

MINUTES

FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 6, 2018

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. Lawrence gave the invocation. Present for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Julius Stroud, Greg Goolsby, John Howard, and Melvin Lawrence. Also present was City Attorney, Bobby Melton, and City Manager, Janice Hall.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 22, 2018 CALLED COUNCIL MEETING

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

SWEARING IN OF NEW POLICE OFFICERS

Mayor Wilson administered the Oath of Office to Anais Benjamin, fulltime officer, and Manuel Barajas, part time officer, and welcomed both to the city of Forsyth.

EDDIE HARRIS – UPDATE AND RECOGNITIONS FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief, Eddie Harris, introduced Janet Eldridge, Municipal Court Clerk, for a recognition of the court. Ms. Eldridge read a letter from the Administrative Office of the Courts recognizing the City of Forsyth Municipal Court as having an excellent rating within the State Court system. Mayor Wilson recognized Municipal Court Judge, Kristi Lovelace, and Municipal Court Public Defender, Jefferson Adams, who were also present and thanked all those involved in the court for their work and dedication.

APPROVAL OF CONTRACT WITH ANAIS BENJAMIN

Mrs. Hall reviewed that Officer Benjamin was hired from the City of Cordele and has not completed the two years required after completing mandate to cover the cost of mandate. City Council previously agreed to pay out the remainder of his agreement with the City of Cordele, provided that an agreement is written between Officer Benjamin and the City of Forsyth that he would remain employed with Forsyth for at least 2 years or he would be responsible for reimbursing the cost paid to the City of Cordele. Mrs. Hall stated that Officer Benjamin has signed the contract and requested that council approve the contract and authorize the City Manager to sign the contract as well.

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

PUBLIC HEARING – VARIANCE REQUEST FROM INGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROPERTIES FOR 22/25 WEST MAIN STREET FOR MINIMUM SQUARE FOOTAGE FOR APARTMENTS AND CONDITIONAL USE/VARIANCE TO ALLOW STAIRWAY TO EXTERIOR ON JACKSON STREET

Mr. Melton reviewed the variance request to reduce the minimum square footage for apartments in CBD and to allow a stairway to be constructed on the exterior which would permanently block a portion of

the sidewalk on the Jackson Street side of the building. Mr. Melton stated that Planning & Zoning approve both request conditional upon all agencies approval and that all ADA regulations be met for the stairway as well as the remainder of the sidewalk requirement. Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments for or against the approval of the requests. Hearing no comments, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Lawrence offered a motion to approve the conditional use/variance request for minimum square footage and exterior stairway on Jackson Street with the conditions as recommended by Planning & Zoning that all other approvals be met and Mr. Stroud seconded the motion. Mr. Goolsby asked how many apartments were being constructed and the projected completion date. Mr. Ingram stated there will be seven apartments and hopes to have the project complete around the first of 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING – ANNEXATION REQUEST FROM MONROE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE COUNTY RECREATION COMPLEX PROPERTY AND ANNEX AS INSTITUTION

Mr. Melton reviewed the annexation request received from Monroe County and stated that annexations must be done in the form of an ordinance to amend the City Zoning Map; property is proposed to be annexed as Institutional which is the closest zoning that the city has to match what the property is currently zoned and Institutional will allow the current use to continue; the request comes from the Monroe County Board of Commissioners and they have waived all formal notices; the request is being made to accommodate the Elections Board request to have city and county polling place in the same location; and this has been advertised in the August 15, 22, and 29 issues of the Reporter. Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments for or against the annexation. Hearing no comments, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the annexation of the property as presented and Mr. Lawrence seconded the motion. Mr. Stroud asked why the annexation request only included a portion of the property at the Recreation Complex and not the 100+ acres the County recently purchased and Mayor Wilson explained that the annexation is for the purpose of the election polling place. Mr. Stroud stated that dividing the property will only create an issue as we already have with the property behind Country Club Park and just wants to make sure that we are not doing something that will only hurt the City at a later time. Mr. Stroud asked why the annexation was only for the county property and not the other properties that adjoin this property or those across the highway and Mrs. Hall stated that those properties are included in the Annexation Plan but this is only being done to try to alleviate the problems city voters have when there is a city election and a county, state, or national election so that voters only have to go to one polling place to vote. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING – ANNEXATION REQUEST FROM MONROE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER PROPERTY AND ANNEX AS INSTITUTION

Mr. Melton reviewed the annexation request received from Monroe County and stated that annexations must be done in the form of an ordinance to amend the City Zoning Map; property is proposed to be annexed as Institutional which is the closest zoning that the city has to match what the property is currently zoned and Institutional will allow the current use to continue; the request comes from the Monroe County Board of Commissioners and they have waived all formal notices; the request is being made to accommodate the District Attorney request to the County Board of Commissioners; and this has been advertised in the August 15, 22, and 29 issues of the Reporter. Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing

for comments for or against the annexation. Hearing no comments, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

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

KIM PIERSON – MONROE COUNTY RECREATION DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

Ms. Kim Pierson, Monroe County Sports Coordinator, reviewed the summer camps held this summer at the County Recreation Complex. This is a joint project paid for by the city and carried out by the staff at the County Recreation Complex. Ms. Pierson stated that there were 16 camps with 405 children participating in the various camps. Ms. Pierson presented a picture to council of the participants in each camp. Mayor and Council thanked Ms. Pierson for the picture and her work with the camps.

PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT THE 2018 MILLAGE RATE

Mr. Melton reviewed that this matter has previously been before council and the proposed millage rate has been properly advertised. Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments for or against the adoption of the proposed millage rate. Hearing no comments, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to adopt the 3 mil rate for 2018 provided that the funds are not deposited into the General Fund and Mr. Stroud seconded the motion. Mrs. Hall reviewed that the funds from property taxes do come through the General Fund but are transferred to a separate bank account for Special Projects. Mr. Stroud stated that we need to be careful as to how we use the property tax and not lower the tax as long as we have streets and sidewalks that need to be repaired. Mr. Goolsby amended his motion to approve the 3 mil property tax rate provided the tax is used for Special Projects. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PARADE PERMIT FOR THE MPHS HOMECOMING PARADE – OCTOBER 25, 2018

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the parade permit as presented. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF LICENSE AND MASTER AGREEMENT WITH SYNERGISTIC SOFTWARE

Mrs. Hall reviewed that this software that the city police officers, county deputies, 911 dispatchers, and county jail will use. Mrs. Hall stated that when we first combined the city and county dispatch, the county wanted to move to the software that the city police officers were using, but when the company told us that they did not have a jail module, we had to find other software for both the city and county. We are in the final stages of installing this software and this license and agreement will cover the city's use. The cost of the software will be paid through ticket processing as with the currently software. Mr. Melton stated that the agreement provides for any disputes to be carried out in Tattnall County and recommended that be changed to Monroe County. Mrs. Hall stated she would have that changed before the agreement is signed.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the agreement contingent upon the change of venue getting changed. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL TO DECREASE HOURS OF OPERATION AND SET CLOSING DATE FOR SPLASHPAD

Mrs. Hall reviewed the recommendation to change the hours of operation for the Splashpad to Monday through Friday 2 PM until 7 PM. Saturday and Sunday 10 AM until 7 PM and to close the Splashpad for the season on September 30. Mr. Stroud asked that we be proactive to begin whatever the process may be to have the Splashpad operational in May and Mrs. Hall agreed. Mayor Wilson stated that the restrooms must be complete by the end of 2018 as the waiver provided for by the Health Department

will expire then. Mr. Howard stated that we need to look at adding additional features to the Splashpad as well.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to amend the hours of operation as recommended by the City Manager. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE INVOICES -

Mrs. Hall reviewed invoices for each department for a total of all invoices to be approved of \$275,130.56.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the accounts payable as presented. Seconded by Mr. Howard, the motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF REQUISITIONS GREATER THAN \$5,000

- a. Calibration Controls Automation Inc – Industrial Park Lift Station emergency repairs - \$23,001.92
- b. Gresco – street light bulbs - \$11,400

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

REPORTS

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Mrs. Hall offered the following report:

- Mrs. Pierson is working on DDA training to be held in Forsyth; will have space for 15; council can attend but need to know if you want to attend so you are included in the count; possible dates are October 5, 12, or 19
- Received email this afternoon from Matt Perry, EMA Director, advising of possible severe weather from Hurricane Florence; will update as information is received
- 2017 audit is still being finalized; we have reported to State that we are late and have requested special consideration but they will not give us an extension
- Contacted Railroad again yesterday after 2nd train versus vehicle accident on Tift College; they have options to present and I am working with them on a date to make their presentation to council
- RFP's for water/wastewater management and engineering are out and due in by end of September
- Received only 1 response for restroom rehab at Splashpad; will meet with that contractor to see if cost can be reduced; may have to rebid if cost remains the same
- All departments have submitted their 2019 budget request; I will be scheduling individual meetings with each to review and have the presentation ready in October for council to consider by end of 2018; the presentation will include park considerations rather than trying to do that separate as the funding for the projects must come from 2019 funds
- Working on employee appreciation for this month
- Couple of roads need attention:
 - Jackson/Adams
 - Jackson/Phelps
 - Johnston/Phelps
- Road patch on MLK closest to Main is failing so repair will be made
- New employee starting Monday as bookkeeper
- Working on email issues; provided all with way to access web mail rather than Outlook, IHS continues working on the problem
- Inspection report from EPD; flow meter for discharge and dredging of ponds will be costly to install

