

**MINUTES
FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 2, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, INVOCATION AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Wilson lead the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Stroud gave the invocation. Present for the meeting were Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers joining in person were Mike Dodd, Greg Goolsby, and Chris Hewett and those joining via Zoom were Julius Stroud, Melvin Lawrence, and John Howard (Mr. Howard joined the meeting at 6:03 pm). Also present were City Attorney, Bobby Melton, and City Manager, Janice Hall. City Clerk, Regina Ivie, was unable to attend the meeting. All unanimous votes will be six (6) votes (Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Howard, Hewett, and Lawrence).

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the agenda with the removal of the approval of the October 19, 2020 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL TO AMEND MINUTES OF THE JUNE 15, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the amendment to the June 15, 2020 council meeting minutes to add corrective and additional modifying wording to the section “Public Hearing – Proposed Ordinance for Alteration and Amendment of the Corporate Boundaries of the City of Forsyth through Annexation of Four Parcels at the corner of Patrol Road and Harold Clarke Parkway” to amend the first paragraph of that section of the minutes by correcting and substituting the sixth sentence to read: “Planning & Zoning met on February 24, and May 19, 2020, and recommended approval of the annexation as Highway Business zoning with variances for the location of gas pumps and brightness of lighting”. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF REVISED CONTRACT WITH HELBY, INC.

Ms. Hall reviewed that council previously approved the contract with Helby Inc., however they have requested an addition to the agreement. Mr. Melton reviewed the recommended wording to be added to the agreement. Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to add the specific language to the agreement with Helby Inc. as recommended by Mr. Melton. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF RENEWAL OF EMPLOYEE INSURANCE BENEFITS TO INCLUDE BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD RATE 5% RATE INCREASE

Ms. Hall reviewed that the City currently pays 100% of dental, vision and life insurance coverage for all fulltime employees and those renewals came in at a flat renewal rate and 99% of the health insurance coverage which initially came in with a 12% increase that has been negotiated down to a 5% increase. Ms. Hall stated that we have had a flat renewal on the health insurance for the past three years and the increase this year is related to several large claims. Ms. Hall reviewed how insurance companies review information for providing quotes for coverage and pointed out that any company providing a quote will see the same large claims that BCBS has paid. Ms. Hall recommended renewal of all insurance renewals to remain with the same companies with the 5% increase for the health insurance.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to renew all insurances as presented to include the 5% increase for health insurance with BCBS. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL BILLING FOR 2019 AUDIT BY MAULDIN & JENKINS

Ms. Hall reviewed information provided by Mr. Miller Edwards, Mauldin & Jenkins, during the 2019 audit review with council wherein he stated that all six (6) findings in the 2019 audit were related to the 2018 audit and issues related to that audit. Ms. Hall stated that the previous auditing firm did not provide any adjusting journal entries for 2018; however, when Mauldin & Jenkins began the 2019 audit review it was realized that there were indeed adjusting journal entries that should have been provided to the City but were not. Mauldin & Jenkins dedicated almost 60 hours to research and corrections to the 2018 audit and have presented an invoice in the amount of \$6,000. Ms. Hall recommended approval of payment for the additional \$6,000.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the additional cost of \$6,000 to Mauldin & Jenkins for the work provided. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CHRISTMAS BONUSES TO CITY STAFF

Ms. Hall reviewed the amounts previously provided to City employees and that cost; reviewed cost if amounts to employees remained at those amounts; and reviewed cost if amounts were increased by \$50 for each and that amount be covered by reimbursement funds received by the CARES Act.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the increase of \$50 each for Christmas bonus for all City employees. The approved amounts were fulltime employees with more than 1 year of service \$378.99 with the employee receiving \$350; fulltime employees with less than 1 year of service \$216.57 with the employee receiving \$200; and part time employees \$162.43 with the employee receiving \$150. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW GDOT PROJECTS FOR LEE STREET

Ms. Hall reviewed two projects that GDOT has submitted for the City to review and provide comments. The first project is the installation of a pedestrian crosswalk on Lee Street just north of Adams Street. City Council had previously asked GDOT to look at the possibility of adding a crosswalk in this area. Consensus was that this is a good project and City Council approves of the location of the pedestrian crosswalk.

The other project covers Lee Street from the railroad to North Frontage Road. GDOT has submitted preliminary plans to add striping to the far righthand lanes ensuring that those lanes are turn lanes only, striping the middle lane to ensure a two-way turn lane, upgrading the traffic signal at the intersection of Patrol Road, and requested Council comments on making any changes to the intersection with Russell Parkway. Ms. Hall reviewed that the intersection with Russell Parkway is currently a “Right In, Right Out” only intersection and developers over the years have asked about changing this intersection. Mr. Hewett stated that anyone making a left turn from Russell Parkway to go south on I75 would have five lanes of traffic to cross in a very short distance. Council discussed confusion to travelers from Russell Parkway trying to get to I75 and the need for signage if this change is not approved. Mr. Stroud stated that the drawings do not show crosswalks at each intersection and requested that all crosswalks are striped to provide a safe crossing for pedestrians and there are a significant number of pedestrians in this area. Ms. Hall will provide all comments back to GDOT for their consideration.

