

**Minutes
Forsyth City Council Meeting
February 15, 2021**

Call to Order

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and Roll Call

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Dodd gave the invocation. In attendance for the meeting in person was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Chris Hewett, City Manager, Janice Hall, City Attorney, Bobby Melton and City Clerk, Regina Ivie. In attendance via zoom was Councilmembers John Howard, and Greg Goolsby. Councilmembers Julius Stroud and Melvin Lawrence were unable to attend. All unanimous votes will be four votes (Goolsby, Howard, Dodd, and Hewett).

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes from the January 27, 2021 Called Meeting and the February 1, 2021 Council Meeting

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing – 2021 Urban Redevelopment Plan Update

Mr. Taylor Stickels with Middle Georgia Regional Commission stated that various updates have been done to the Urban Redevelopment Plan since 2010; it is a prerequisite to filing for opportunity zones, redevelopment area strategies; and various other programs offered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Mr. Stickels reviewed the updates to the areas within the city; objectives have been updated as well as photographs within the plan.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor for the public hearing in favor of or opposition of the 2021 Urban Redevelopment Plan Update. No one came forward in favor of or opposed to the 2021 Urban Redevelopment Plan Update therefore, Mayor Wilson closed the floor for the public hearing.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the 2021 Urban Redevelopment Plan updates. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Jordan Harbin – Review Proposal to record and broadcast Council Meeting.

Mr. Jordan Harbin with Harbin Repairs offered to record and live stream City Council Meeting at no cost to the City; Harbin Repairs will advertise their business during the recording.

Mayor Wilson stated that previously due to the bandwidth issue the City is no longer live streaming the Council Meetings.

Mayor Wilson further stated that City permission isn't required to record and or live stream the meetings; the Council Meetings are open meetings which allows for the public to record the meetings.

Approval of lease purchase with Altec Capital for bucket truck.

Ms. Hall reviewed the lease quote for a bucket truck; total cost is \$152, 832.00, annual payment would be \$28027.00.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the quote of lease with Altec Capital. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Requisitions Greater than \$5,000

Reed & Shows Meter Repair & Supply – \$5,875.00

Pyles Plumbing & Utility Contractors, Inc – \$8,790.00 – 2020 SPLOST

\$154,400 Previously approved at 11-2-2020 Council Meeting.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the requisitions as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

City Manager's Report

Ms. Hall provided the following report:

Approvals needed:

- Police department requested a Panhandling Ordinance; we worked with the Regional Commission to create an ordinance; chief is ready to advertise the ordinance for adoption.
- We need to know what to do about holding July 4 fireworks; need to lockdown the date with vendor; stated at council retreat that this would be a good time to get others to partner – Tammie spoke to Rec Director and they are not holding the fireworks this year and leaving it up to city; we included the cost in the events budget - \$10,000 for fireworks display; can decide later if will have food vendors or just the fireworks but really need to lock that date down soon.

- A more precise face covering policy has been written and provided to all departments for their employees; the face covering policy spells out the minimal times that all employees must wear face coverings while in city buildings and/or vehicles along with the additional disinfecting for vehicles and offices.
- Revised personnel policy has been received; we will spend the next department head meeting reviewing each section of the draft to determine any edits that need to be made; once all edits are complete, a draft copy will be provided to the City employment attorney for review, then to council for adoption.

March Council meetings:

- Public hearing for sign variance will come before council on March 1 for internally illuminated sign in the corridor overlay district for Shane's Rib Shack
- Public hearing for sign variance will come before council on March 1 for internally illuminated sign in highway business for QuikTrip.
- Reminder that the department heads will provide an overview of the accomplishments for their respective departments during the 2nd council meeting in March; we will try to limit all other business on that agenda to allow for each department to present without holding a lengthy meeting. CVB is on the agenda for the 3/1 meeting so we will move Economic Development, Main Street/DDA presentation to the 3/1 meeting. Denise Buff will make a presentation on the Artisan Guild in March as well.
- Sol Taco & Tequila will be presenting a request to add tables and chairs to the sidewalk area in front of the restaurant.
- Still have several outstanding alcohol license applications waiting on paperwork to be submitted, once received will begin those advertisements.
- P&Z has a full agenda of projects for their February 22nd meeting and expect those to be advertised and come before council at first meeting in April.

