

MINUTES  
REGULAR CALLED  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ZOOM  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

Members Present via zoom:

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

Staff via zoom:

Brandon Douglas  
Beverly Ragland  
Lindsey Williams  
Tara Benson  
Lonnie Waters  
Steve Roper  
Von Headrick

Guests in Attendance via zoom:

Amberle Godfrey  
Green's iPhone  
Jenna  
Jenna's iPhone  
Pam  
Computer 1  
Rebecca Keefer

Members Absent:

John Foust

Legal Counsel via zoom:

R. David Syfan

Press via zoom:

Mari Livsey-KnowPickens  
Dan Pool  
Know Pickens 2

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 stated that Council has the minutes from the August 3, 2020 regular council meeting and minutes from the August July 13, 2020 Budget Planning Meeting and entertained a motion to adopt both as presented. Councilmember Looney provided motion with Councilmember Anne Sneve providing second. Motion to approve carried unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the only item under old business (Item A) Final consideration and approval of Ordinance No. 2020-22 for the amending of the City of Jasper Alcohol ordinance to permit open containers within the central business district. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. At the August 3, 2020 regular council meeting there was a first reading that detailed the containment area. Since that meeting, staff has met with the new owner of the Woodbridge Inn property at which time they asked to be incorporated into the containment area. The area would follow across the wood bridge and envelope their property. City Attorney R. David Syfan recommended adding language to revise the ordinance accordingly. Councilmember Dr. Proctor asked if it would be easy in the future to amend the containment area if other properties wished to be included. Attorney Syfan committed to adding additional language to make that possible.

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

Mayor Lawrence recognized the first item under new business (Item A) Consideration and approval of advertising millage rate. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. Each year the City receives the tax digest from Pickens County. Finance Director Beverly Ragland has received the digest and has calculated the rollback rate as required. If there is an intention to recommend a millage rate in excess of the calculated rollback rate, procedures are statutorily required to advertise a tax increase. Using the rollback rate of 4.345 would not meet current expenditures. Using the current millage rate of 4.655 would only provide an increase in revenue of \$67,000 over 2019. Finance has provided information on what respective millage rate increases would mean for revenue based on the 2020 tax digest. In order to present a balanced budget for adoption in December, the millage must be set before the budget hearings are conducted in October and the respective public hearings in November and December. The millage rate will have to be set first. Finance Director Ragland elaborated the need to advertise the notice of tax increase, current and five-year history and time and place of public hearings to meet O.C.G.A. requirements before Pickens County could deliver the tax digest for approval for the entire county on September 25. The advertisements would need to be in the Pickens Progress on September 17 and September 24. The preliminary budgets for 2021 have revealed a millage rate of 6.780 needed to produce a balanced

