



## Blakely City Council Minutes

Work Session

October 5, 2021, City Hall, 5:00 P.M.

The Mayor spoke about some things that have been going on with senior citizens. He stated that around 100 seniors are being fed and that the service had been moved from the Subway parking lot to the Senior Center. He informed the Council that any senior in Early County is being fed not just those in the City of Blakely. He informed the Council that Gwen was in attendance to speak about additional funds that she has found to reopen the center for activities for seniors and this grant will fund the majority. He stated that the only portion that will fall to the Council is the utilities and that the center will only be open about two or three days a week not all five days.

Gwen gave a short explanation of what happened during the pandemic with SOWEGA Council on Aging. She then stated that they questioned where the activity funds were that SOWEGA had to utilize. She stated that it took 4 or 5 months in phone calls and zoom meetings but an agreement was reached where SOWEGA would provide the meals outside the senior center and her group would provide activities inside and the two are not combined. She stated that something had to be signed keeping both these programs separate. She provided a press release of an announcement letter and a brochure. She informed the Mayor and Council that there is \$1,000 per month to provide 5 activities a month. She broke it down by saying they could have 2 activities on Tuesday and 3 on Thursday and at least 3 participants they could be reimbursed \$100 per class. She talked about getting donated activity materials and possibly save funds to hire a part time activity director to help build the program. She stated that these are just thoughts. She then stated this is a year program. She also informed the Mayor and Council that they have provided their certificate of insurance and will be adding the City of Blakely as a certificate holder and the City has the building insurance. Councilmember Clenney asked that the City be added as additional insured and the Mayor stated that if anything regarding the City's policy is needed just get with someone at City Hall. Gwen, they presented to the Mayor and Council the information they will be sending out. She also stated that SOWEGA will be doing a robocall regarding the dates the center will be open for activities. There was discussion on how SOWEGA is now doing the meals program and the additional funds being used by SOWEGA for the meals program. Gwen also stated that she has applied to a foundation for additional funding for a possible full-time director. She spoke on the COVID procedures. There was discussion on how classes will work with the number of participants. There was discussion about the funds the City provided for the center in the past and what funds may be needed in the future and how many participate from the City and how many from the County. The Mayor and Council were good with Gwen moving forward with this program. There was then some discussion on the land around the center and ownership of that land and possible further uses. The Mayor stated he felt a memorandum of understanding would be

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sufficient to move forward working with Gwen's organization. The Mayor thanked Gwen for all her assistance and everything that she has had to work with the City on regarding some grants.

The Mayor informed the Council that a housing assessment was fixing to start with the GICH program. He gave a brief explanation of what the GICH program can do for the City. Gwen stated that the assessment involved two parts, one being a physical structure housing assessment where they document every house in Blakely. The second part involves a door-to-door survey to get perceptions and options from citizens of what they would like to see in Blakely. There will also be other ways this survey can be done also. Gwen spoke about talks with some developers already.

The Mayor talked to the Council about the Reddick building and that the time is drawing near for work to be done and that what the City does can be added to the property as a tax lien. He stated that the building needs to be brought into compliance. He then stated that the Council needs to approve cleaning and a possible roof on the building due to damage being done to properties attached to this property. He stated that this is on the agenda for the Council to make a decision on what they choose to do with this property.

The Mayor and Council discussed the property on Howell St to which the Mayor stated that this is also on the agenda. Councilmember Clenney stated that he would need to abstain from voting due to his real estate company having some interest in this matter.

There was discussion on the Halloween trick or treat date being observed on Saturday and not Sunday.

The Mayor spoke on the Enterprise Fleet lease agreement. The Mayor suggested starting with the Police interceptors for four years at a little over \$1,000 per month with the option to pay out the difference. He then stated to possibly look at trucks next year if the trial programs works.

The Mayor spoke on the ARPA funds informing the Council that the first reporting date has been extended. He informed the Council that the only thing that been paid out to date is a portion of the engineering cost for the Dean and Deal project. The Mayor then informed the Council of the Public Safety/First Responder grant the City will be applying for that will provide \$1,000 for full time certified employees and \$300 for volunteers. The Mayor also informed the Council of the receipt of the Health and Wellness Grant for \$3,000.

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Travis Wimbush, Mayor