Project updates:

- RFP for contractors is being advertised for LWCF Grant at golf course; pre-bid meeting on March 5 at 2:00 with bids due on March 10 for bid opening at 2:00. We are receiving a good response of companies requesting the full bid, hopefully that will mean competitive bids will be submitted.
- CDBG water line project in Blount Hill is not progressing as well as expected; contractor has had several issues and we are working through those and those issues have caused them to go beyond their approved completion date; our inspector required a pressure test and that was completed on Friday, line pressurized well and will be flushed Monday morning; public works and UP are working with the contractor to help with road cuts and service lines.
- Main Street water line project is moving along very well; will be installing water meters on property owner side of sidewalk as much as possible.
- Worked with Mike Batchelor to figure out solution for downtown pedestrian lighting; he has ordered replacement LED bulbs that will be brighter than what is currently in place; hopefully, this will add much needed lighting downtown; Main Street/DDA Board has asked that the City keep the lights on the trees downtown year-round; we are working to determine type of lights that would be needed and all other areas of possible concern before deciding whether to move forward with that request or not.
- Conference call last Friday with USDA for final request for information before submitting our application forward for review; all information requested was submitted to USDA by end of day on Friday; should hear back from USDA by end of March with offer on the water and wastewater plant upgrades; this is a \$30 million project.
- Mike, Craig, and I met with Schneider last week to begin our conversations again regarding projects through their company; mainly focused on a water and electric meter changeout program but also provided them with information from council retreat regarding a signature solar project and park improvements; they will put a presentation together for a council meeting. Schneider will require an Investment Grade Audit Agreement before moving forward with the projects and if decide after the Audit is submitted not to do the projects, the City will pay \$42,350 to Schneider for the Investment Grade Audit. This information has been forwarded to each of you.
- Met with Hofstadter & Associates to get updates on where they are on several projects:
 - o Should have plan for stairs at The Pickled Okra by end of this week.
 - o Should have plan for storm drain on Adams Street in couple of weeks.
 - o Provided recommendation for City participation in waterline installation on Railroad Ave; will discuss with developer before asking council to approve.
- Regina, Lyn, and I met with representative from Waste Management, company that has purchased Advanced Disposal to review several issues that we are having and just to fine tune the service and how to handle customer issues going forward.
- Received notification that our application for LWCF grant for projects in Country Club park for the master park plan was approved to move forward in the process; received notification on February 4th with first set of documents due February 12 and next set due February 19; working with Regional Commission to get all the documentation submitted on time; the LWCF grant for park projects is \$1.25 million with maximum of \$500,000 from grant; I am working on financing options for the remainder of the projects to have options ready by end of 2nd quarter as requested.

- Visible progress is being made to City Hall construction; contractor has submitted request with justifications for an extension which is being reviewed by Clark Nexsen and I for consideration, once we agree on a final date, Pellicano will come to council to answer any questions regarding the extension request.

General Report:

- I reported incorrectly that names of those to possibly replace Mrs. Rowland on the Housing Authority were to be submitted to me and that is incorrect. By State Law, the appointments to the Housing Authority are made by the Mayor so please present names to Mayor Wilson for consideration to the Housing Authority.
- Electric Cities of Georgia Board is considering purchasing land to build a new training facility on. The Board is looking at several alternatives for funding for the land and building one of which would be using 60% of each participant YES (equivalent to approximately \$4500 for us). The building would be covered in the annual subscription costs to ECG for each participant under training & development. I responded that we would need some type of assurance covering what happens if participants drop their subscription to Training & Development even though it requires a 2-year notice. Also, Electric Cities of Georgia is losing some out of state training dollars this year, so that is a factor as well. Overall, this will mean estimates increase to our annual subscription of \$17,000 if the Board approves to project.
- Meeting this week with Regional Commission on the Boundary and Map Survey that is submitted annually to the Census Dept; this is the survey that provides annexations to the Census Bureau each year, so they have the correct city boundaries when it is time for the next census.
- Working with Regional Commission to submit SAFER grant for fire department personnel.
- Technical Assistance request with Regional Commission for annexation process was on hold; that has been reactivated and waiting for staff to be assigned so we can pick that process back up.
- Main Street Board voted to partner with Mrs. Rosemary Walker with the banners and recognition of Black History Month. Mrs. Walker is not doing her exhibit this year due to COVID-19 but did have the new banners made that spotlight a few of our community leaders. This is her 13th year of promoting Black History Month and except for a few donations over the years, she has covered all the cost to maintain and display the exhibit. Thank you, Mrs. Walker, for this great service to our community.
- Notice of general election is being advertised by the Elections Board with qualifying August 16- August 20; Posts 2, 5 and 6 are up for re-election this year.
- Arbor Day tree planting is scheduled for this Friday, February 19 around noon; Tree Board is still trying to determine a good place to plant a couple of trees.
- Chief Herndon is working to prepare to open Splashpad; scheduling with Carlos to make some repairs/replace some parts that failed at end of last season.

City Attorney Report

Mr. Melton stated two variance applications for signage is currently being advertised in the Monroe Reporter.

- Cabiness Rd Project at 448 Cabiness Rd.
- QuikTrip at Highway 18 and Patrol Rd.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Wilson had no further business to report.

Additional Business

No additional business was brought forward.

Public Comments

No one came forward for public comments.

Executive Session

Mayor Wilson stated an executive session was necessary to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to adjourn into executive session at 6:25 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the executive session at 6:30 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss Mr. Dodd offered a motion to adjourn the council meeting. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.