

Minutes
Forsyth City Council Meeting
November 7, 2022

Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation by Rod Callahan, and Roll Call

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Rod Callahan gave the invocation. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Julius Stroud, Melvin Lawrence, Chris Hewett, and John Howard. Also in attendance was City Manager, Janice Hall; City Attorney, Bobby Melton; and City Clerk, Regina Ivie. Councilmember Greg Goolsby was not in attendance for the council meeting. There were five members of council in attendance for the council meeting therefore all unanimous votes will be five votes (Dodd, Stroud, Lawrence, Hewett, and Howard).

Approval of the agenda

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

Approval of the minutes from the council meeting held on October 17, 2022

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence.

Mr. Stroud offered an amendment to the motion; to the amend the minutes to reflect a change to the last name referenced at the prior meeting from Michael Rawls to Michael Banks. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously. Mayor Wilson called for a vote on the original motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Recognition of police department personnel.

Mayor Wilson and council recognized four police department employees for their outstanding and professional service in response to an incident in April 2022. Mayor Wilson read a letter sent to Acting Chief Alexander Daniels. In the letter special agent in charge Keri Farley with the Federal Bureau of Investigation praised officers Cpl. Barnett, Officer Richard Maddox, Sergeant Terrence Thomas, and Major Alexander Daniels for their quick response, and professionalism in keeping citizens of the city safe during a dangerous situation. She requested the letter be placed in each employee's file mentioned in the letter.

Public hearing to consider an ordinance for a zoning variance at 26 Brentwood Place.

Mr. Melton stated the application is for a zoning variance request at 26 Brentwood Place; approximately one acre. The owner of the property is James Freeman. The request is for a variance to allow a 10-foot setback from the south boundary and a 10-foot setback from the west boundary in the southwest corner of the property. The notice of the public hearing was advertised in the Monroe Reporter on October 19, 26, and November 2, 2022.

Cody Ellis, Economic Development Director stated the current setbacks for that type of zoning are 25 and 15 feet from the prospective sides. Brentwood Apartments are located at the rear side, a vacant lot; there's a natural buffer between both lots. The building on the premises is 52 ft by 36 ft.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing in favor of or opposition to the proposed variance request. There being no comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed variance request Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the variance request as presented. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of an application for a license for the sale of alcoholic beverages by MJ & MJ Brothers, LLC.

Mr. Melton reviewed the application for a license for the sale of alcoholic beverages by MJ & MJ Brothers, LLC. The proposed location is at 465 Tift College Drive at Hong Kong Palace. The restaurant complies with distance limitations set forth in City of Forsyth code section 4-52. The notice was published in the Monroe Reporter on October 26, 2022 and November 2, 2022.

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

Approval of an agreement with Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services for low-income household water assistance program.

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

Approval of off system energy sales margins for the power supply year 2023.

Ms. Hall recommended the off-system energy sales margins be deposited into the Municipal Competitive Trust, Flexible Operating Account, Intermediate Extended Maturity Portfolio.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the deposit of off-system sales margins into the Municipal Competitive Trust, Flexible Operating Account, Intermediate Extended Maturity Portfolio as recommended by Ms. Hall. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Award Bid for Highway 41 to South Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Ms. Hall reviewed the bids received. Hofstadter & Associates provided a written recommendation for Gulf Coast Underground, LLC in the amount of \$1,006,437.95.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to award the bid to Gulf Coast Underground, LLC. In the amount of \$1,006,437.95. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Walter Goodson

Mr. Walter Goodson inquired about the process of filing complaints, due process. He stated the process should allow for the chief of police to be held accountable, to be questioned to verify certain events if an incident with a citizen has occurred. He would like the process explained to him. He's stated he's inquiring for the benefit of the citizens.

Mayor Wilson stated the police department has a policy on how complaints are handled. Ms. Hall stated Mr. Goodson has been provided a copy of the policy.

Approval of Requisitions Greater than \$6,000

Stuart C. Irby \$7,500.00

Motorola Solutions \$12,979.38

P.F. Moon \$8,900.00,

S&E Commercial Tire \$8,049.70

Display Sales \$8,900.00

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:

Council Retreat review:

- Projects list currently has 70+ projects; these projects are in addition to our regular, normal day-to-day activities; working to create the spreadsheet as a sharable document to post on website and make available for viewing
- Submitted requests to Bobby Melton for changes to City Charter and possibility of paying a stipend to board appointments. I forwarded his responses and will wait on your instructions as to how to move forward on those.
- Reviewed need to let Regina know on Friday if there is an item that you want brought before council for consideration so those can be included on the agenda rather than during reports. If not aware in time to have added to agenda, a motion to amend the agenda would be in order at the beginning of the meeting.
- 2023 preliminary budget
 - does not include revenue or expense associated with Blockstream as they are currently shutdown
 - renewal of health insurance has 54% increase; included this figure in the preliminary; increases expenses by \$378,160; budgeted \$8700 for group insurance for 2022, 2023 will be \$13,100 unless bid comes in lower from a different carrier