budget. Mayor Lawrence further discussed that the advertised rate could not be exceeded but it could be adopted at a lower rate. Finance Director Ragland confirmed this to be correct. Mayor Lawrence wanted comments from all councilmembers regarding this. Councilmember Raffield commented that a tax increase is not a perfect situation but they were elected to be fiscally responsible. Councilmember Looney agreed with Raffield and stated it was never easy and as staff proceeded to get the budget prepared, we'd see what the coming months bring. Councilmember Sneve agreed a balanced budget was needed and recommends following staff's recommendation on the millage rate and hopefully be able to adjust it down once the final budget numbers are in. Councilmember Proctor pointed out that this has been an accumulation over time and has been presented at this time to make it right. His feedback from the public over transparency in this situation has been positive along those lines. He fully supports the recommendation. Mayor Lawrence discussed savings in salaries since the first of the year by not filling vacancies as they have occurred, leaving holes in staffing.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Raffield making a motion for approval to advertise the millage rate at 6.78 mills and Councilmember Sneve providing a second. Councilmember Looney asked if this motion was for the advertisement only and City Manager Douglas reassured it was for advertisement only with the millage rate being adopted in October. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item B) Consideration and approval of advertising millage rate. City Manager Douglas presented a schedule of proposed dates for advertising and public hearing dates to satisfy statutory requirements for the adoption of the millage rate and for the adoption of the budget. The public hearings and council meetings will be hybrid meetings with the opportunity for the public to attend in person or via zoom. The adoption of a millage rate will be done with an ordinance so the called meeting on October 12th is necessary for a second reading after the regular meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Proctor making a motion to approve the dates as submitted with Councilmember Looney providing a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item C) Consideration and approval of alcohol license for Pendley Creek Brewing Company, LLC at 57 North Main Street. Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Raffield making a motion to approve and Councilmember Looney providing the second. Before voting, Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas if anything needed to be added at which time, he stated that everything was in proper order and all advertisements had been completed. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item D) Consideration of licensing agreement with 57 North Main Street for allowing the Pendley Creek Brewing Company, LLC to utilize a ramp to access the side entrance from the sidewalk. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. Last year the board approved a business along Main Street access to a ramp through a temporary licensing agreement. Taking that same approach, this agreement is allowing a ramp to be built on the city sidewalk. This access is needed for the business to operate. Development Director Lonnie Waters commented that the Fire Marshall requires a second exit and this is accomplished with a ramp to the existing door on the side of the business. City Attorney Syfan commented on the proposed licensing agreement. The license is not a grant of an interest in real estate but a grant of use of real estate. This agreement is a one-year term that will automatically renew unless council takes action within 30 days prior to the end of the term. The agreement states a term of 10 years but this is renewable or non-renewable yearly. The access ramp has to be designed to meet all building codes. If the business is sold, the City has the option of granting to new tenant. Liability insurance is required on the ramp in the amount of one million dollars. The ramp would have to be removed if the business ends the agreement. Councilmember Raffield inquired if the license agreement should be with the owner of the property rather than the tenant and Attorney Syfan commented it would be correct to be with tenant.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Raffield making a motion to approve the license agreement with Councilmember Sneve providing a second. Motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item E) Consideration of options relative to the sidewalks along Stegall Drive. Mayor Lawrence asked City Manager Douglas to bring forth information. The illustration presented shows a two-lane, one-way road being reduced to a one-

lane, one-way road and the extension of the sidewalks to a depth necessary to accommodate the ramp. The width of the one-lane road would be at a size wide enough to accommodate fire trucks. Lonnie Waters commented on adding eleven-foot sidewalks. The road would need to be taken down to match the curb and guttering and storm drains would need to be added and connected to Mark Whitfield St. to accommodate water coming into that area. This would allow future businesses to build outside decks. The entire street and sidewalks would need to be completely demolished and rebuilt. City Manager Douglas explained that the project was more intensive than originally anticipated and wanted council's direction on what to pursue.

Councilmember Sneve made a motion for staff to continue to work with the committee on getting options and pricing on doing it the correct way. Councilmember Looney provided the second. Mayor Lawrence asked about a time line on getting a plan in light of the opening of Pendley Creek Brewing Company. It was discussed that there was not a need for a time stamp. Councilmember Raffield further discussed the importance of this development and stressed time to be given. Councilmember Proctor asked if SPLOST was available for this construction and City Manager Douglas confirmed. Motion to approve as motioned passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item F) Consideration of purchasing playground equipment for City Park and associated work to finalize the improvements utilizing SPLOST funds. Mayor Lawrence asked Councilmember Sneve to bring forth information. Illustrations were presented for a younger child play area. Recommendations were made to allow \$50,000 of SPLOST money be set aside for the playground equipment and fencing.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion for approval with Councilmember Raffield making a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. Councilmember Proctor asked about the 2020 SPLOST receipts at which time City Manager Douglas provided the first month's receipt and the next month's projected. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item G) Consideration and approval of the renewal from the Georgia Municipal Association for the City of Jasper health, dental and vision insurance. City Manager Douglas was asked to bring forth information. This is the second year in a row that the increase has fallen below double digits. The recommendation is that the renewal be approved and for the City to absorb the increase without raising employee contributions.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to approve with Councilmember Sneve providing a motion to approve the renewal of insurance with City absorbing increase. Councilmember Looney provided a second. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item H) Consideration of Resolution No. 2020-09 for requiring the use of masks or face coverings in property owned or leased by the City of Jasper during the COVID-19 Outbreak. City Manager Douglas explained that currently there were no rules that a mask be worn when entering City facilities. He has encouraged staff to wear a face covering when conducting meetings with visiting individuals. City Attorney Syfan elaborated that the Georgia Municipal Association has drafted a model resolution that is being utilized. Governor Kemp has allowed cities across Georgia to decide if face masks are required. This resolution is for city property only, not citywide.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to adopt with Councilmember Sneve providing a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-09 for the required use of face masks on property owned or leased by the city with Councilmember Raffield providing the second. Councilmember Proctor inquired if City Parks were included and Attorney Syfan replied they were not. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item I) Consideration and approval of additional work from Match Point for leak detection of \$9,800 and to authorize the additional use of up to \$25,000 for Match Point to install zoned meters in targeted areas. City Manager Douglas brought forth more information. This was discussed in the February retreat. Match Point was commissioned to survey leak detection in an amount up to \$25,000 in April. At the time we did not have an idea of what the survey work would reveal. The additional work above the original amount was needed to get us to a point of installing zoned meters in targeted areas. If the zoned meters exceed the \$25,000 it would be presented at the October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to approve with Councilmember Proctor providing a motion to approve. Councilmember Looney provided a second. Councilmember Proctor asked how many meters may be needed and City Manager Douglas replied between 2 and 4. The motion to approve passed

unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item J) 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. City Manager Douglas brought forth information. Staff had presented an idea of making changes to the rear entrance of City Hall with a ramp for use in Council Chambers during municipal court. The estimate for the ramp came to \$10,000. The desire was to provide better access for customers with mobility issues and limiting the disruption of normal operations during court days. The available office space already has a ramp for ease of entry. The estimate from qualified individuals included bathroom facilities that would be required making the initial thought of an additional \$5,000 to build the space out fall short. Discussion from Mayor Lawrence included the use of the space for a polling area as well as court.

Councilmember Looney made a motion for staff to continue getting estimates and come to council with options. Councilmember Raffield provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item K) Discussion and update of the City of Jasper Zoning Ordinance review. Councilmember Proctor was asked to bring forth information. Work has been done with Clark Patterson Lee to revise the City's zoning ordinances. We are close to having it in a presentable state. Revised copies will be sent for suggestions to the committee. There are hopes for final approval in the December council meeting.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item L) Consideration and approval of pursuing the purchase of raw water intake pump to replace existing one at Long Swamp Creek through the competitive bid process in accordance with our purchasing policy. City Manager Douglas was asked to bring forth information. Finance Director Ragland advised council that due to the potential amount of the purchase, there would need to be a 30-day formal sealed bid process. Discussion was had among council that approval would be given when bids were opened and no approval was needed to begin bid process.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item M) Consideration and approval of water supply agreement between the City of Jasper and Pickens County. Councilmember Proctor was asked to bring forth information. Staff was charged to meet with potential water partners including Calhoun, Cherokee County, Gilmer County and Pickens County. We wish to solidify the relationship with Pickens County so we can partner with their pre-existing relationships as to obtaining water. City Manager Douglas added although this agreement was temporary in nature, it is a step that could be expounded upon.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to approve with Councilmember Raffield providing a motion to approve. Councilmember Sneve provided a second. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item N) Consideration and approval of amended organizational chart. City Manager Douglas was asked to bring forth information. The organizational chart was approved back in April. The modification allows for better operations. Currently, the position of Fire Marshal is under the Fire Department. The desire is to have the Fire Marshal under Development as well as Fire.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to approve with Councilmember Looney providing a motion to approve with Councilmember Raffield providing a second. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item O) Consideration and approval of job descriptions for the following positions: Assistant Police Chief, Building Inspector, Fire Marshal, Planner, Public Works Crew Leader, Public Works Equipment Operator, Public Works Technician, Sanitation Collector, Sanitation Driver/Collector, Sanitation Supervisor, Water Distribution Crew Leader, Water Distribution Equipment Operator, Water Distribution Technician, Water Plant Operator, Water Supply Crew Leader, Water Supply Equipment Operator, Water Supply Technician, and Water/Waste Water Plant Operator. Councilmembers Sneve and Looney were asked to bring forth information. A tremendous amount of work has been done by staff to develop these. Human Resources Coordinator Stella Brewer was commended on taking the lead in the endeavor.

