



**BLAKELY CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES**

MARCH 3, 2020

CITY HALL

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 Al Hutchins, Councilmember Ray Jarrett and Councilmember Margaret Zachary were all present. Also present was the City Attorney, Tommy Coleman and the City Clerk, Melinda Crook. Eric Harris gave the invocation. The Mayor and Council led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II) PRESENTATION TO RETIREES

The Mayor read and presented the retirees with a Certificates of Recognition for their years of service. The retirees were Danny Williams, Willie Wimberly and Jamie Thomas. All the retirees were presented with an engraved watch and a gift card for \$50.00. All were present except for Jamie Thomas, who was unable to attend.

The Mayor requested that all Councilmembers raise their hands in recognition of their votes (YEH or NAY) due to the public and live feed being unable to hear each response.

III) APPROVE MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to approve the minutes from February 4th, 13th and 18th. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

IV) CITIZENS AND DELEGATIONS

Pastor Scott Bryant - Redemption House

Pastor Bryant spoke to the Council regarding Redemption House. He stated that they will be located in Calhoun but the house will be available to all the surrounding Counties as well. He informed the Council that the housing was for recovering addicts (drug and/or alcohol.) He then stated that they felt that this facility would mostly be for men transitioning from the recovery programs mostly due to women being able to return to family homes. He stated that they were partnered with Touchstone and recently Aspire. Stephanie, an associate of Pastor Bryant's, then spoke of how they would be teaching these individuals life skills and financial skills. She stated how approximately 70% of these individuals go on to permanent housing. She also stated that after in the home for a period of time these individuals would be required to pay some form of rent (upon holding a job.) They went on to say that this was a three-step program in which the individuals would be evaluated after 6mths, then reevaluated again at 9mths and could possibly be in the home up to 12mths. They also stated that certain requirements would have to be met. They then stated

that all they were requesting was a letter of support from the City and would greatly appreciate the City and community support when these individuals leave the home, to find suitable permanent housing. Councilmember Hutchins questioned where their facility was going to be located and they informed the Council that it would be directly across the street from City Hall in Arlington.

Samuel Lee – Request to Waive the 1 Year Waiting Period to Allow His Rezoning-Request to Go Back Before the Planning Commission

Mr. Lee was not present.

V) ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Chief Caudill gave his monthly report on the Police activity in February. He then asked the public to make sure to remove any valuables from their vehicles and make sure that they are locked due to the increase of unlawful entry/theft recently. He stated that they were increasing patrols. Chief Caudill informed the Council and public that Officer Eric Cawthorn had left the City employment to go to the GA Dept of Public Safety. Chief Caudill stated that he had hired a part time officer and is looking at one for full time. He stated Kevin Naramore went to ALERT training and is now an instructor. He is hoping that the City could host training here. He then asked the Council if they preferred to continue to receive paper copies of his report or would they prefer email.

Councilmember Hutchins and Councilmember Zachary stated that they preferred to continue to receive the paper copy, to which the Mayor then stated to just continue with the paper copies.

Charlie Wade – Bids on Mowers

A motion was made by Councilmember Jarrett and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to approve the purchase of a new lawnmower from Westover Lawn & Garden in the amount of \$7,895.00. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

Kenneth Jones – Alcohol License Nicole Hughes

Kenneth Jones informed the Council that the Police Dept. had denied the application due to previous incidents. He then stated that there had been two issues and that the one naming a person inside City limits could be cleared up easily but the other issue regarding the background check would not be as easy to clear up. The City Attorney, Tommy Coleman explained that the Council could deny the application which would result in Ms. Hughes being able to file an appeal and be heard by the Council so that the Council could then make a final determination to deny or grant her the alcohol license. A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to deny the application. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present.

Kenneth Jones – Variances for North Ave CDBG

- (a) 7 North Ave
- (b) 497 North Ave
- (c) 395 North Ave
- (d) 1488 North Church
- (e) 1502 North Church
- (f) 1633 North Church
- (g) 1705 North Church

Kenneth Jones informed the Council that item 1 was actually zoned CBD and therefore not zoned for residential housing. He then stated that the balance of the variances were for setbacks needing to be adjusted. The City Attorney then explained variances to the Councilmembers. He stated that he felt that item 1 would need more than a variance. A motion by Councilmember Zachary and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to approve all the variances except Item 1. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

VI) CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

First Reading of Budget Ordinance

The City Attorney, Tommy Coleman, reminded the public that an Ordinance was adopted to extend operations to get a budget put in place. He then read the heading on the Budget Ordinance stating that a public hearing would be held on the 9th with a budget adoption meeting to follow a week after that. This constituted the first reading of the budget Ordinance.