APPROVAL OF REQUISITIONS GREATER THAN \$5,000

- a. Pyles Plumbing & Utility Inc – SPLOST - \$154,400
- b. Stuart C Irby Co – primary cable - \$11,900 (1 spool each for Golf Course & Country Club underground projects)

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve both requisitions as presented. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER'S

Ms. Hall presented the following report:

- Trick or Treat on the square was a huge success Saturday; Tammie said this may have been the largest crowd we have ever had. Reminder that we have the Christmas Tree Lighting on November 30. We are planning on our normal ceremony with the chorus but not the gingerbread contest. Just want to make sure council is ok with us holding this event or if want to have this virtual. Saturday November 28 is Shop Small and Main Street is encouraging the businesses to extend their hours on that day by 2 hours and having several small events to encourage shoppers to come out – would like input from Council as to whether to hold Tree Lighting on that Saturday or leave it on Monday or any other suggestions that you may have.
 - o Mr. Stroud stated that he did not understand why the City would cancel the New Years Eve program but hold the Christmas Tree Lighting program. Mr. Stroud stated that we are still in the middle of a pandemic and holding any events just does not make sense during this time. Mr. Stroud offered a motion to have a virtual Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence, the motion carried unanimously.
- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant application submitted on Friday October 31; total project amount \$1,299,577.50; LWCF is a 50/50 grant with maximum grant amount of \$500,000; had to make some adjustments to what was submitted to get within the funds that we have for the project – such as grass parking area rather than asphalt, asphalt paving and curbs are limited to the entrance road off Ensign.
- Continue to work on pricing for water lines on Railroad Avenue to provide infrastructure that was previously in place.
- Mike Batchelor worked to get us back on the registry with ECG for Mutual Aid to other cities in need and we were able to send 2 linemen and a truck to Marietta last week to help restore power as they were hit really hard from Zeta.
- Police department picked up the 2 new radar signs on Friday and these will be installed by our electric department hopefully this week on East Main and Jones Street. We will be able to pull data from the signs to determine if a street is eligible to move forward in the process for installing speed humps.
- Public Hearing for H&H annexation being readvertised for November 16 meeting
- Will be moving some line items around for the 2021 budget, no change to the overall budget just moving line items to different departments. Will be making one change in that the DDA and Housing Authority will begin paying their attorney fees rather than the City paying those as both of those entities have funds to pay any cost incurred.
- French Market & Tavern has submitted a beer, wine and liquor pouring license application for their new location in the old Minori's Restaurant. This is being advertised and come before council at the November 16 council meeting for a public hearing,
- Additional alcohol license applications are being worked on by Comfort Inn and AJ Patel and we will advertise those as soon as the application is complete and submitted.

Ms. Hall stated that an item was left off the final agenda that was on the original agenda and requested that this item be added back to the agenda. Ms. Hall reviewed the insurance quote received from McGinity Gordon for construction coverage while the new City Hall is being built. Once the building

is completed, this coverage will be dropped, and the new building added to the existing property and liability coverage. Ms. Hall reviewed the cost of this coverage is \$7,539.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve payment of \$7,539 for builder's risk coverage for the new City Hall building. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously.

CITY ATTORNEY

Mr. Melton had nothing further to report.

MAYOR

Mayor Wilson had nothing further to report.

COUNCIL BOARD

Mr. Hewett stated that the Housing Authority will meet this Thursday at 9:00 am in the lobby of City Hall Annex.

Mr. Lawrence reviewed the food distribution that took place last week that Mr. Stroud and Mr. Howard participated with. Mr. Lawrence stated that we have many citizens in need for assistance during this time and this will be his 19th year volunteering with a local church to provide Thanksgiving meals to families. Mr. Lawrence stated that a parade for Black Voters Matter was held today to encourage voters to get out and vote.

Mr. Stroud stated that it was a pleasure to work with the food distribution program and help those in need. Mr. Stroud stated that Mr. Rodney Penamon had contacted him regarding issues at Forsyth Garden Apartments with vehicle traffic and requested the assistance of the police department in stopping these issues. Mr. Stroud stated that council approved at this year's retreat to provide an additional day off for Veterans as a thank you for their service and wanted to make sure that this was taking place this year.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

There was no additional business presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to adjourn into executive session for the purpose of pending litigation and land acquisition. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously, and council adjourned into executive session at 6:41 pm.

Mayor Wilson called the meeting back into open session at 7:51 pm.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to pay Monroe County Commissioners \$357,312.99 for the balance due on the 911 Dispatch Agreement and to renegotiate the 911 Dispatch Agreement to a fixed cost for 2021. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried with five (5) votes for (Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Howard, and Hewett) and one (1) abstention (Lawrence).

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 pm.

Submitted by:

Janice L. Hall, City Manager