

MINUTES
REGULAR CALLED
COUNCIL MEETING
IN-PERSON & ZOOM
MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2020

Members Present:

Mayor Steve Lawrence
Dr. Sonny Proctor-zoom
Kirk Raffield-zoom
Anne Sneve
Jim Looney
John Foust

Staff:

Brandon Douglas
Beverly Ragland
Lindsey Williams
Tara Benson
Lonnie Waters
Steve Roper-zoom

Guests in Attendance:

Amberle Godfrey
Dr. Robert Keller
Haley Bouchie-zoom
Pam-zoom
Rebecca Keefer-zoom
Jerry Hicks (s)-zoom
iPhone-zoom

Members Absent:

Legal Counsel:

R. David Syfan-zoom

Press:

Mari Livsey-Know Pickens
Max Caylor-Pickens Progress

Mayor Steve Lawrence asked Councilmember Anne Sneve if she recognized a quorum. See a quorum, Mayor Lawrence recognized meeting as opening. He requested Development Director Lonnie Waters to provide the invocation. He requested Amberle Godfrey of the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Lawrence advised that an agenda is in front of them and he entertained a motion to adopt the agenda. Councilmember Sneve made a motion to adopt the agenda with Councilmember Jim Looney providing a second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence stated that Council has the minutes from the September 14, 2020 regular council meeting and minutes from the public hearings held on September 24, 2020 at both 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and entertained a motion to adopt all as presented. Councilmember Sneve provided a motion with Councilmember Looney providing a second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the only item under old business (Item A) Consideration of utilizing the unused office space at the Jasper Police Department for Municipal Court and authorize the expenditure of monies from fund balance for the expected build out costs. Mayor Lawrence asked that this item be tabled since there have been no other bids received at this time. Councilmember Sneve made the motion to table Item A and Councilmember Jim Foust provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the first item under new business (Item A) Consideration of Ordinance 2020-23 for the adoption of the 2020 ad valorem tax rate (millage rate) for the City of Jasper. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. Earlier this evening we held our third and final public hearing regarding the tax increase as required. Information has been provided with respect to the proposed final millage rate. Finance Director Beverly Ragland disclosed it has been determined that a millage rate of 5.655 was needed to balance the preliminary general fund budget for 2021.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Sneve making a motion for approval to adopt the millage rate of 5.655 mills and Councilmember Foust provided a second. Mayor Lawrence asked for further discussion. Councilmember Looney commented that this was movement in the right direction to keep the City of Jasper on a good road and appreciates staffs work on getting information together. City attorney R. David Syfan asked for an amendment of the motion to include the first reading of the ordinance to approve the millage rate of 5.655. Councilmember Looney provided the amended motion to approve and Councilmember Sneve provided the second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item B) Consideration and approval of the bids to purchase 3 public safety vehicles from 2020 SPLOST proceeds. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. We have been protective about discussion of the preliminary 2021 budget until we present it to the council and public. Staff requested funds in their 2021 general fund budget to replace three vehicles in the police and fire departments due to age and operating condition to continue operations. Looking at ways to cut spending in the general fund, it was determined these vehicles could be purchased with 2020 SPLOST according to the language in the voter-approved referendum in 2019. This SPLOST provides funds for public safety in addition to water and sewer facilities, parks and recreation and roads, streets, sidewalks, and bridges. We received one bid from Prater Ford in Calhoun, GA for \$35,435.18 each for three 2020 Ford F-150 trucks. Staff is requesting an amount not to exceed \$140,000 to purchase the vehicles and add the equipment required on public safety vehicles.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Looney making a motion to approve and Councilmember Raffield providing a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item C) Consideration of requests for utilizing Main Street for events. Mayor Lawrence asked Haley Bouchie of the Jasper Merchants Association to bring forth information. In previous years, the downtown merchants would set up tables on the sidewalk for candy to be given to children on Halloween between the hours of 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. There have been requests on social media regarding what will happen this year. In recognition of the Governor's Executive Order, we need guidance on what we can and cannot do during this time. City Manager Douglas further explained the Governor's Executive Order as it relates to the City of Jasper government. The order inhibits the government's ability to invite individuals to a public gathering without the ability to provide assurance of social distancing. Therefore, it is staff's understanding that this public gathering would be prohibited. This does not include private, residential activity.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Raffield making a motion to approve the hours between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. for families to do what was best for them in residential communities and not allow a public gathering on Main Street. Councilmember Sneve provided the second. Mayor Lawrence reiterated the motion and second for approval was not for downtown but for parents to do as they felt best for Halloween in their residential communities between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Motion to approve passed unanimously. Any discussion about Christmas activities would be suspended until the November 2020 regular meeting. The Veterans parade has been officially canceled for 2020.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item D) Consideration and update of the City of Jasper Zoning Ordinance review. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information and he deferred to council. Councilmember Proctor explained that work has been going on for some time to revise the planning and zoning ordinances in the City. The design phase has been wrapped up and legal review has been made. Key stakeholders have been contacted for limited input on what we were proposing. Hopefully, we can put this to a motion in our next regular meeting. There has been a lot of interaction throughout this process that has been positive. Rebecca Keefer from Clark Patterson Lee discussed the draft would be closed later in the week and put on the City website for public review. At this time there are still opportunities for changes to be made as the review committee considers. After adoption, change will still be available as markets change and priorities change. It will be a living ordinance. The first reading of the ordinance is currently planned for the November 2, 2020 council meeting and the second reading at the December 7, 2020 council meeting. No further discussion was had.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item E) Consideration and approval of an easement for a water and sewer line. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. The city needs to install a water line for a development that was approved last year. Due to the fact this involves real estate and the possibility of compensation involved, City Attorney Syfan has advised this could be discussed in executive session in section VII of the meeting.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item F) Consideration and approval of job descriptions for the following positions: Firefighter, Fire Lieutenant, Fire Captain and Assistant Fire Chief. Mayor Lawrence asked Councilmembers Looney and Sneve to bring forth information. Job descriptions were provided in council packets. Councilmember Looney asked for a motion to approve the four completed job descriptions for positions in the fire department. Councilmember Sneve provided a second and thanked Human Resources Director Stella Brewer for all her hard work with this project. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item G) Final consideration of surplus items to be auctioned by the City of Jasper. City Manager Douglas and Development Director Waters were asked to bring forth information. Items two to three items deep are in the parking lot from the gate down to the shop in the City Hall parking lot. There has already been a vote to approve the auction in April 2020. We wanted to give a final list of items in the auction. Some items operate and some do not. Everything is being sold as is-where is. The auction is on Saturday, October 23, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. People will be allowed to view the items two days before the auction. Appointments are offered to anyone that wants to view but is unable to come on those designated two days.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to affirm the auction of surplus City property. Councilmember Raffield provided a motion to approve and Councilmember Looney provided a second. Councilmember Looney asked if the motion was to approve the list. Director Waters explained there may be a few more items added. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to go into executive session to discuss real estate. Councilmember Looney provided the motion and Councilmember Sneve provided the second. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to come out of executive session. Councilmember Looney provided a motion and Councilmember Sneve provided a second. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized Committee Reports.

