are not worn by choice what happens if a large number employees in a department are out. There was discussion about making mask wearing mandatory unless there is social distancing also putting mask wearing back in place if riding in the same vehicle if social distancing cannot be maintained. The Mayor reminded that nothing could be put in place for the public over the Governors order and that these suggestions are only for internal use. Again, the Mayor asked if an entire department was quarantined could City services be provided. He spoke on hospital capacities in areas around the City and ambulance use and conditions. Councilmember Jarrett asked how the Mayor was leaning. The Mayor stated that he felt that masks should be put back on. Councilmember Jarrett asked if the shot cannot be mandated how can masks be mandated. The Mayor responded by stating that the Council cannot mandate the public but can mask mandate the City staff.

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Travis Wimbush, Mayor