

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**  
**WORK SESSION / PUBLIC**  
**HEARING IN PERSON & ZOOM**  
**Thursday, March 25, 2021**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**STAFF**

Brandon Douglas  
Beverly Ragland  
Tara Benson  
Lonnie Waters  
Shauna Coleman-Zoom

**GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE**

Will Tate  
Kerry Wentworth-Zoom  
Andrea Childers  
Wayne Reece  
Richard & Joy Buhl  
Joy Buhl  
Michael Reece  
Philp Searles  
Marshall Acher  
G.Preston  
Linda & Charles Ray  
Nicole & Marshall Dixon  
Joe B Jones, JR  
Larry Jones  
John Sosebee

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**LEGAL COUNSEL**

R. David Syfan

**PRESS**

Mari Livsey – KnowPickens  
Max Caylor -Pickens Progress

Mayor Steve Lawrence asked Councilmember Dr. Sonny Proctor if he recognized a quorum. See a quorum, Mayor Lawrence recognized meeting as opening. He requested Development Director Lonnie Waters to provide the invocation. He requested Councilmember Anne Sneve to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Lawrence thanked everyone in the chambers for coming to tonight's meeting. Mayor Lawrence stated that anyone and everyone in the room will have opportunity to voice what they want to voice to City Council.

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

Mayor Lawrence recognized the first item under new business (Item A) Public Hearing – Request to rezone Parcel # JA13 097 from R-1 to R-3 located between 74 and 154 Georgianna Street, Jasper, Georgia. Mayor Lawrence called on City Manager Brandon Douglas. Mr. Douglas provided background information, he mentioned that the City held a Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting March 23 of this week. Mr. Douglas provided the staff report that is included in the Mayor and Council packets. The two members at the Planning and Zoning Meeting were not in favor of moving forward with this project. Mayor Lawrence noted this would not be voted on tonight. This is a public hearing for Mayor and Council to listen to what the Public and Developer have to say. Voting will take place at the next Council meeting (April 5th) Mayor Lawrence recognized Phillip Searles with The Linam Corporation. Mr. Searles Spoke of the need of housing in Jasper and Pickens County. After discussions about compliance with Jasper's future use plan, Mr. Searles acknowledged that some people would be upset, and they will do what they can to make everyone happy. A fencing allowance is included for homeowners adjacent to the property. Mr. Searles stated that they want to be good neighbors because Jasper is a great place to live. Mr. Searles provided a synopsis of the project as the intended use to be a multi-family style development.

Mayor Lawrence opened the floor for public hearing to those in attendance in person and via Zoom. Many statements/points were made from the public: Fire safety and response time, the closest ladder truck is in Cherokee county, roads will not accommodate the new structure, safety, the rise of crime, traffic, taking away the small-town environment, concerns about the soil and water quality and stormwater. Members of the public invited the developer to come look at the rivers that are currently flowing after recent heavy rain. Kerry Wentworth, via zoom stated that she will not be selling her land to provide access via Sellers/Bellwood Ave.

Mayor Lawrence allowed Mr. Searles to reply after the public voiced concerns. Mr. Searles tried to address all concerns. That they will do everything to follow City ordinances. He stated that other parts of the county do not support this project. He is asking Jasper to fill a current need.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under New business (item B) Public Hearing – Request to rezone 2 tracts of Parcel 041 015 at 1317 West Church Street, Jasper, Georgia from C-2 to R-3. –Mayor Lawrence stated that the

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Applicant requested to table. Mayor Lawrence asked for anyone in the audience to speak on the public hearing for item B. No one came forward.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item C) Public Hearing – Text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance of the City of Jasper. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas to provide background information. This item will be voted on the next Council meeting on April 5th.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item D) Consideration of the appointment of Will Tate to serve on the Planning and Zoning commission. Mayor Lawrence asked council for a motion to approve Mr. Tate to the Planning and Zoning commission. Councilmember Foust made a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Lawrence called on Will Tate. Mayor Lawrence proceed with the swearing in of Mr. Tate for the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the final item under new business (Item E) Discussion of American Rescue Plan Act Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas and Finance Director Beverly Ragland. Mr. Douglas wanted to give the staff update. As of March 11th, President Biden signed the American Relief Act which included a direct allocation to local governments in the amount of 1.9 trillion dollars. The City of Jasper is scheduled to receive proceeds. However, there are very few details about how this money will be coming in. This funding is different from the CARES act. Mr. Douglas believes the dollar amount provided in the preliminary information would be close to what we would receive. He is not in the position to confirm what amount that will be because the amount could change. This does afford us the opportunity to begin thinking about how the monies will be allocated. He stated that we would follow the rules on the allocation of these federal funds. Mayor Lawrence stated the council had previously considered raising our minimum salary range if this something that might allow us the opportunity to do so. Mr. Douglas stated that the did not know at this time and was waiting on final guidance from the U.S. Treasury. Mr. Douglas stated that we would need to defer to Ms. Ragland for more information on the current pay scale. Ms. Ragland discussed the cost to increase the hourly rate across the board by \$1.00. She also explained the differences in Police, Fire and Non-Public Safety hours worked and how that would impact the budget. She gave the average amount of overtime earned by Police and Fire since those departments were the largest for payroll and gave the increase in cost with an increase in pay.

Mayor Lawrence made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Kirk Raffield made a motion. Councilmember Jim Looney provided a second.

Meeting adjourned.



Steve Lawrence

Mayor



Beverly Ragland

Finance Director/City Clerk