VII) CITY CLERK'S REPORT

The City Clerk, Melinda Crook, presented the Council with hard copies of the financial reports for December 2019 and January 2020. She then went through a powerpoint presentation for the public. The City Clerk then reviewed the figures for the EWP project showing the public the fully submitted amount. She then informed the Council and public that the USDA funds had been received in the amount of \$223,941 and stated that the only amount still outstanding was GEMA's 10%, which is \$23,949. She stated that presently the City is in the negative \$15,549 and when taking that amount and adding the \$8,400 in administrative cost this came back to the amount still due from GEMA. She then informed the Council that the documents for the ITAD reimbursement of around \$85,000 had been submitted and we are just waiting for confirmation of receipt.

VIII) NEW ITEMS PROPOSED BY MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Reappointments to Planning Commission

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to table any reappointments until the April meeting. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

MEAG Off System Energy Sales

A motion was made by Councilmember Jarrett and seconded by Councilmember Hutchins to approve the MEAG Off System Energy Sales to apply to the monthly bill. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

ECG Voting Delegates

A motion was made by Councilman Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to approve Mayor Travis Wimbush as the voting delegate and the City Clerk, Melinda Crook as the alternate delegate. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

Councilmember Zachary stated that she had received calls about high bills and customers asking for some relief or some form of change.

Mayor Wimbush stated that the County wanted a combined meeting regarding the MOU for the Generators. He spoke of the cost the City has already incurred applying for the generators and the thoughts that there should be some form of cost share on this cost. He asked the Council if they were in agreement to meet with the County at 5pm Monday the 9th before the budget Public Hearing. The Council was in agreement.

IX) EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Councilmember Zachary and seconded by Councilmember Jarrett to enter into Executive Session regarding litigation and real estate. The motion carried unanimously by Councilmembers present

Upon returning to regular session no motions were made

X) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Davis stated that Blakely is a mess. She spoke of junk cars, cars in handicap spots, positioning of trailers and housing that need torn down.

Tony Alexander spoke of his yard flooding when it rains heavy. He spoke of how the water drains from Son Jones and Tarver. Charlie Wade, Street Department Head, stated that he had looked into the situation but he could not figure out how to correct the issue and that someone else may need to be consulted. He asked that the Mayor go out with him to look at the area. Mr. Alexander also spoke of having to let their water run for 5 minutes before being able to use due to the smell. The Mayor stated that the City's Water Dept and Water Treatment Department would be around to test the water.

Erica Henderson reminded the Council and public that April is Child Abuse Prevention month and asked if everyone could again wear blue on Friday's in support.

Deputy Chief Tim Hardrick gave some pictures to the Council of the lighting along the street on Cedar Springs HWY. He asked if more lighting could be added for safety. He stated that he had almost gotten hit due to the lack of lighting.

Charlie Sol stated that SWGRC and AARP are doing a program for age friendly communities. He spoke of looking into this program due to sidewalks. He also spoke of the Census that will be starting soon and how important it is to take part due to funding for the City and the County.

The Mayor provided the Council with a copy of the Civic Center application and the travel policy and asked that they review these documents and recommend changes if they felt there should be some. He stated that it had been recommended that the Federal Per Diem rate per area be considered so that 1099's would no longer be an issue for Council or staff.

The Mayor reminded the Council and public of Peanut Proud this month. He also stated that there have been 2 reported cases of the Corona virus in GA. He asked everyone to remember to wash their hand and take sanitary precautions.

The Mayor then asked that everyone take a moment of silence for the passing of the County Administrator, Spencer Mueller and Tim Roberts who worked with the Museum.

XI) ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilmember Hutchins and seconded by Councilmember Zachary to adjourn the March 3rd City Council Meeting. The motion carried unanimously by Councilman present

Travis Wimbush, Mayor