

MINUTES  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, June 7, 2021

Members Present:

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

Staff:

Brandon Douglas  
Beverly Ragland  
Lindsey Williams  
Shauna Coleman  
David Hall  
Lonnie Waters  
Greg Lovell  
Steve Roper  
Matt Dawkins  
Stacy Johnson

Guests in Attendance:

Green Suttles  
Jack Dunn  
June Ash

Members Absent:

Kirk Raffield

Legal Counsel:

R. David Syfan

Press:

Mari Livsey-Know Pickens  
Ellen Harrison- Smoke Singles

Mayor Steve Lawrence asked Councilmember John Foust if he recognized a quorum. Seeing a quorum, Mayor Lawrence recognized meeting as open. He requested Development Director Lonnie Waters to provide the invocation. He requested Councilmember Dr. Sonny Proctor to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Mayor Lawrence stated that Council has the minutes from the May 3rd, 2021, Regular council meeting, and May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Special Called/Work Session / Public Hearing. Mayor Lawrence entertained a motion to adopt all as presented. Councilmember Foust provided a motion with Councilmember Proctor providing a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized Sam Latimer, CPA with Rushton & Company. Latimer presented highlights from the 2020 City of Jasper Audit. A report was provided for Mayor and Council. Latimer thanked City staff for all of the hard work.

Mayor Lawrence commented on the inordinate amount of time that went into making sure that everything balances for our city. Mayor Lawrence asked for Mr. Latimer to give an opinion publicly that the City of Jasper is doing what you think it needs to be doing, and if there are other things that we need to be doing differently. Mr. Latimer stated that the changes that have been made are great and everyone is doing everything they can. He commended the experienced staff that care about what they do and how things operate. He spoke highly of Finance Director Beverly Ragland and Deputy Finance Director Lindsey Williams. He told the Mayor the city is in good hands and would give staff an A +.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the first item under old business (Item A) Consideration of Ordinance No. 2021-11 – Request for rezone Parcel # 014015 from R-3Residential and C-2 General Commercial to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) located at 1317 West Church Street, Jasper, Georgia. Mayor Lawrence let Council know that the applicant has withdrawn and will bring this back. City Manager Brandon Douglas stated for the record that it was withdrawn by the applicant due to the fact they wanted to make some changes to their site plan. It is advertised for the June 22<sup>nd</sup> Planning and Zoning Commission meeting and the June 24<sup>th</sup> Mayor and Council Work Session, and subsequently a July 12<sup>th</sup> regular council meeting. Those are the published dates for anyone interested in that item.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under old business (Item B) Final consideration and approval of Ordinance No. 2021-12 to amend the malt beverage portion of the City of Jasper Alcohol Excise Tax. Mayor Lawrence called on Lindsey Williams. Mrs. Williams stated that they have found some inconsistencies between the City's ordinance and the State ordinance. Staff is asking for this change so that we come into compliance with the State. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion to approve this final consideration to amend the City of Jaspers excise tax ordinance. Councilmember Sneve made a motion to approve. Councilmember Looney provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under old business (Item C) Consideration and approval of the City of Jasper pay scale (as amended) along with retention bonus of \$500 per full time employee along with authorization to amend 2021 Budget to reflect changes associated with the pay scale to address compression.

Mayor Lawrence called on Councilmember Jim Looney. Mr. Looney provide information on the amended pay scale,

Minutes  
Regular Council Meeting  
Monday, June 7, 2021  
Page 2

making the lowest paid position \$13 an hour as well as providing a retention bonus. Mr. Looney stated that the talk of changing to bi-weekly on the May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting will need to be addressed later based upon communication of staff to Department Leaders. Mr. Looney added that a tremendous amount of work has been done on the salaries. Mr. Looney asked that this be approved by Mayor and Council as well as thanking the Finance Department and the employees for the tremendous job they have done. Mayor Lawrence called on City Manager Douglas. Mr. Douglas began to provide background on this project. Mr. Douglas stated that this has been ongoing since his arrival in February of 2019. Mr. Douglas stated this one part of the initiative is to encourage, incentivize and retain the employees that we do have by making adjustments. Mr. Douglas explained the pay scale as well as asking to give all employees a \$500 retention bonus to continue to encourage employees that we have to continue to operate. Mr. Douglas commended all the employees.

