

MINUTES
REGULAR CALLED
COUNCIL MEETING
Zoom
Monday, August 3,
2020

Members Present via zoom:

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

Staff:

Brandon Douglas
Lindsey Williams
Tara Benson

Guests in Attendance:

Green Shuttles

Members Absent:

None

Legal Counsel:

David Syfan

Press:

Mari Livsey-KnowPickens
Angela Reinhart

Mayor Lawrence asked Councilmember Foust if he recognized a quorum. See a quorum, Mayor Lawrence recognized meeting as opening. He requested Councilmember Jim Looney to provide the invocation. He requested Councilmember Anne Sneve 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 Raffield providing a second. Further discussion regarding the absence of City Clerk Beverly Ragland due to the death of her father and appointing City Manager Brandon Douglas was had by City Attorney David Syfan. Councilmember Sneve made a new motion to adopt the agenda and approve City Manager Brandon Douglas as interim City Clerk until further notice with Councilmember Raffield providing the second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence stated that Council has the amended minutes from the June 25, 2020 work session which was a Special Called meeting and minutes from the July 13, 2020 Regular Meeting entertained a motion to adopt both as presented. Councilmember Sneve provided motion with Councilmember Looney providing second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence announced a special recognition to retiring Jim Gleason with the Jasper Police Department. He spent 25 years in the Jasper Police Department and held the positions of Patrolman, Sergeant and Captain and is retiring holding the rank of Major and Assistant Chief of Police.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under old business (Item A) Final consideration and approval of Ordinance No. 2020-20 and 2020-21 for a re-zone and annexation of 274 & 250 Robin Road Parcel Nos. JA17 012 and JA17 011 into the City of Jasper as C-2. City Manager Brandon Douglas was asked to bring forth information.

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

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next section of the meeting as the Public Hearing. The request is to close and abandon a portion of Old Mullins Road as it is contained within Parcel No. 031 003 002. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Brandon Douglas to bring forth information. The 60-acre parcel had previously been split with Old Mullins Road that has since been abandoned and no longer resembles a road. This action does not land lock and parcels. Mayor Lawrence asked for public comment. City Manager Douglas indicated there were no requests to speak.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval to close the Public Hearing with Councilmember Looney making a motion for approval with Councilmember Sneve providing a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (item A) Consideration of Resolution No. 2020-06 for a request to close, abandon and quit claiming portion of rights-of-way of Old Mullins Road as contained within Parcel No. 031 003 002. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. Adjoining property owners have to petition the City for approval to formally close and abandon the old roadway to incorporate that into their deed. This action combines the parcel. No

objection has been received from any adjoining property owners

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval of first reading. Councilmember Sneve provided a motion to grant request to close and abandon Old Mullins Road according to Resolution No. 2020-06 and Councilmember Raffield provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item B) Consideration and approval of Resolution No. 2020-07 Intergovernmental Sales Agreement between the City of Jasper and the Jasper Downtown Development Authority, along with any other documents needed to refund existing debt including but not limited to: Bond Resolution Agreement and Financing Agreement and for the Mayor to execute said documents. Mayor Lawrence asked City Attorney David Syfan to bring forth information. The City has gotten a bid for refinancing debt in the Water and Sewer Enterprise fund at an interest rate of 1.14 percent. At that rate the City will save over \$300,000 in interest charges. It also gives the City over \$600,000 in capital funds to make needed improvements and repairs in the Water and Sewer system. The Downtown Development Authority is the issuing authority for the Bonds. Assets will be put into the DDA's name and bought back with the payments on the Bonds by the City. The Revenue Bond is issued in the DDA's name but is backed by the Revenue in the Water and Sewer fund. In the unlikely event there were not enough revenue in the Water and Sewer fund to make the bond payments, the Intergovernmental Sales Agreement allows a millage rate increase for the payment of the debt. City Attorney Syfan asked if anyone had questions. Councilmember Raffield commented that City Manager Douglas had done a phenomenal job with the refinance.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval of the Resolution. Councilmember Sneve Foust approved with Councilmember Dr. Proctor providing a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item C) Consideration and approval of depository accounts for aforementioned bond proceeds through United Community Bank with approvals that mirror existing approvals on accounts there. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth more information. City Manager Douglas explained that bond funds were required to be held in a separate account. Staff recommends using United Community Bank because Water and Sewer funds are held there.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval. Councilmember Jim Looney made a motion for approval and Councilmember Raffield 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. 2020-08 for the City of Jasper to accept the Coronavirus Relief Fund Grant Agreement as provided through the CARES Act and approval for Mayor to sign and approve all documents related to the reimbursement of applicable funds spent as a result of COVID-19. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth more information. The model resolution is provided by the Georgia Municipal Association and has been used by cities across the state to satisfy the requirements of the Federal Aid.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval of the Resolution for the City of Jasper to accept Federal Aid through the CARES Act as required in the model agreement presented by GMA. Councilmember Raffield motioned to approve and Councilmember Sneve provided the second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item E) Consideration and approval to purchase remote workstations that would be required as a result of any executive orders related to the ongoing pandemic as reimbursable through the CRF Agreement. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. The first 30% of the CARES Act reimbursement has already been received. This amount of \$62,408 covers costs already incurred. There is a deadline issued of September 1, 2020 as the day all expenditures are submitted for reimbursements. There have already been items received and encumbered that exhaust a large part of the 30% of the funds already received. Staff is seeking permission to purchase an additional number of laptops that could be utilized to work remotely.