Development Committee – Councilmember Proctor commented he had nothing further to add. Councilmember Raffield commended Councilmember Proctor, Rebecca Keefer from CPL and City Manager Douglas for dedication to and work on this project.

Street/Parks Committee – Councilmember Looney hoped to have a plan of what exact playground equipment was being purchase available at the November or December regular meeting.

Administration Committee – Councilmember Looney thanked council for approving the four new job descriptions for the Fire Department. As they are coming to the end of the exercise, they are confident they have a good product.

Water/Waste-Water Committee – Councilmember Foust spoke with Water/Waste-Water Director David Hall today to confirm the line to Gilmer County has been completed. Water is now available, and we are awaiting approved permits to get water from them.

Police/Fire Committee – Councilmember Looney explained the department reports were in the council packets and could discuss further if there were questions.

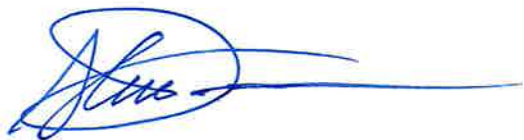
Financial Report – City Manager Douglas provided highlights from the financial report. Councilmember Looney asked if list of items over \$5,000 was necessary. City Manager Douglas explained that practice had began before the Purchasing Policy was approved. Discussion was made to eliminate that report with no objections.

Development Report – Development Director Lonnie Waters provided highlights from the development report.

Mayor Lawrence commented that the police and fire reports were in council packets.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to adjourn with Councilmember Foust providing a motion and Councilmember Sneve providing a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.



Steve Lawrence
Mayor



Beverly Ragland
Finance Director/City Clerk