Councilmember Proctor added that this is something that was discussed during Mr. Douglas' interview. Mayor Lawrence read a letter that was left from Councilmember Kirk Raffield (not present) of his support. Councilmember Foust made a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

At the conclusion of Old Business, Mayor Lawrence recognized the first item under new business (item A) Consideration and approval of adjusting City of Jasper Ordinance Nos. 2021-03 through 2021-11 to correct internal scrivener's error. Mayor called on Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas explained staff discovered inadvertently gave two ordinances the same ordinance number, Ordinance o 2021-03 was used twice. In consultation with legal, he assured us that because we are not changing any content, it is nothing more of internal record keeping that we just want to acknowledge it on the agenda. Mayor called for a motion. Councilmember Sneve made a motion to approve. Councilmember proctor provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item B) Consideration of Ordinance No. 2021-13 – text amendments to the City of Jasper Zoning Ordinance – Section 94-96(d)(1) & Section 94-50 Permitted Uses (Central Business District) – wine specialty shop. Mayor Called on Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas provided background information from the Planning and Zoning meeting on May 25, and the Work Session / Special called meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup>. It was concluded that it would be more prudent and receptive for a fenestration requirement on the front façade only. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion to consider Ordinance No. 2021-13 – text amendments to the City of Jasper Zoning Ordinance – Section 94-96(d)(1) & Section 94-50 Permitted Uses (Central Business District) Councilmember Sneve made a motion to approve. Councilmember Looney provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item C) Consideration of Ordinance No. 2021-14 – amendment to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Jasper regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages to provide for wine specialty shops. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas to provide background information. Mr. Douglas explained the piggybacking off land use. This amendment pertains to the Jasper Code of Ordinances. The Zoning Ordinance is a component of the Code of Ordinance. The Jasper alcohol Ordinance is separate from the land use so it is a requirement that if we are going to incorporate any sort of new changes to the alcohol ordinance, we would need to amend that procedurally. This would be the first occurrence since our change to the new Charter and it would only require one read. Attorney David Syfan reiterated the last Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. This is the amendment to the City's alcoholic beverage ordinance to allow a wine specialty shop license under the ordinance. The reason for that is that wine specialty is a blend that they would do packaged sales, by the bottle and by the drink. He went on to say under this ordinance they would not have to have food sales. Mr. Syfan asked about what license fee we would charge. It was discussed that the fee would be \$1,500 which is consistent with some of our other license fees.

Mr. Syfan referred to Lindsey Williams on the fee. Mrs. Williams recommended that we stay with that flat fee. Mayor Lawrence asked Council for any further questions. With no further questions, Councilmember Looney made a motion that we set the fee at \$1,500 and the approval of Ordinance No. 2021-14 – amendment to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Jasper regarding the sale of alcoholic beverages to provide for wine specialty shops. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item D) Consideration and approval of Resolution No. 2021-03 - rescinding the use of masks or face coverings in property owned or leased by the City of Jasper. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Syfan. He explained that the recent action by Executive Order dialing back previous restrictions, staff has concluded that it may be prudent to rescind the previous resolution (Resolution 2020-09) thereby clarifying the City's requirements. Councilmember Sneve made a motion to approve Resolution No.2021-03. Councilmember Foust provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item E) Consideration and approval of Resolution No. 2021-04 - acceptance of the recommended contractor of LCS & Associates, LLC for the work on the damaged raw water & finished water lines at Cove Creek for a contract of \$111,220 with a not to exceed PO of \$125,000. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas spoke of the significant weather event during the latter part of March 2021. Specifically, the 10" raw water main line from the wells at the mines running parallel to Cove Road was

