



**Blakely City Council
MINUTES
City Hall**

August 4, 2020

6:00 P.M.

I) Call To Order, Roll Call, Invocation, Pledge Of Allegiance

Let the record show that Mayor Travis Wimbush called the meeting to order. Mayor Travis Wimbush, Councilmember Margaret Zachary, Councilmember Brad Clenney, Councilmember Al Hutchins and Councilmember Ray Jarrett were all present. Also present was the City Attorney, Tommy Coleman and the City Clerk Melinda Crook. There was a moment of silence for those lost to COVID-19 and Senator John Lewis of the Fifth District of the State of Georgia. Councilmember Al Hutchins gave the invocation. The Mayor and Council led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II) Approve Minutes

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to approve the minutes from the July 7th City Council meeting and the July 14th Work Session. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

III) Citizens And Delegations

Jerry Tiner – Citizen Concern

Mr. Tiner stated that he had received a phone call about the use of inmates for picking up trash. He stated that using temp workers and not inmates was a waste of tax payer money. He stated that this was happening due to a bondsman supervising the inmates. He spoke of the law regarding this. He then spoke of the assets presented regarding being bonded. He spoke of the previous administration not seeing the assets just what was on paper. He stated that if assets are not to be shown then this sets a precedent going forward and everyone should be held to that standard. He then discussed the escrow account and that this employee is doing bond business on City time. He stated maybe when renewing a license everything should be shown again. He stated that there are conflicts of interest having an employee watching inmates and being a bondsman. He reiterated that if one doesn't have to show assets or escrow then no one should have to show these items and stated that he would like to know if this employee is working inmates and still bonding.

IV) Administrative Committee

Stephen Welch - Bids For Pole Truck

The Electric Department Supervisor, Stephen Welch presented bids on a new pole truck. He stated that Altec was the lowest bid. He stated that the current truck is a 2001 and that he wants to keep this truck as a back-up. He informed the Council of things that were going wrong with the current pole truck and how Three Notch had to be called to ask for assistance when trying to set poles from an accident that had taken place because the City pole truck broke down. Councilmember Hutchins asked Stephen if the two bids were for trucks the same size to which Stephen stated that everything was identical except the name brand. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to approve the purchase of a new pole truck from Altec in the amount of \$189,860. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

Adam Askew - Inspection Project

Adam Askew, Water Treatment Dept Head, spoke to the Council regarding problems from EPD. He explained a little about the problems which were mainly high flow into the plant. He stated that EPD is asking for a complete camera inspection of the entire sewer system to identify and prioritize from the worst to the least. He stated that a plan needs to be developed and that past administration had hired a company to work on this. He stated that a bid was out for this work but nothing has come back as of yet. He stated that once received it would be brought before the Council. Councilman Hutchins questioned if he had the funds in his budget for this work. There was discussion about looking for grants to help assist in the cost.

Will Caudill – Updates

Police Chief, Will Caudill, gave the July activity report. He then gave a response to the speed limits on Freeman Road. He stated that is 40MPH due to specific language in an Ordinance for that street, from the Bypass to Flowers. He stated that it was up to the Council to change if they chose to do so. He then stated that there are areas that need speed limit signs. He spoke of the speed limit on Old Lucille which he recommends dropping to 50MPH at least to Willow Glenn. The Mayor asked the Chief's recommendation on Freeman to which the Chief stated he didn't have one but if the specific line was taken out of the Ordinance it would drop the speed limit to 30MPH. The Mayor ask the City Attorney to which the attorney stated that the City could set limits on City streets as the see fit but that it could not be done at this meeting. The Chief then brought up some verbiage in the same Ordinance that still says Sheriff and should be changed back to Police Chief. The City Attorney stated that he could correct this item.

Matt Hromalik - E911 Updates

E-911 Director Matt Hromalik, gave the July activity report. He stated that they took 1,279 total E-911 calls between the City, Stewart and Randolph and an additional 3,649 administrative call for a total of 4,928 calls for the month.

Lane Davis – Gateway Project

Building Maintenance Lane Davis, addressed the Council regarding the Gateway Project. He stated that presently the project is on hold and has been put out for bid twice. He explained that in the first bid process no bids were presented and in the second bid process one bid came in that was way over budget. He stated that the Clerk had pulled together expenditures for the Gateway project and so far there was a cost for \$304,886 with an addition \$5,900 for wetland mitigation for a cost of \$310,786. He stated that he just wanted to make the Council aware of what is going on and how the Council wants to proceed. He also informed the Council that if a re-bid is done there would be an additional cost of \$4,500 from EMC Engineering for processing the documents and proceed with the meetings. He also stated that if a bid came in and was accepted their cost would be around \$10,000-\$12,000 for construction and administrative overseeing, but that they could possibly lower that cost if the City was to help oversee as well. Lane then stated it would be the City's responsibility to run a portion of electric, in the amount of \$5,000 and water/sewer, in the amount of \$2,500. He then stated that the grant for this project is \$800,000 and that it is coming back up before the DOT committee and is could possibly be de-obligated next month and that this does not mean that the City will loose it but there would be some paperwork that would need to be completed to proceed forward if de-obligated. The Mayor asked the Council to take this information for review to be discussed at the next meeting.