- Still issues with beltpress at the South Sewer Plan; receiving septic tank discharge but limit to one load per week; requesting documentation of where discharge comes from
- Electric installation complete at car charging station at Walmart
- Grapple truck down for brake repair; should only take a couple of days to complete
- Yard sale this weekend on Jackson Street from 8 am to noon; 45 signed up as of today
- Boy Scouts working on flower beds on square
- Two men short in public works so will be advertising for laborers
- Cutting Right of Way on Montpelier
- Sprayed at RWTP for kudzu
- We have only had one prison detail since the accident couple months back so we are behind on grass cutting as the two details work mainly on grass cutting in the cemeteries while our guys work on the rights of way and parks;

Mr. Goolsby stated that Representative Dickey had asked him about the Tift College Drive Railroad crossing and when it was going to be worked on and stated that Mrs. Hall was supposed to talk with him about the matter. Mrs. Hall stated that she has not spoken with Representative Dickey about the crossing but will contact him. Mrs. Hall stated that the Railroad and GDOT are willing to do the upgrades needed but they want to handle all crossings at the same time. Mrs. Hall will work with all to get a meeting scheduled to discuss and review the proposals from the Railroad.

Mr. Lawrence asked that the speed limit in front of Hubbard Elementary be lowered. Mrs. Hall stated that this is outside the city limits so it is not something that we can request but will submit the request to the County for consideration.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

Mr. Melton stated that the City should be proud of the recognition the City Court received as there are many courts that are not in compliance.

Mr. Lawrence asked Mr. Melton his opinion of making Paul James Place a one-way street and Mr. Melton stated that he would recommend getting public input before considering. Mayor Wilson stated that it makes sense to have Harris and Kimball as one-way for one block. Mr. Dodd stated that new city hall will increase the traffic on Harris and Chambers and those streets need to be looked at as well. Mr. Stroud stated that we need to get with store owners to see what works best for them and get a traffic study done. Mr. Lawrence stated that the property owners have approached him and asked him about having Paul James Place one way but to keep the parking on both sides of the street. Mrs. Hall stated that parking is only permitted on one side of both streets. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the issue and it was agreed that Mrs. Hall would get with the property owners to get their input on making the streets one way.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Wilson offered the following report:

- The Wayfinding signs look great
- The exit ramp lights and under pass lights are all on and look great
- Home dedication for fallen fire fighter tomorrow and the public is invited
- Reviewed how Central Georgia Technical College ranks in comparison to all other technical colleges in the state
- Received request from citizen to install speed bumps on Newton Memorial Drive and asked Mrs. Hall to talk with the Board of Education to make sure they are okay with installing speed bumps
- Received request to consider dedicating Lee Street Park as a Veterans Park. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to explore dedicating Lee Street Park as a Veterans Park and Mr. Stroud seconded the

motion. Mr. Goolsby stated that the size of the park may be an issue as it is a small park. Mayor Wilson stated that it would not be for monuments, just be named as Veterans Park. Mr. Stroud stated that maybe we should consider Country Club Park since it is next to the National Guard Armory and would be a good place. Mr. Dodd amended his motion to consider Country Club Park and Mr. Stroud seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ADDITIONAL COUNCIL REPORTS

Mr. Howard asked if there has been any movement on the county returning the park area to the city and Mayor Wilson stated that the last he heard was the county stated that if the city would build a pool they would give the land back. Mr. Stroud asked what we need to do to get the land back. Mr. Goolsby stated that we should show the county our plan for the park and what we plan to do with the land. Mr. Howard stated that this was done when he was Mayor and the county rejected the plan. Mrs. Hall stated that the wording in the deed is that the property would revert back to the city if it was no longer being used for recreational purposes. Mrs. Hall reviewed a phone call she received from a citizen asking who is responsible for cutting the grass on the property and she explained that the county owns the property. The citizen stated that they would call the county and then called back to tell her that when he called the county road department they told them that they do not cut the property that it belongs to the city. Mrs. Hall reviewed that the plan she has been working with the Regional Commission is not where she wants it to be and is still working with the Regional Commission to finalize a narrative and drawing and that the plan includes all of the city parks along with the property the county now owns. Mr. Stroud stated that the term “recreational use” is very vague and asked if it is possible to define what that should be. Mr. Melton stated that the term could be defined and the original plan was for the county to have the country recreation activities on the land but they are no longer using the land. Mr. Stroud stated that the deed states reverts to the city if the property is no longer used for recreational purposes so the county occasionally holds some type activity there to meet the requirement. It was agreed that the city will provide the county with a plan as to what the intended use of the property will be by the city and request that they deed the property back to the city. Mrs. Hall will work with the Regional Commission to finalize the plan.

Mr. Howard stated that the end of the year is approaching and it is budget time, with high taxes we need to look at all sources of revenue to attract and keep employees.

Mr. Lawrence stated that the sidewalk on MLK at the dentist office needs to be replaced as it has a large hump in it.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Hall requested an executive session for the purpose of pending litigation and personnel matters. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to adjourn into executive session for pending litigation and personnel matters. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously and council adjourned into executive session at 8:01 pm.

Mayor Wilson called the meeting back into open session at 8:31 pm.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Submitted by:

Janice L. Hall, City Manager