

**Minutes
Forsyth City Council Meeting
December 6, 2021**

Call to Order

Mayor Pro-tem Lawrence stated Mayor Wilson was at a conference out of town. Mayor Pro-tem Lawrence called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and Roll Call

Mayor Pro-tem led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Dodd gave the invocation. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Pro-tem Melvin Lawrence; Councilmembers Julius Stroud, Mike Dodd, Greg Goolsby, and Chris Hewett. Also in attendance for the meeting was City Manager, Janice Hall; City Attorney, Bobby Melton and City Clerk, Regina Ivie. John Howard was not in attendance therefore all unanimous votes will be four votes (Goolsby, Stroud, Dodd, and Hewett).

Approval of the Agenda

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

Approval of the Minutes from the November 15, 2021, Council Meeting

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

Fire Department awards and recognitions – Chief David Herndon

Chief David Herndon recognized Deputy Chief Kevin Bunn, Firefighter Daniel Fullmore, Captain Eddie Bowden, Firefighter Matthew Walker, Captain AJ Rollins, Firefighter Craig McMurray, and Firefighter Tyler English with CPR Save Awards; due to their quick actions and responses on emergency calls lives were saved.

Chief Herndon also recognized Chris Elliott as Firefighter of the Year. Chief Herndon stated Chris Elliott is a full-time medic and a part time fire fighter for the city for 16 years. Since the pandemic began Chris Elliott has served as our Infection Control Officer; countless hours were spent ensuring our response policies were up to date and followed. The department's response policies have been used by other departments around the state. Chris Elliott is a highly professional, dedicated, and dependable firefighter and is truly an asset to the City of Forsyth Fire Department.

Chief Herndon recognized Nancy Patten in appreciation for her dedication to the mission of the City of Forsyth Fire Department. Nancy Patten is a certified firefighter, certified public safety officer, certified EMT. In addition to her duties as the fire safety educator Nancy responds to emergency calls all hours of the night, and weekends; she's a part of the command staff at large fires. Nancy works diligently to ensure our records are for state certification; she was instrumental in the city maintaining our ISO2 classification. Along with her other roles she's also the non-criminal GCIC coordinator as well as the NIFERS coordinator. Chief Herndon further stated that Nancy Patten was tasked this year with heading up the City's Safety Committee; under her leadership the city was awarded a grant of \$6900. Nancy Patten is dedicated, dependable and handles all her roles with the highest level of professionalism.

Public Hearing to consider an application of Jane Pennington for rezoning.

Mr. Melton stated the application for rezoning of Jane Pennington on Hilltop Avenue; tax parcels F19 049 and F19 091. The ordinance if adopted will re-zone the property from R-3 (Residential Detached Single-Family Moderate-Density) to RM (Residential Multi-Family). Ms. Pennington seeks a variance as to setbacks, with a proposed use for the property for multi-family dwellings. The public hearing notice was in the Monroe Reporter issues on November 10, 17, 24, and December 1, 2021. Planning & Zoning recommend approval.

Mayor Pro-tem Lawrence opened the public hearing in favor of or against the rezoning application of Jane Pennington.

Mr. James Green spoke in favor of the rezoning application. There being no further comments for or against the rezoning application Mayor Pro-tem Lawrence closed the public hearing.

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

Public Hearing to consider an application of George Emami for rezoning.

Mr. Melton stated the application of George Emami for rezoning property on Lover's Lane; tax parcels F27 070, F27 089, and F27 090. The ordinance if adopted will rezone the property from CBD (Central Business District) and NS (Neighborhood Shopping District) to RM (Residential Multi-Family District) with variances to require 20' setback along Lover's Lane with a child safety metal fencing on Lover's Lane. The public hearing notices was in the issues on November 10, 17, 24, and December 1, 2021. Planning and Zoning recommend approval.

Mayor Pro-tem Lawrence opened the public hearing in favor of or opposition to the rezoning application.