Councilmember Looney made a motion to approve the purchase of remote workstations and a second was provided by Councilmember Raffield. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item F) Consideration and approval of Ordinance No. 2020-22 amending the Alcohol Ordinance for open containers within the Central Business District to include all of City greenspace along with Wall & Depot Street. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. A proposed ordinance has been developed by City Attorney Syfan to allow patrons to take alcoholic beverages purchased in establishments in the CBD outside of that establishment. Attorney Syfan explained that open containers in clear cups would

not be unlawful in the containment area but that other laws such as public drunkenness would be enforceable.

Councilmember Raffield asked for a motion to approve the containment area map with the addition of Depot and Wall Street to include I Love New York Pizza. Councilmember Looney asked to amend the motion to include a portion of land owned by the City of Jasper that is adjacent to the Depot and Wall Street location. Councilmember Raffield amended his motion to approve with the additional properties discussed. Councilmember Looney provided a second. Motion to approve passed.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item G) Consideration and approval of the City of Jasper job application form. Mayor Lawrence asked Councilmember Looney to bring forth information. Attorney Syfan added that an affirmation that the applicant has read and understood the job description should be added. Councilmember Looney stated all job descriptions have not been completed and asked if that could be added later. Attorney Syfan agreed that it could.

Councilmember Looney made the motion to approve the job application form and Councilmember Sneve provided the second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item H) Consideration and approval of purchases of necessary water supplies in anticipation of the Georgia Power Reliability Project. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. The reliability project involves the relocation of underground power lines and is a good project for the city and county. There are, however, unknowns as to the location of some infrastructure. The City needs to be in a position to respond quickly in the event these locates are not detected and there is an unintentional break. If a break occurs due to their negligence on marked lines, they would reimburse the costs. Items purchased would be used to benefit us as a utility in the future.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to approve the purchase. Councilmember Raffield motioned to approve an amount up to \$50,000. Councilmember Dr. Proctor provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item I) Consideration and approval for Georgia Power's purchase of easements from the City of Jasper. City Manager Douglas reiterated the importance of an attitude of partnership with residents, governments and utilities with regard to the purchase of easements. Georgia Power has submitted the following four locations and amounts: 55 Dixie Street \$4,000, Spring Street \$14,800, 127 Woodlane Drive \$4,000 and 1800 Code Road \$4,000. Councilmember Dr. Proctor discussed concern over the unknowns.

Councilmember Looney motioned to approve the purchase of easements by Georgia Power and to give City Manager Brandon Douglas the authority to negotiate costs of said transaction and the locations. Councilmember Raffield provided a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously. Councilmember John Foust did not vote because he works for Georgia Power.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item J) Consideration and approval for the replacement of a Variable Frequency Drive at the Water Treatment plant and conduct necessary improvements to housing accessories. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to explain this. The VFD sets the flow of water at a steady rate. Without this device, there could be sudden changes in the flow potentially acting as a hammer and subjecting the system to leaks. The two bids received came in less than the maximum price spent of \$20,000. There needs to be a housing built where this device is temperature controlled. That is the anticipated cost for both the equipment and housing. Councilmember Foust agreed that heat plays a huge role in the failure of the device thus the need for the housing.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to approve an amount not to exceed \$20,000. Councilmember Raffield provided a motion to approve and Councilmember Sneve provided the second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item K) Consideration and request for approval of reduced Water/Sewer rate applications. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. The City has a process of approving a reduced rate by 50% for customers based on household income and age. Attorney Syfan suggested a sliding scale in any future changes to the thresholds. Discussion was brought by Councilmember Raffield about tabling this request until new guidelines could be developed. Further discussion was had by the board to deny these claims for a period up to 60 days until new guidelines were established.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to deny these requests until new guidelines could be established. Councilmember Sneve motioned to deny the requests and have them reapply after new guidelines are established. The second was provided by Councilmember Raffield. Motion to approved passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized committee reports.

