

**MINUTES
FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 15, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, INVOCATION, AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Goolsby gave the invocation. Present for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Greg Goolsby, John Howard, Chris Hewett, and Melvin Lawrence. Also present was City Attorney, Bobby Melton and City Manager, Janice Hall.

Councilman Stroud was unable to attend the meeting; therefore, all unanimous votes will be five (5) votes (Dodd, Goolsby, Howard, Hewett, and Lawrence).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE APRIL 1, 2019 COUNCIL MEETING

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

PUBLIC HEARING TO AMEND CHAPTER 4 – ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE ORDINANCE TO ADD A DOWNTOWN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

Mr. Melton reviewed that this matter has been properly advertised in the April 3 and 10 issues of the Reporter and is before council for possible adoption to amend Chapter 4 and to set an effective date. Mayor Wilson asked for a show of hands of those wishing to speak in favor of the proposed ordinance amendments and several raised their hands. Mayor Wilson asked for a show of hands of those wishing to speak in opposition of the proposed ordinance amendments and no one raised their hand.

Mr. Jeremy Seymour, owner of The Pickled Okra, came forward to speak in favor of the proposed ordinance stating that he feels this is a great idea and will bring more people to the downtown area. Mr. Seymour asked that council look at the proposed start times and make those later in the day. Mayor Wilson stated that council is considering 5:00 pm to 11:00 pm.

Mrs. Lorri Thomas, owner of Jonah's on Johnston, asked if those hours applied to Sunday as well because they are opened from noon to 5:00 pm on Sunday. There was a lengthy discussion by council regarding times. Mr. Howard suggested leaving the times to the discretion of the business owners so long as they were not outside the times alcohol can legally be sold. Mr. Goolsby suggested 5:00 pm-11:00 pm for Monday through Friday and 11:00 am – 7:00 pm on Saturday and Sunday. Mr. Melton stated that a change to the times advertised would be a substantial change and would require that the proposed ordinance be readvertised. Ms. Hall stated that she hand-delivered a letter with a copy of the proposed ordinance to each business that is located within the proposed area on Friday. Ms. Hall stated that her letter specifically stated that hours and/or days that consumption will be allowed was still to be determined and the proposed ordinance that was included with the letter left the hours blank. Mr. Melton stated that this would suffice to cover making the change to the hours advertised.

Ms. Holly White, owner of Sage & Sparrow, stated that she visited the City of Monroe on yesterday and they have a lot going on downtown. Ms. White stated that Forsyth is growing and approving this ordinance is a good idea.

Mrs. Shauna Boatright, owner of Hometown Treasures & Monograms, stated that she had customers in her store today that would not stay in town because all the downtown restaurants were closed.

Mrs. Kelly Heirs, owner of West Mane, stated that she was interested in how this ordinance would affect someone offering alcohol for an event such as Business After Hours or shopping event. Mayor Wilson stated that the business offering the alcohol would still have to hold an alcohol license to provide alcohol. Ms. Hall reviewed current alcohol ordinance that governs one day alcohol permits for Non-profit and for those that are not Non-profit, stating that a business having an event should first submit a temporary, one-day permit application for approval by city council, then submit to the State for a similar permit. Ms. Hall stated that the ordinance limits the number of temporary permits to six per year for a business or Non-profit. Mrs. Heirs asked how this ordinance would affect the Forsythia Festival. There was a lengthy discussion regarding wording to put in the ordinance to allow council to revoke this portion of the alcohol ordinance at any time for special events. Mr. Melton stated that if council knows they are not going to allow alcohol during certain times or events, that this needs to be included in the ordinance now and not try to amend the ordinance for each occasion. Mrs. Tammie Pierson, Economic Development Director, asked if a certain area is blocked off for an event, could the person applying for the street to be blocked request that no alcohol be allowed inside the area they are requesting to use. Mr. Melton responded that closing a street is different than allowing alcohol and if council wants exceptions in the ordinance those need to be included now before the ordinance is adopted.

Mr. Hewett asked about the size of the container and Ms. Hall stated that this was also included in her letter as something left to be determined and the proposed ordinance included with her letter left the size of the container blank.

Hearing no further comments for or against the proposed ordinance, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to amend Chapter 4 Alcohol ordinance to add the Downtown Entertainment District with hours of consumption as Monday – Friday, 5:00 pm – 11:00 pm; Saturday 11:30 am – 7:00 pm; and Sunday 11:30 am – 7:00 pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lawrence. Mr. Howard asked about the Forsythia Festival and there was a lengthy discussion regarding suspending the hours of sell and consumption and how to accomplish that. Mr. Goolsby stated that council should be able to suspend the ordinance at any time.