Minutes

Regular Council Meeting

Monday, June 7, 2021

Page 3

compromised as it crosses Long Swamp (Cove Creek) as well as the 6" finished water line that supplies water to customers along Cove Rd. Council was provided the bid from Turnipseed Engineers. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion to approve Resolution No. 2021-04 - acceptance of the recommended contractor of LCS & Associates, LLC for the work on the damaged raw water & finished water lines at Cove Creek for a contract of \$111,220 with a not to exceed PO of \$125,000. Councilmember Foust made motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item F) Consideration and approval of Resolution No. 2021-05 - acceptance of the recommended contractor of Precise Contractors, Inc. for the repair and painting of Lily Circle Elevated Tank for a contract of \$78,180 with a not to exceed PO of \$85,000. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas. Mr. Douglas provided background information on the project for Lily Circle Elevated Water Tank. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion to approve Resolution No. 2021-05 - acceptance of the recommended contractor of Precise Contractors, Inc. for the repair and painting of Lily Circle Elevated Tank for a contract of \$78,180 with a not to exceed PO of \$85,000. Councilmember Sneve made a motion to approve. Councilmember Proctor provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item G) Consideration and approval of the purchase of a sludge de-watering press for the Jasper Water Pollution Control Plant and to request reimbursement from USDA Rural Development in the amount up to \$400,000. The Belt press is to be purchased from Charter Machine Company for \$357,856 with a 12-week lead time of delivery. Mayor Lawrence called on Water/Waste-Water Director David Hall. Mr. Hall provided background information. Mr. Hall stated that our sludge dewatering is through USDA which has been taking a very long time and we are running out of time. The growth that is continuing to come into our community, staff thought the USDA would have moved forward by now however it has not. Mr. Hall asked for approval to move forward with the purchase of Sludge de-watering press and Belt Press. Mr. Hall reassured that that we will be reimbursed the money from the USDA loan grant once it takes place. Mr. Syfan stated that we may need to get a written reimbursement resolution. (To be done at next Council meeting.) Mayor Lawrence called for a motion. Councilmember Foust made a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item H) Consideration and approval for 60-month commitment in the Taser 7 Certification Plan with AXON for the Jasper Police Department for an amount not to exceed \$65,000.00 with Year 1 investment of \$6,323.60. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas who expressed the importance of making a commitment to our public safety. The current tasers (purchased in 2011) are nearing their expected life insomuch as the iteration of tasers carried are no longer viable from the Vendor. Mr. Douglas asked that we make a commitment and not set it out and forget it. Assistant Police Chief Dawkins gave highlights from the Axon Taser proposal. The Police Department would be getting 20 Tasers with 20 holsters and 24 Taser batteries which are rechargeable. Mr. Dawkins went on to talk about the training offered in the proposal. Mayor Lawrence asked how long this commitment will be. Mr. Dawkins stated that it is a 5-year commitment in that there is a maintenance that comes along with the package. If a cartridge is used it will be replenished at no cost. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion to approval for 60-month commitment in the Taser 7 Certification Plan with AXON for the Jasper Police Department for an amount not to exceed \$65,000.00 with Year 1 investment of \$6,323.60. Councilmember Looney made a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item I) Consideration and approval of engaging the services of Ronald Huffman with Wood Consulting for the submittal of a TAP (Transportation enhancement Project) application with GDOT- Stegall Drive. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas and Green Shuttles to provide background information. Mr. Douglas stated that the photos and iterations have been created pro-bono from talented Mr. Huffman. Mr. Douglas went on to explain that staff would like to retain Mr. Huffman and have him submit a TAP application with GDOT to solicit grant monies to enact these measures as well as to incorporate the entire corridor leading to Peace Park. Mr. Douglas added that with the TAP, it is something that may or may not happen. There will be a 20% payment required for our initial investment. This grant requires a million-dollar minimum requirement. Mr. Douglas, Mr. Huff and the Downtown Development Committee would like to expand this goal to incorporate Reinhardt, the parking bathroom area, Old Jail and Cabin as well as the park area. Mr. Suttles spoke of a \$2,500 grant from GA Power that he would like to use this to get started on improving Stegall Drive. He spoke of tactical urbanism: nothing permanent mostly movable and completely reversible. Mr. Green stated that adding picnic tables as well as painting out two parking spaces Dragon green we could get donations for the paint and tables, etc. from other business owners on main street. Further discussion was had between Mr. Suttles on immediate measures in area relative to tables, cones, etc. Along with scheduled closing on a temporary basis. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion for consideration and approval of engaging the services of Ronald Huffman with Wood Consulting for the submittal of a TAP. Councilmember Foust made a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item J) Consideration of special event – Carriage House. Mayor Lawrence called on Lindsey Williams. Mrs. Williams stated that The Carriage House submitted a

Minutes  
Regular Council Meeting  
Monday, June 7, 2021  
Page 4

Special Events Permit to serve alcohol on September 3<sup>rd</sup> starting at 5:00pm. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion to approve. Councilmember Looney made a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item K) Consideration of changing our fuel cards to the State Contract Holder – WEX. Mayor Lawrence again called on Mrs. Williams. Mrs. Williams provided information on changing fuel cards to State Contract-WEX. The City currently uses WEX but is limited to only fueling at QT. With the State Contract Holder WEX, the option would allow for fueling at 95% of fueling stations in the state. Mayor Lawrence called for a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve made a motion to approve. Councilmember Proctor provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item L) Consideration of special event – Long Table on Main for Saturday, September 18th. Mayor Lawrence called on June Ash with North GA Family Partners group. Mrs. Ash asked Mayor and council to close Main Street from Hwy 53 to the 4-way stop at 61 Main from noon until midnight. This is an annual fundraiser for the North Georgia Partners Group. She went on to say that off duty Japer Police will be hired to provide security. This is the 10th annual event for The Long Table. Councilmember Looney make a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item M) Discussion of Weather-Related Event/Impact. Mayor Lawrence called on Mr. Douglas who provided an update on the temporary/permanent water line on Gennett. Staff is working with GEMA & FEMA for Cove repair reimbursements with bid approved with contract creation. It may be late July before a pre-construction meeting on repairing the line with a possible September date of receiving materials.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item M) Consideration for advertising of alcohol license for 61 N. Main Street for Taco Bar. Councilmember Looney made a motion to approve the process for advertising of alcohol license for 61 N. Main Street.

Mayor Lawrence recognized Committee Reports.

Development Committee – Many exciting developments in the works with the State conducting a DRI

Street/Parks Committee – Counting to move forward with Stegall Drive and the Bike Trail at Doris Wigington park.

Administration Committee –

Water/Waste-Water Committee – commended staff on a great job continuing to progress forward with the generators.

Beverly Ragland provided the Financial report.

Lonnie Waters provide the Development report.

Police Chief Greg Lovel provided the Police report.

Chief Steve Roper provided the Fire report.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the Fire Report.

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

Meeting adjourned.

  
Steve Lawrence  
Mayor

  
Beverly Ragland  
Finance Director/City Clerk