Ms. Hall reviewed background information relating to the rezoning request. She stated Mr. Emami is requesting to rezone all the properties that will be necessary for the proposed development and he's requesting a 15-foot setback variance. Ms. Hall referenced planning and zoning minutes; the 20-foot setback was approved and the installation of a metal fence that meets the child safety code along Lover's Lane between the apartments and the sidewalk.

Mr. George Emami spoke in favor of the rezoning request, the proposed development and the fence requirements that were requested. He requested approval of the proposed development as presented; and to build them one building at a time. The residents on Hunter Street side will be able to reside in the residences longer. Mr. Emami further stated that \$1000 for each tenant will be provided to assist with moving expenses, down payment assistance.

Mrs. Jennie Caldwell stated after the project has been approved; rezoning and setback concerns were resolved the complete design would address the stormwater concerns. The development would be designed based on city requirements.

Mr. Goodson expressed concerns regarding the streets and creeks in the proposed area.

There being no further comments in favor of or against the request Mayor Pro-tem Lawrence closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the rezoning requests, with a 15-foot setback, no fence required for Lover's Lane. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

City/County Bicentennial Tree – Nolan Howard

Mr. Nolan proposed placement of a joint bicentennial a Ginkgo tree for Monroe County & City of Forsyth at the corner of the City Hall parking lot. Mr. Nolan stated the advantages to the proposed tree; no expense would be incurred by the City. He further mentioned that a plaque commemorating the bicentennial will be placed at the base of the tree later.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the planting of the Ginkgo tree at the corner of the City Hall parking lot. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Board Appointments for 2022

Mr. Stroud recommended appointment of Shayla Barron for the Downtown Development Authority Board. He inquired if others currently on the board are willing to continue to serve on the board. Ms. Hall stated all were willing to continue to serve.

Mr. Hewett stated he's willing to continue to serve on the Monroe County Health Board.

Mr. Stroud stated the district one county commissioner should always be on the Downtown Development Authority Board. If we are going to continue to grow together; then it's necessary to have a seat for the commissioner of district one on the board. He inquired as what's necessary to make those changes effective. Mr. Melton stated the ordinance would need to be updated; it must be proposed and advertised for a public hearing.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to amend the ordinance to have the Commissioner of District One be a delegate or representative of the Downtown Development Authority Board. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing for the 2022 Budget

Ms. Hall reviewed the overall revenues, expenses for the general fund and combined utilities fund. She reviewed salary increases for employees. Ms. Hall stated that adoption of the proposed budget will require a \$4,175,315 transfer to the general fund for a balanced budget. Ms. Hall further stated adoption of the proposed budget will have a surplus of \$27,000 in revenue over expenses; and that's if we include \$475,000 in revenues from the Blockstream project to balance the budget. Adoption of the 2022 budget will be presented to council at the next meeting, December 20, 2021.

Approval of healthcare benefits for 2022.

Ms. Hall reviewed the healthcare plans available for benefits for the employees. She recommended plan#1 B series at \$675.20 per employee; each employee contributing one percent. An 8% increase from last year. The out-of-pocket expense increases to \$4,400; the city renewal cost will be \$46.05 per employee. Ms. Hall also recommended Plan 2 2022, referred to as the Buy-Up Plan at \$712.75 per employee. Each employee who selects this plan will pay the difference in cost. The out-of-pocket will be \$2500, and the benefit percentage is 100%; deductible remains the same at \$1,000 and the employee would pay approximately \$530 per year for the higher benefit plan. The final recommendation is for the family plan to Plan 3 2022 at \$603.79 with a \$2500 deductible per individual.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the plans based on Ms. Hall's recommendation. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Fourth Amendment and related documents between MEAG-GPW.com & the City.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the fourth amendment and all related documents between MEAG-GPW and the City. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of a temporary alcohol permit for Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce on January 21, 2022.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the temporary alcohol permit on January 21, 2022, for the Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the third amendment to the intergovernmental agreement with City of Adel for the Blockstream project.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the third amendment to the intergovernmental agreement with the City of Adel for the Blockstream project. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Requisitions Greater than \$5,000**Davis Plumbing \$14,600.00**