Mr. Goolsby withdrew his motion. Mr. Melton stated that the City Charter does allow for an emergency provision to suspend any ordinance summarily.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to amend Chapter 4 Alcohol ordinance to add the Downtown Entertainment District with hours of consumption as Monday – Friday 5:00 pm – 11:00 pm; Saturday 11:30 am – 11:00 pm; and Sunday 11:30 am – 7:00 pm and to allow for suspension of the ordinance at the discretion of City Council at any time and to provide that a 16 ounce cup with an approved logo must be purchased from the Main Street department. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF TRAVEL POLICY AMENDMENTS

Ms. Hall reviewed her recommendations for proposed changes to the City Travel Policy as:
#3 – remove sentence “City Officials shall forward their travel Expense Report/Authorization form to the City Manager to be brought before the City Council for approval. City Council must approve City Official Expense Report/Authorization forms prior to travel”.

And replace it with “Elected Officials travel should be limited to Georgia Municipal Association Conventions, Legislative Conferences, Mayor’s Day Conference, and MEAG Annual Meetings and Conferences. Travel other than the traditional conventions listed above, must have approval of Mayor and Council”.

#5b – remove sentence “When more than one City official, employee, or representative is traveling to the same event, separate vehicle allowances will not be approved if one vehicle is sufficient for transportation, unless separate arrival or departure times are necessitated by City business”.

#5b – add statement “Mileage reimbursement will be calculated from City Hall address to address location for business travel.

#5d – add statement “Any room upgrades are the responsibility of the traveler and not a reimbursable expense”.

#5e – add statement “Travelers are expected to take advantage of meals included in the conference/seminar registration fees. Reimbursement per diem for meals will be reduced for meals provided by the conference/seminar. If advance is provided, the advanced per diem will be decreased by the amounts that are included in a conference, seminar, or similar registration for meals.

Per Diem may be provided in advance of travel if requested and approved in a timely manner. Advance per diem will only be provided for meals not included in conference/seminar registration. Any unused funds shall be reimbursed to the City”.

#8 – add statement “The City officials, employee, or representative shall provide payment to the City of any costs for the spouse, family members or guests which would need to be submitted in advance to the sponsors of the convention, seminar or meeting so that no obligation by the City exists to provide such payment and that payments are received in a timely manner to the sponsor.

#9 – add statement “All elected officials and employees who make or have made travel reservations and fail to cancel, if necessary, in a timely fashion may be required to reimburse the City of all costs incurred by the City due to this failure”.

Ms. Hall reviewed that she sent out an email to other city administrators/managers asking how they handled spouse and/or dependent expenses for travel and the City of Griffin was the only one out of the 15 responses that were received that include a spouse reimbursement and that is for one meal only at the per diem rate for GMA Mayor’s Day and GMA Annual Conference. Ms. Hall stated that the responses received along with the GMA Road Map to Travel Policies for Municipal Officials was sent out via email to Mayor and Council.

Mr. Howard asked about the reimbursement to the City for training that someone does not attend due to an emergency. Ms. Hall responded that the wording in the recommendation states “may be required to reimburse” with the emphasis on “may”.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to amend the Travel Policy to include all recommendations for changes as presented by the City Manager. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL FOR T-SPLOST

Ms. Hall stated that the County is moving forward with placing a referendum on the November ballot for a local T-SPLOST. Ms. Hall stated that the State taxes based upon Counties so if City Council chooses not to be included in the referendum and it passes, the County would collect $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1¢ in the entire county to include inside the city limits but all of that tax would go to the County and none to the City. Mr. Dodd asked what percentage the city would get if include in the referendum and it passes. Ms. Hall stated that she is not certain of the percentage but it would most likely be the same as SPLOST breakdown.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the placing a referendum on the November ballot for the T-SPLOST. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Hall stated that council needs to submit projects for the tax and that the County is proposing to use all of the tax proceeds to resurface roads outside the city limits.

NAME CHANGE OF AMERICAN LEGION HALL BUILDING

There was a lengthy discussion regarding adding Mr. Glover Stuart's name to the existing name of the building without diminishing the current name of the building. Mr. Hewett suggested adding Mr. Stuarts name as the building name with the remainder of the name of the building staying the same.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to rename the building to the Glover Stuart building at the American Legion Hall, Thomas Hollis Post 34. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Wilson asked that Ms. Hall work with Mr. Stuart's grandson to coordinate the time and date for the dedication and to obtain the full name of Mr. Stuart.