Councilmember Hutchins questioned work at the Civic Center to which Lane stated that they are sanding the floor and clean and should start laying floor on Thursday.

V) City Attorney's Report

Cares Act Resolution

The City Attorney spoke on the allocation of COVID-19 Cares Act Funds. He stated that the City needs to sign the Cares Act documents. The Mayor informed the Council that the City had signed regarding the funds of \$239,281 with Phase I being \$71,784, which must be spent on COVID-19 expenditures and that Phase II and Phase III are based on how the City uses phase I. He stated that Phase I needs to be expended by September 1, 2020. A motion was made by Councilmember Clenney and seconded by Councilmember Hutchins to approve the Cares Act Resolution. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

VI) City Clerk's Report

The City Clerk presented the Mayor and Council with financial reports. She then read the monthly and YTD figures for the public. The Clerk informed the Mayor and Council that all items requested by the auditor have been presented. The Clerk requested that the Mayor and Council set a Special Called Meeting date to set the millage rate so that the 5yr Tax Levy History could be placed in the paper. She stated that there would be a slight increase but that the millage rate would be dropping from 4.25 to 4.20. The Mayor questioned the City Attorney regarding the time frame to set the meeting to which he was informed that the ad had to run

for one week before the meeting to adopt could be held. After some discussion the Mayor set the Special Called Meeting for August 20th at 6:00pm

VII) New Items Proposed By Mayor And City Council

Councilmember Hutchins spoke briefly on the hazard pay in regards to the Care Act Funding. The Mayor also stated, in regards to hazard pay, that if it is not already implemented into our city policy, the reimbursement is ineligible in the Cares Relief Act. He stated that he would provide the Cares Act documents to the Council.

The Mayor stated that the first two home of the 2019 CDBG Grant were 40-50% complete and meeting code.

The Mayor stated that the 2020 Census is still underway and that the Early County grade so far is an "F" He asked if the Council would consider donating items to the school system to promote ways to get citizens to complete the Census and to attend the meeting the next day at 2:00pm.

The Mayor spoke on the surplus items declared by the County of which there are two items that are shared and items that the City has that need to be declared surplus by the Council. He spoke of the surplus trash cans that Damascus has requested and asked the Council for declaration motion. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to donate the surplus trash cans to the City of Damascus. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

The Mayor stated that it has been suggested to draft a letter regarding a mask policy for City Hall so as not to violate the Governors Order. The City Attorney stated that he felt the City has the right to regulate a policy/operating procedure regarding this matter. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett that if entering City Hall or any other public building masks be worn. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

The Mayor stated that Congress has not extended the unemployment benefits of \$600 and some citizens have already expressed concerns regarding not getting this benefit. He stated that with the Cares Act Funds if it could be written in the form of a grant and written in time to allocate a certain amount of funds this month to be set aside to assist customers. He stated that a committee be formed to administer these funds. He stated he would like to request the amount of \$10,000 and the City could seek reimbursement through Phase II or III. A motion was made by Councilmember Zachary and seconded by Councilmember Hutchins to set aside \$10,000 in Cares Act funds to assist customers with their utility bills for customers who qualify. Councilmember Hutchins requested a roll call of the Council votes. Councilmember Zachary, Councilmember Hutchins and

Councilmember Jarrett voted “YEH.” Let the record show that Councilmember Clenney voted “NAY.”

VIII) Public Comments

Mr. Jerry Tiner spoke on the Civic Center rental to which the Mayor stated that there was an agreement and rental process and that this took place in City Hall. He then spoke of what he had gone through regarding the construction of his Fireworks building.

Tracey Robinson spoke on the \$10,000 allocation of City funds for utility bills for citizens in need. He stated that citizens would go to the Neighborhood Service Center and to the City and that citizens names should be cross checked so that the same citizens were not assisted by both entities

Chamber President, Celia Bostwick, spoke on the Gateway project stating that it could help bring the City back and stated that on behalf of the Chamber the City needs the Gateway project.

IX) Executive Session

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Clenney to enter into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to enter back into regular session. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

X) Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilmember Zachary and seconded by Councilmember Hutchins to adjourn the August 4th City Council meeting. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present.

Travis Wimbush, Mayor