Development Committee-Councilmember Dr. Proctor and Councilmember Raffield: Councilmember Dr. The Development Committee has not met since the last meeting. They do have a revised zoning ordinance in the process of review.

Streets/Parks Committee-Councilmember Foust and Councilmember Sneve: There is a desire to have staff get pricing for the younger children's playground equipment and fencing after the completion of the older children's playground. Also cost numbers obtained from CPL as it relates to creating concept of designs of new parking area/old jail/cabin/peace park. No motion made at this time to approve purchases, only to obtain pricing for an action forthcoming depending upon budget.

Administration Committee-Councilmember Sneve and Councilmember Looney: Continue to work through updating job descriptions. Work is close to being done on pay scales for the City. The Financial report was presented.

Water/Waste Water Committee-Councilmember Dr. Proctor and Councilmember Foust: Working on building relationships with local providers over the last month. In the process on finalizing agreements.

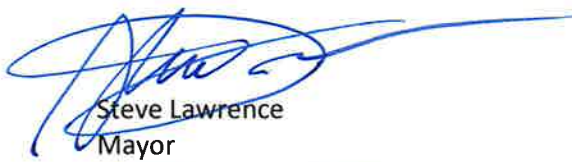
Police/Fire Committee-Councilmember Raffield and Councilmember Looney: Major Gleason retirement acknowledged. No outstanding items other than normal business.

City Manager Brandon Douglas introduced Lindsey Williams to provide the financial report.

Development Report-Lonnie Waters: in the absence of Lonnie Waters, email would be provided to update everyone. Fire and Police reports were in packets.

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

Meeting adjourned.



Steve Lawrence
Mayor



Brandon Douglas
City Manager/Interim City Clerk

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED
BUDGET PLANNING MEETING
ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020

Members Present via zoom:

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

Staff:

Brandon Douglas
Beverly Ragland
Lindsey Williams
Tara Benson

Guests in Attendance:

Members Absent:

None

Legal Counsel:

Press:
Mari Livsey-KnowPickens

Mayor Steve Lawrence asked Councilmember Jim Looney if he recognized a quorum. See a quorum, Mayor Lawrence recognized meeting as opening. He requested City Manager Brandon Douglas to provide the invocation. He requested Councilmember Kirk Raffield 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 Raffield made a motion to adopt the agenda with Councilmember Dr. Sonny Proctor providing a second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the first item under new business (Item A) Revenues for upcoming 2021 budget. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. He elaborated that this was an unusual year due to the pandemic and wanted to present information differently this year. Because the budget for 2021 is still under development, there was no information given in the packets. An additional meeting date of September 2 was offered as preparation for the September 14 regular meeting if needed. He explained that the revenue discussion would be focused around the general fund because the other funds were proprietary and did not involve general services. There are a few sources of revenue that help fire, police, building inspection, administration, etc. operate. Water, sewer and sanitation have fees associated with those services. The 2020 budget was adopted in late 2019 and a mid-year budget amendment was done for the first time in July of 2020. This amendment resulted in a need to use about 29% of fund balance to have a balanced budget of revenues to expenditures in the general fund. This resulted in about \$250,000 more than originally expected. Department leaders have been asked to look at revenue projections for the 2021 general fund budget as roughly the same as 2020 which was just under \$4.5 million. The estimated expenditures for 2020 come in at approximately \$4.9 million. A lot of the expenditures for 2020 were one-time costs: hardware, software, police vests, turn-out gear for the fire department, playground and the zone ordinance are costs that are not going to be budgeted for in 2021. Even when we take those one time costs out of the \$4.9 million in expenditures for 2021, we will still need to use fund balance to have a required balanced budget. One of the biggest sources of revenue for the general fund is property taxes. The digest is scheduled to arrive in September from the county. This is used to establish a millage rate. The \$4.5 million in revenue in the general fund is made up of \$1.2 million in property taxes. There are also franchise fees, business licenses, Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) and fines/fees/forfeitures in the general fund. Although property tax is important, there are other revenues that support general services that are outside of our control (i.e. sales tax and alcohol taxes could go down). Councilmember Raffield asked about the deadline for the county to submit the digest. City Manger Douglas explained the deadline is September 1 to the Department of Revenue but extensions are commonly granted in 30-day increments. There was further discussion by Councilmember Dr. Proctor about discussions about moving city holdings. City Manager Douglas explained that specific procedures would need to be followed for possibly moving those holdings. Discussed then focused on the Water Department. Water rates have been the same since January 5, 2009. Our expenses in the Water Department have not stayed constant since that date. Minimum fees are being explored in this department. Existing software does not allow for a rate adjustment or a tiered structure but we can look at the minimum fee. Currently, we are well below the local market. Staff is looking at and recommending an adjustment of those minimum fees to fall in line with market. Area water departments are all paying the same costs for chemicals and moving water yet we are behind on minimum fees. An adjustment would allow us to reinvest a third back into the system, reserve a third for upcoming capital projects on the system and the last third as a transfer into the general fund to