APPROVAL OF ANNUAL AGREEMENT WITH DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS FOR INMATE DETAIL

Ms. Hall stated that this is the annual renewal contract with the Department of Corrections for two inmate detail crews at \$39,500 per year.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the renewal agreement with the Department of Corrections as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF BUYOUT AGREEMENT FOR POLICE OFFICER

Ms. Hall reviewed the buyout agreement before council for Officer Bell who recently graduated from mandate but is taking a position with an agency closer to her home. Ms. Hall stated that the original agreement provided for a 40% reduction but she recommends a 37.53% reduction of the cost stating that Officer Bell has worked 9 out of 24 months of her contract. Total cost for buyout would be \$4,539.30.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the buyout agreement per the recommendation of the City Manager. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL TO AMEND 2019 MAIN STREET BUDGET RELATING TO FAÇADE GRANTS

Ms. Hall reviewed that in 2016, we budgeted \$5,000 for façade grants and almost all of that was requested. In 2017, we increased the budget to \$10,000 and paid out \$6,655; then 2018, still at a budgeted amount of \$10,000 paid out \$2,838; and 2019 we have already paid out the \$10,000 that was budgeted and have seven additional businesses that have expressed interest in applying for the façade grant program. Ms. Hall recommended increasing the budget for the façade grant to \$15,000.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to increase the 2019 budget for Façade Grants in the Main Street budget by \$5,000 for a total budget of \$15,000. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF STREET CLOSURE REQUEST – JACKSON STREET FROM MAIN TO JOHNSTON STREETS – FOR FILMING EITHER MAY 11, 12 OR 18, 2019

Ms. Hall reviewed the application submitted to close Jackson Street between Main and Johnston Streets and stated that the filming company has not set a firm date for filming yet but have requested either May 11, 12 or 18.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the street closure request at the discretion of the City Manager once the filming company has set a firm date to film. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE INVOICES - \$388,931.64

Ms. Hall reviewed the invoice totals for each department for a grand total of all invoices of \$388,931.64.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the invoices for payment as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF REQUISITIONS GREATER THAN \$5,000

ADC – 990 gallons of captor (dechlorination solution used at SWWTP) \$7,484.40

Fire Fisher – 2 breathing apparatus & mask - \$10,995.42

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the requisitions greater than \$5,000 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Howard, the motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Ms. Hall offered the following report:

- Request approval to move forward with resealing of Splashpad pad; seeing a tremendous amount of wear and wash; needs to be sealed every couple of years for pad to last; cost could exceed my approval authority of \$5,000 depending on cost of materials; waiting on quote from Carlos but he wants to get this done by end of April before he begins other jobs. He is a Splashpad installer and was here over the weekend – we were at the Splashpad from 7:30 am – 7:00 pm Saturday and 9:00-1:00 Sunday; found out lots of information and will be working this week to get those things corrected.
 - o Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve resealing of the Splashpad area with a possible cost to exceed \$5,000. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.
- Getting quotes from companies to provide camera equipment for recording in the two main parks due to vandalism; it is truly a shame the vandalism that continues at the parks – new restrooms were only opened 2 days before vandalized; city putting a lot of citizen money into the parks for people to not take care of them.
- Interviews last week and follow up interviews this week for AP/PR clerk; accepting letters of interest from current employees for City Clerk; should have decision on both next week. Also working to write job description for possible new position for Facilities Management to maintain all city buildings and properties – we need someone to do repairs at the parks, monitor the restrooms, maintain playground, skatepark, and Splashpad equipment, small repairs in buildings such as changing out locks, light bulbs, leaky pipes, etc. Will bring back as soon as complete for council approval to add position and funding.
- Working on rental agreement for City Hall Annex; will have separate agreements for potential lease with Art Guild and then agreement for events for other portion of building; look to name the two areas as separate rooms to distinguish them but not name the building.
- CDBG application for water line project for Blount Street area was submitted on April 1, 2019
- Working on possible modifications to the Take Home Vehicle policy regarding use of vehicle to and from work and possibly extending the distance or granting permission to an employee that is just outside the 30 mile radius that we allow
- Reminder regarding November election; qualifying fees were approved in January; qualifying dates will be August 19-23 at the Elections Board Office in the County Commission building; October 7 is last day for persons to register to vote to be eligible to vote in November General Election; if you are up for re-election this year, be sure to see Kay at the Election Board Office to submit your quarterly reports
- Public hearing May 6 for Big Peach Properties for variance needed at 51 West Adams Street to install loading/unloading area; council approved permission to remove and replace sidewalk
- GMA will attend council on May 20 to review results of cost study for alternative retirement with Rule of 75
- Old City Hall buildings – DDA has just about completed the work on the exterior of the buildings; city loaned DDA \$125,000 and pledged an additional \$125,000 to do the exterior work; looks like