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

City Manager's Report

Ms. Hall provided the following report:

- Reminder that City Hall will be closed December 23 & 24 for Christmas holidays. Huge thank you to Frank Wilder, Regina Ivie, and Monica Cordy for spearheading the Christmas decorations at City Hall and downtown. The decorations look better than ever and were a great addition to the Chamber Christmas parade. We have hung all the decorations that we can on the streetlight poles – the ones that are up took almost 2,000 bulbs just to get them operational. We will be revisiting this after the holidays to see what should be done as far as those decorations.
- Drive thru is open and is being well used. Just a reminder that this is for payments only, any new service or changes must be made inside.
- Closeout public hearing for CDBB for Blount Street will be rescheduled by DCA for a later date. The project is complete except for the removal of the old fire hydrants.
- All employees are very thankful for the additional Christmas bonuses this year. We have received word that the submittals for the fire and police departments have been received and approved. Once all funds have been deposited in our account, we will write those checks. We anticipate this may happen as early as this week.
- Need to look at Council meetings for 2022 that will need to be rescheduled due to conflicts with holidays. Those are January 17 Martin Luther King Day; July 4; and September 5 Labor Day.
 - Mr. Stroud offered a motion to conduct the meetings for the holidays on Tuesday, January 18, 2022; cancel the July 4, 2022 meeting, and the September meeting will be on Tuesday, September 6th. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.*
- Still waiting on the agreement to be returned from the County regarding the use of the Justice center for municipal court. They will not budge off the \$1,000 per court day which is \$34,000 per year. We are working to make the necessary changes needed to hold court in the Welcome Center.
- H2O reported Friday that Filter #6 at the RWTP is showing the same signs of deterioration as Filter #5 did before it had to be taken out of service. Hofstadter & Associates was called in on Friday to evaluate the filter and make a recommendation. If we take Filter #6 out of service, that means Plant 2 is offline which reduces our daily rate by 2 mgd. I should have a recommendation from Hofstadter this week.
- Several projects at the treatment plants are in various stages of completion.
- QuikTrip has tied into our sewer as of 2 weeks ago. Railroad Avenue project is complete except for asphaltting of patches. Hydrant on Russell Parkway has been installed at Starbucks.
- The two emergency projects approved by USDA could be delayed as far out as May 2022 due to delivery of steel, but Hofstadter is working to reduce that timeframe.
- All Seasons Tree Service will be scheduling the stump grinding on W Main and W Johnston Streets along with removal of the large, dead pine tree in the park.
- Officer Malone continues to work on reinventing his spreadsheet for the blighted properties and had hoped to have that for you tonight.
- P&Z did not meet in November and if anyone submits requests in time, we will have a called December meeting rather than the regularly scheduled date of 12/27. We have a couple of projects in the early stages that will go before P&Z and then to council for approval of variances/changes, but no one has submitted paperwork yet.
- We have had several meetings with Schneider Electric over the last couple of years and one of the discussions I had with them was regarding funding for the Park Plan. Schneider put me in touch with Davenport & Company. I met with them about a month ago and reviewed the city finances and what we would like to do as far as the Park Plan is concerned. Davenport & Company came back last week with a very cursory review of some large potential savings. The savings would include the refinancing of the

City Hall loan along with some other refinancing and I asked if it would be possible to include the Park Plan in any part of this. To move forward with Davenport & Company, they would need a Letter of Engagement from the City. They would do the proposal work for refinancing at no cost to the city and would work on a bonding proposal for the City Hall and Park Plan but if we chose not to accept that proposal, there would be cost associated depending on the amount of time they have in that project. If interested in moving forward, I will have them submit the Letter of Engagement for your consideration and approval at the next meeting.

City Attorney Report

Mr. Melton had no further business to report.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Pro-tem Lawrence had no further business to report.

Council Board Reports

Mr. Hewett stated the next housing authority meeting will be January 13, 2022.

Additional Business

No additional business was brought forward.

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 7:35 p.m.