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

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item P) Consideration and approval of City of Jasper pay scale to reflect the existing positions and unfilled positions. City Manager Douglas brought forth information. Along with doing an organizational chart and job descriptions, we also needed a pay scale. The pay scale has no impact on the 2021 budget in terms of adjustments to bases.

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to approve the pay scale as submitted with Councilmember Proctor providing a motion to approve and Councilmember Looney providing a second. Councilmember Raffield discussed an observed correction needed on base pay for Police Corporal and Police Sergeant at which time Finance Director Ragland agreed those should be reversed and would be. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the next item under new business (Item Q) Consideration and approval of Resolution 2020-10 for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Pre-Application for the Land Water Conservation Fund Grant for the 2021 funding cycle. City Manager Douglas brought forth information. This resolution demonstrates the City's commitment to matching funding of up to 50% or more and up to an amount of \$500,000. The pool of applicants shrinks in Spring 2021 at which time the application could be made. Pre-applications are due October 31.

Councilmember Looney made a motion to approve a pre-application on the Land Water Conservation Fund Grant with Councilmember Sneve providing a second. Councilmember Proctor inquired about a pre-grant application made last year that was not received and if it could be applied for again. City Manager Douglas commented that the two grants could not be applied for on the same project. The former grant was highly competitive with approvals given to some large metro cities. The LWCF grant has historically been favorable to more rural communities. Councilmember Proctor mentioned collaboration with Pickens County on the former grant and his desire to revisit that. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized the last item under new business (Item R) Consideration for request for reduced Water/Sewer Rates. City Manager Douglas brought forth information. An oversight occurred at prior month's council meeting for the request. At the time, the eligible age was not met but there was a disability that should have negated the eligible age rule.

Councilmember Sneve made a motion to approve the reduced rate with Councilmember Raffield providing the second. Councilmember Proctor asked that we make that proactive back to when the application was made. City Manager Douglas assured it would. 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 Raffield 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 asked for a motion to authorize City Manager Brandon Douglas to pursue a potential sale of City real estate and to bring back information to the next regular meeting. Councilmember Looney provided a motion to approve and Councilmember Raffield provided a second. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Mayor Lawrence recognized Committee Reports.

Development Committee – Councilmember Proctor commented on the combined meeting with the development authorities from Gilmer County, Pickens County, Jasper, Fannin County and the combined Pickens/Gilmer authority. The session went very well and the feedback has been very positive.

Street/Parks Committee – Councilmember Sneve reminded members about the playground equipment that has been approved for purchase. Invitations were extended to council and public for a photo opportunity on September 15 at the new picnic tables that also have free wifi. Councilmember Sneve made a motion for staff to pursue getting professional plans for peace park from Clark Patterson Lee. City Manager Douglas recommended a price not to exceed \$7,500 for design and concept using 2020 SPLOST funds. A second was provided by Councilmember Looney. Councilmember Raffield asked that there be signage included in the plan. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Administration Committee – Councilmember Looney extended his appreciation to council for approval on pay scale, organization chart and job descriptions. Work is still being done.

Water/Waste Water Committee – Councilmember Proctor expressed staff's satisfaction with how work has been progressing. The meetings with the counties have been promising. He expressed his appreciation of City Manager Douglas' leadership.

Police/Fire Committee – Councilmember Looney has met with both Chiefs and their reports are contained in the packets. He asked for approval to use 2020 SPLOST funds be utilized to purchase public safety vehicles. He made a motion to approve staff obtaining bids for three public safety vehicles to be considered for approval at the October regular meeting. The second was provided by Councilmember Raffield. City Manager Douglas commented the concern Chief Lovell has on the amount of lead time needed to purchase vehicles. It could be anywhere from 6 weeks to 6 months. This time would allow a positive SPLOST cash flow to make the purchase. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Financial Report – Finance Director Beverly Ragland provided highlights from the financial report.

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

Mayor Lawrence asked for a motion to accept the Police and Fire reports as submitted to them with Councilmember Raffield providing a motion and Councilmember Proctor providing a second. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Meeting adjourned.



Steve Lawrence  
Mayor



Beverly Ragland  
Finance Director/City Clerk