- CU shows balance of \$4,769,892 before transfer out, and GF shows deficit of \$4,383,351 before transfer in leaving balance of \$386,541 without salary increases; will propose up to 8% merit increase for employees with most receiving 6% as 8% would be for exceptional only
- Will also propose increases for several fees along with addition of new fees
- Final Goals
 - 1. Annexation - work with Regional Commission to establish all aspects for moving forward with annexation plan previously adopted.
 - 2. Improve public/private relationships - improve relationships with Federal, State and Local Officials. Improve transparency to Citizens by providing projects listing on website. Work with Regional Commission on possibility of public transportation thru 5311 Program. Work to attract a developer that will construct low to moderate housing. Work with Zoning Officer to review residential zoning ordinances for possible changes to minimum square footage and to review zoning map to determine if zonings are still as they should be. Work with GMA to schedule Hometown Connection with Federal & State Officials.
 - 3. Infrastructure - look at future needs for all infrastructure to include water, sewer, electric, roads, traffic signals and patterns. Need to determine Councils vision on water/sewer future and ensure viable enterprise with sufficient availability & capacity for future growth. Need to review traffic patterns especially in new subdivision areas of Fox Run and Manor Montpelier III.
- Traps have been placed in Country Club Park in an effort to remove the large skunk population that has taken up in that area. We encourage all citizens in the surrounding area to not leave food and water out especially overnight.
- Received a Consent Order from EPD regarding permit violation for copper in discharge from NEWWTP. Working with Hofstadter for a response to the EPD.
- Initial draft of Agreement associated with the LOST distribution has been provided to the County Attorney for his review and comments. Hope to have that finalized and before you for adoption at the next meeting.
- The 6 patrol vehicles approved for purchase have been received at the dealership; getting those painted and then to Griffin for equipment installation.
- 2 of the 3 additional pickups for public works has been received at the dealership, the other is expected this week. Once they have all 3, those will go to Griffin for equipment installation.
- GDOT began resurfacing project last week on Lee Street from Main to city limits.
- Christmas Tree lighting & turning on Christmas lights will be Saturday, November 26 in conjunction with Shop Small for after Thanksgiving sales.
- Friday is Veteran's Day and a new holiday for city employees. All non-public safety offices will be closed on Friday.
- Police Chief interviews – panel conducted first round of interviews today and will complete those tomorrow; panel is made up of myself, Kenny Smith (consultant), Terrence Thomas (SGT in FPD), and James Morgan (Jackson Police Chief); currently have 29 applications for the position and will continue to accept and interview until we find the right candidate
- Received notification from DCA that our application to review our Qualified Local Government status was approved. We must be a QLGA to qualify for many of the grants that are available.
- GMA Advisory Council met last week and this year we will be working Grant needs and resources for cities and what GMA can do to assist with the grant applications and administration; Accounting and Financial Management services regarding sound financial management and solid financial staff in place; and Operational Assessments where GMA would come to cities and do an overall assessment of their operations to provide insight and ideas to make cities run smoother and more efficiently
- Take note of picture wall in the lobby. Thank you to Regina Ivie for the idea and to Drew Patten for painstakingly installing this.
- Blighted Properties
 - 503 Stroud Street was purchased by neighbor, and she has done a great job removing this burned structure. Thank you for Mrs. Farlar for her work on this property.
 - 5 properties were suspended for 90 days to allow owner to do work necessary or to allow them time to sell the property. Those will return to council on 12/19
 - 5 properties are in process of going to court
 - All others on the list have been completed
- Planning & Zoning
 - Advertising for changes to Sections 14.6 and 14.10 of the Zoning Ordinance relating to fences and walls distance and relating to swimming pools

City Attorney Report

Mr. Melton stated zoning amendments is being advertised for the December 5, 2022 council meeting, safety measures being added. A public hearing is currently being advertised for the November 21, 2022 meeting for a zoning variance for tax parcel F17 007 at 183 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. The applicant, Ragan Peluso seeks a variance for commercial usage of the property for interior/inside sorting of materials. A public hearing is currently being advertised for the November 21, 2022 meeting; tax parcel F17 070 at 164 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. The applicant, Kimberly Pope seeks a variance for the use of the property for outreach ministry.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Wilson reviewed that himself, Ms. Hall, and Mrs. Ivie were presented with a “big check” for the Community Development Block Grant by Department of Community Affairs. The city was awarded \$1,000,000 for improvements to the city’s water systems. Mayor Wilson stated he recently attended the Georgia Association of Regional Commission’s conference; he learned a lot from the speakers about programs going on in the community. He encouraged everyone to attend the annual event in November. He also attended the MEAG Mayor’s Summit this past weekend; good information is provided.

Council Board Reports

Mr. Hewett stated the Housing Authority will meet Tuesday, November 8th at 3:00 p.m.

Additional Business

Mr. Lawrence encouraged citizens to vote on election day. He also mentioned that James Freeman Jr’s mother passed recently. Her service will be at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church.

Mr. Stroud stated he is attending a monthly class on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through May 2023 that’s being offered by Georgia Municipal Association. The class is extensive, he’s learning a lot and is enjoying the class. Mr. Stroud inquired about Sunday voting for the city for the next election.

Mr. Hewett inquired about street improvements for the local maintenance improvement grant. Ms. Hall provided an update for the streets for the 2022, Jenay Court and Adams Street.

Public Comments

No one came forward for public comments.

Executive Session

No executive session was held.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.