cost for everything except the tile in the entrance way to Scoops and City Hall Annex has either been submitted or estimated and total cost is \$114,985 so leaves \$10,014 for the loan to DDA; when DDA requested the \$250,000 we had no idea where we would be in cost, and since council decided to not sell the City Hall Annex building or to deed it to the DDA, will go back and divide out cost as much as we can to determine totals for DDA building and City building. Now need to do work on interior of Annex – need to remove carpet and determine then if need to replace with new flooring or if flooring can be restored, paint, not sure on electrical and HVAC what may need to be done, especially in back breakroom area will need to demo restroom and repair ceiling where roof leaked for so long. Would like to use the funds pledged towards the building to do the interior work but need to get this done before 6/8 Georgia Trust tour as City Hall Annex will be the wrap-up location for the tours

- Mr. Goolsby stated that the DDA has done a good job on the exterior of the buildings and offered a motion to continue with the agreement with the DDA for the interior work and use the funds already pledged toward the work on the buildings. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously.
- Purchased vacuum for downtown to help with debris that gets blown into corners
- GDOT approved signage for no engine breaks; we order signs and they will install them as soon as they come in
- 1st Step meetings with developers seem to really be helpful; we are averaging one developer per week with some coming back multiple times as they go through their design process; met with new owner of building at corner of Adams/Jackson – concern is how to get vehicles in and out of back portion of building. Reames Concrete has received their certificate of approval to go to the building department to get their permits. Seven 5 has started the approval process; Welcome Mart is in the rebuilding stage (did not require any approvals); there are 5 projects scheduled to go to P&Z/D&R on next Monday. (Fowler, Seven 5, Manufactured Housing, Emami, and a residential new construction)
- Mayor Wilson and I met with Schneider last week; this is company Clean Air Coalition approved for energy efficient projects – they accepted bids, vetted the companies, and recommended Schneider and council approved. Will work with Schneider for them to come in and do assessments of city buildings for lighting and HVAC upgrades; will also discuss with them possibility of smart meter installation. No cost to city until we get to point of them submitting cost – if we do nothing they suggest there is a cost for their evaluation. Any projects that we do through them is based on and paid with guaranteed savings.
- April 30 at 5:30 pm is One Monroe meeting and will be held at the American Legion Hall to showcase the work recently completed.
- Events – kite day yesterday had good crowd; April 20 will have the 911 Band in concert; May 4 Homegrown Harmonies; park plan meeting tomorrow in Aldermen Hall 1-7; Easter Egg Hunt for employees this Friday – those that leave at 11:30 will come at 11:00 and remainder at noon. Will have sub sandwiches after the hunt in Lee Street Park.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Melton had nothing further to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Wilson gave the following report:

- Reminded everyone of the Master Park Plan meeting tomorrow in Aldermen Hall from 1:00 pm – 7:00 pm.
- Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition (MGCAC) will showcase the innovations of savings and cleaning up the air. MGCAC has also worked in Brosnan Yard in Macon to replace the diesel engines in the rail yard. Mayor Wilson, Chairman Tapley and Mr. Ray Clark will travel to Washington DC later this week to meet with EPA staff to review how our regional Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition works to hopefully duplicate what is done here.
- Is honored to have been nominated for the 3rd Vice President of the 6th District for GMA. City Council congratulated him on his nomination.
- We are on the eve of the 2020 Census and it is very important that all elected officials let citizens know they need to be counted.
- Mr. Hewett asked if the funds from the MGCAC can be used for existing plants to offer inducements and Mayor Wilson stated that it could possibly be pursued. Mayor Wilson stated that the MGCAC partially funded the electric car charging stations that are at the police department.