cover costs associated with the business of water. Councilmember Anne Sneve asked for clarification on not being able to adjust the minimum until we have new software. City Manager Douglas reiterated that we would not be able to adjust rates or a tiered schedule until we have new software that is a year away but we would be able to adjust the minimum fee with current software. City Manager Douglas wanted to make clear the distinction between general fund revenues that cover general services (in a required balanced budget) and the enterprise fund revenues that cover cost of business in those business-like funds. He wanted to be clear that even without the one-time expenditures aforementioned, we would still be operating at a deficit. We are eligible for one-time CARES Act revenue to offset costs in 2020 for \$208,000. Essentially, the one-time costs in 2020 general fund have been replenished by the one-time receipt for CARES for about the same amount, although the CARES funds are approved to pay for public safety personnel during the pandemic. There was no further discussion regarding revenue

City Manager Douglas moved on to the next item under new business (Item B) Expenditures for the upcoming budget. Some notable increases in the general fund include employee benefits such as health, dental, vision and retirement, liability insurance for property casualty and litigation, and additional software maintenance costs. The increase in projected expenditures does not take into consideration departmental requests. If we hold steady on revenue levels from 2020 and other expenses, we are at a projected shortfall of over \$550,000. This budget planning meeting is being held to disclose very preliminary basic information of this potential shortage and further required use of fund balance before our next regular council meeting on September 14 when we have to consider what the City wants to do with the 2020 millage rate. It is the City Manager's responsibility along with the Mayor's to present a balanced budget. Looking at the revenue trends also requires looking at the services provided and the costs associated. There has been a 10% of reduction in work force due to attrition and departments operating with a reduced crew in 2020, no fleet management requests or capital items for 2021 and no planned merit increases in 2021 and we still project a shortage of \$550,000. Looking at a five-year history of actual numbers provided by Finance for the general fund, we show an increase of 27% in expenditures and an increase of 12.5% in revenue. While the increase in expenditures is modest, the slower increase in revenue cannot sustain current operations comparatively. One solution is the major revenue in the general fund, property tax. The choice not to use the rollback rate in 2019 resulted in an increase of \$30,000 in revenue. Even if the digest comes in at double the increase from last year, \$60,000 would not absorb the known increases mentioned earlier. Before going into the timeline, City Manager Douglas asked if there were items that needed further explanation. There was no further discussion from council. City Manager elected not to elaborate on a comparison of local millage rates as that will be covered during the millage rate meeting. Councilmember Raffield commended City Manager Douglas on how he is handling a difficult topic and appreciates his approach. He also elaborated that he had taken a comparative look at rates and stated ours were lower than those in our immediate vicinity. Councilmember Sneve commended his comments and agreed. City Manager Douglas commented he is continually looking at short term and long-term solutions to the current trend. There were no further questions from council regarding revenues or expenditures. Councilmember Dr. Proctor wanted to add that there are several other special items the public should know will continue to move forward regardless of the presentation. City Manager Douglas further commented that all the items identified in the February retreat have been completed in the midst of a pandemic thanks to the guidance and dedication of the council.

City Manager Douglas transitioned to the next item under new business (Item C) The timeline of the 2021 budget and 2020 property taxes as promulgated by law. The September 14 meeting will have a request for permission to advertise the millage rate. City Manager Douglas explained that you could advertise higher and adopt lower but you could not do the opposite. He explained the meeting and advertising requirements of the property tax millage rate. The dates and times for the three public hearings have been selected based on the requirements. The adoption date would be October 4 at the Regular Council Meeting. The meeting and advertising requirements were explained for the budget with the adoption date being at the December 7 Regular Council Meeting. City Manager Douglas asked about any potential conflicts with the proposed timeline. There were no objections brought forth. He also conveyed his concern over the Statewide executive order and the requirement for public hearings and that he had been in consultation with City Attorney David Syfan regarding such. He assured council that the law would be followed. Councilmember Looney, speaking on behalf of Mayor Lawrence due to technical difficulty, asked for further comment. There was no further discussion.

Councilmember Looney asked for a motion to adjourn with Councilmember Raffield providing a motion and Councilmember Sneve providing second.

Meeting adjourned.



Steve Lawrence
Mayor



Beverly Ragland

~~City Manager/Interim City Clerk~~

Finance Director / City Clerk

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