

Minutes
Forsyth City Council Meeting
December 19, 2022

Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation by Reverend Marilyn Tucker, and Roll Call

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

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of the minutes from the council meeting held on December 5, 2022

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

Swearing in of Chief of Police Woodrow Blue

Mayor Wilson gave a brief description of Chief Blue's career before Chief Blue took the Oath of Office.

Recognition of Steve Jones Retirement

Mayor Wilson recognized Mr. Steve Jones' 37 years of dedicated service to the city. Mr. Jones held many roles during his years of service; as a garbage service attendant, a street sweeper, a lead supervisor, and he is retiring as the Public Works Supervisor. Mr. Jones has been an invaluable employee of the city and will be greatly missed.

Approval of the language access plan resolution for the Community Development Block Grant

Ms. Hall reviewed the language access plan resolution.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the language access plan. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously. After some discussion Mr. Howard, Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Dodd agreed to abstain due to conflict of interest, Mayor Wilson stated the proceeding vote was not necessary. There were not enough votes due to Mr. Stroud not attending. The agenda item will be brought forth at the next council meeting.

Approval of the temporary alcohol permit for Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce

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

Approval of application for the sale of alcoholic beverages at 283 North Lee Street for Helios Stores, Inc.

Mr. Melton reviewed the application for the sale of retail package beer and wine. The notice was advertised in the Monroe County Reporter on December 7, 2022 and December 14, 2022.

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

Approval to advertise an ordinance to modify council meeting dates that occur on holidays

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve advertising the ordinance. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

Reschedule January council meetings

Ms. Hall proposed moving the 2023 January council meetings to Tuesday, January 3rd and Tuesday, January 17th.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve moving January's meetings. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of a proposed charter amendment

Ms. Hall stated the proposed charter amendment was discussed at the council retreat. When department heads are being hired, they would be affirmed or approved by council. Ms. Hall further stated that the purpose of a City Charter is to establish governmental structure and define the boundaries of the city. It is also to provide specific powers, functions, and central procedures and legal control. The City Charter was last amended in 2015.

After a lengthy discussion about the charter amendment Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the amendment to the City Charter. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

Walter Goodson

Mr. Goodson of Forsyth is concerned about the size of homes and land acreage in the city limits. After some discussion, Mayor Wilson states he is in favor of looking into lot sizes and sq. footages of homes.

Appointment of Glenn Watson, Steve Reece, Regina Ivie, and Winifred Berry to the bicentennial committee

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

Public hearing to adopt 2023 proposed budget

Ms. Hall provided an overview of the 2023 proposed budget.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing regarding the 2023 proposed budget. There being no comments from the public, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Approval of a resolution to adopt the 2023 budget

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the 2023 budget as presented. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of comprehensive inventory agreement and deposit with Electric Cities of Georgia

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the comprehensive inventory agreement and deposit with Electric Cities of Georgia. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously

Approval of the 2023 Local Maintenance Improvement Grant

Ms. Hall recommended only resurfacing Blount St. at this time which is estimated at \$87,000.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the 2023 Local Maintenance Improvement Grant. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the First Amendment to the Power Purchase Contract between Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia and the city

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the first amendment to the power purchase contract between MEAG and the city as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of the Requisitions Greater than \$6,000

- Gresco Utility Supplies \$7,788.00
- Georgia Fire & Rescue \$11,074.00
- Electric Cities of Georgia \$30,000.00

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

City Manager’s Report

- Reminder that the work being done on Lee Street from square to Frontage Road is a Georgia Department of Transportation project. They are marking the outer lanes as right-turn only, installing signage, restriping all crossings, installing new signals at Patrol Road intersection with pedestrian island.
- Convention and Business Bureau has submitted names to replace Kerri Swearingen and Amy Knight on the board. Those are Brandie Starr and Paige Bryson for your consideration at the Organizational meeting on January 3rd. Emailed the list out for your review for board appointments that expire 12/31.
- Flashing stop signs to be installed at Indian Springs/W Johnston have been received, poles have been installed and signs should be installed by end of this week.
- Shop with Public Safety (including fire department this year) will be this Wednesday. Thank you to those that made donations as we exceeded our goal of \$1500 by \$1,000 so each child will receive additional money to spend. Also thank you to the Main Street Board for coming up with an event this past Saturday to help raise funds for this very worthy cause.
- Fire hydrant inspections have been completed for this year

- Electric department is working with/assisting the hospital in removing some poles and moving services to clear the path at the helipad at the hospital
- Equipment was received for the new pickups in Public Works and those trucks have been delivered for the equipment to be installed
- We have the six blighted properties along with four that Mr. Melton has scheduled to go to court. Due to the number of items on the agenda tonight and previous discussion that council would like to have a work session to discuss the properties, I did not include these in tonight's agenda. The six were given 90 days to either make the necessary repairs, demolish the structure, and/or sell the property.
- Held Open Enrollment for city employees last week for the new health insurance and all other benefits. Please see me before you leave tonight to sign for your benefits. Changing to Cigna reduced the amount budgeted per employee by \$1,000
- New Year's Eve Forsythia Ball Drop is next event. Concert with Rescue Dogs will begin at 8:00 pm with ball drop at midnight. Jackson and Johnston around the square will be blocked off early that morning to allow for the setup of the stage.
- Public Hearing for variance request for setbacks at 533 Cabiness Road will be held during January 3rd council meeting
- City Hall offices will close at noon this Thursday and remain closed until Tuesday December 27 and remain open through end of day on Friday, December 30. Offices will be closed on Monday, January 2, 2023
- We held a retirement reception for Steve Jones this afternoon and he will certainly be missed but we wish him well in his retirement.
- We welcome Woodrow Blue as Police Chief and look forward to working with him.
- Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Tommy J. Alford at his passing. TJ was a faithful employee since 2000 and operated the grapple truck like none other. We will certainly miss TJ. Funeral will be this Friday at 1:00 pm either at Hopewell Church or Freeman Funeral Home Chapel (depending on the weather)
- Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

City Attorney's Report

Mr. Melton stated a public hearing that is currently being advertised for the zoning variance of Cabiness Road Parcel # 52 12A; setback variance.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Wilson stated that he and Ms. Hall met with Ms. Habersham and Ms. Sibetta from American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) to see about classifying Forsyth as an age friendly community. If Council approved, then they could move forward in the application process.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to move forward with the application process. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Wilson also stated that Electric Cities of Georgia is looking at Forsyth as a centralized training center.

Additional Business

No additional business was brought forward

Public Comments

No one came forward for public comments

Executive Session

Mr. Dodd offered a motion at 7:16 p.m. to go into Executive Session for personnel issues to include elected officials only. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously. During Executive Session Ms. Hall was called in.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to conclude Executive Session at 8:07 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.