ADDITIONAL COUNCIL REPORTS

Mr. Lawrence stated that he will attend the monthly Chamber of Commerce meeting on Wednesday morning at 8:30 am. Mr. Lawrence stated that he may have misspoke at the last Chamber meeting and asked Mayor Wilson about the parking committee that was formed. Mayor Wilson reviewed that the parking committee was an Ad-Hoc committee that was created to look at parking around the square and the committee reported back that they had no recommendations for any changes. Mayor Wilson stated that the parking committee was then dissolved.

Mr. Lawrence reminded everyone of the Hubbard parade and dinner this weekend.

Mr. Hewett asked Ms. Hall if everything was corrected at the sewer plant after the equipment malfunction last week. Ms. Hall responded that she is working with Utility Partners to provide a response back to the EPD as to our Action Plan and that is due by the end of April.

Mr. Howard stated that we need to look at natural gas vehicles.

Mr. Dodd passed out and read a letter spelling out his concerns regarding the façade of the new city hall building. After reading the letter, Mr. Dodd asked if council can request that the architects revisit the appearance of the new city hall building and Mayor Wilson responded that council can vote to change. Ms. Hall stated that the architects have already begun work on the exterior plans for the building and suggested that council not wait much longer before asking them to change direction. Mr. Lawrence asked about the fee for changing at this point and Mr. Dodd replied that it is not the architects' fault that council changed the site after a decision was made on the other building. Mr. Hewett reviewed several surrounding buildings, including the public safety building and United Bank, stating that these are adjacent to the new city hall building site, and are contemporary and modern. Mr. Dodd stated that the Courthouse is on the National Historic Registry and we would build a modern building a block away. Mr. Howard stated that council voted down the Historic Guidelines and that is why historic buildings are not maintained. Mr. Dodd stated that the parking area needs to be increase and the architectural style more in keeping with the historic downtown. Mr. Howard stated that we need to build something that will look good 20 years from now, that there is growth in the city and county, and we need to be in sync with that growth. Mr. Goolsby agreed with Mr. Dodd regarding the architectural style of the building stating that this is a prime example why City Hall should not be on this property. Mr. Goolsby stated that there is too much glass and is a contemporary design. Mr. Goolsby recommended that council request the architects to add some of the features from the Courthouse and Fine Arts Building, to give a more southern feel and the amount of glass needs to be

reduced. Mr. Hewett stated that we are the ones that asked the architects to move the building to the new site. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to request the architects to return with options that pick up the historic flavor to the façade. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Lawrence stated that this needs to be done without an increase in the cost.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (MAYOR WILSON TO REVIEW RULES FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS)

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Rodney Penamon, Forsyth Garden Apartments resident, came before council stating that he and his wife have health issues but the Churches in Forsyth will not help them with their utility bill. Mr. Penamon stated that he has a medical letter from his wife's doctor stating that the utility services cannot be disconnect but Ms. Hall says that the letter from the doctor is not for payment of the bill but for reconnection. Mr. Penamon stated that the doctor told him that the city cannot cut off his electricity but that he still has to pay his bill. Mr. Penamon stated that he needs city council's help to ask the local Churches to help him pay his utility bill. Mr. Penamon stated that his wife receives disability and he is trying to get his disability approved. Mr. Howard stated that he has spoken with Mr. Penamon on several occasions and with Ms. Hall regarding this situation and told Mr. Penamon that if he did not agree with the response he was getting from Ms. Hall that he needed to come to a council meeting. There was discussion regarding possible ways to help Mr. Penamon including signing up for the Budget Billing and assistance from Circle of Care. Mr. Goolsby suggested that Mr. Penamon meet with Ms. Hall to develop a plan to get the bill paid. Mr. Penamon stated that he has met with Ms. Hall but he cannot pay his bill and again asked council to contact the local Churches to ask them to assist him in paying his bill. Mr. Penamon stated that he knew council could not make the Churches help him but if council talked to the Churches, maybe they would. Mayor Wilson stated that council must be careful not to set a precedent regarding interfering with policies in place for the city. Mayor Wilson stated that Ms. Hall should not be blamed for carrying out her duties and upholding the ordinance that governs utility bills and payments. Mr. Penamon stated that he is not blaming anyone that he is just trying to get help. Mr. Goolsby reviewed again the avenues already put in place by council to help people with their bills and that we are looking at smart meters to allow citizens to prepay their bills. Mr. Penamon stated that he just wants council to call someone to help him pay his bill and then he will do what he can on his side.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was needed.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by:

Janice L. Hall, City Manager