

**Minutes
Forsyth City Council
December 16, 2019**

Call to Order

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

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation, and Roll Call

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Dodd gave the invocation. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Julius Stroud, Greg Goolsby, Melvin Lawrence, Chris Hewett, and John Howard. Also present was City Attorney, Bobby Melton; City Manager, Janice Hall; City Clerk, Regina Ivie.

Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Wilson stated a change was needed on the agenda to move agenda item XIII (13) now between item IX (9) & X (10).

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the agenda with the revision as stated. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of the November 18, 2019 Council Meeting

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

Public Hearing – Sign variance 54 N Jackson Street

Mr. Melton stated the public hearing has been advertised in the Monroe County Reporter issues of November 27th, December 4th, and December 11th.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor for public comment in favor of or opposition of the sign variance. Ms. Pierson stated Planning and Zoning approved the sign variance with noted changes on October 28, 2019. No one came forward for public comments therefore Mayor Wilson closed the floor for public comment.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the sign variance. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of lease agreement with The 1823 Artisan Guild for 20 N Jackson Street

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

Award bid for downtown landscape and maintenance services

Ms. Hall stated Design, Install and Maintenance was one of three bids received in response to the request for proposal. Design, Install, and Maintenance's bid is \$1255.00 per month for a yearly cost of \$15,060. Ms. Hall recommends awarding the bid to Design, Install and Maintenance based on her review of the bids received and scope of work to be performed for the price.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve and award the bid to Design, Install and Maintenance. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Quit Claim Deed to Georgia Manufactured Housing Association

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the Quit Claim Deed to Georgia Manufactured Housing Association. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Temporary Alcohol Permit – Monroe County Chamber of Commerce dba Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce

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

Award bid for Highway 41 deep patching work

Ms. Hall stated Hofstadter received bids from companies to perform the work. The low bid is from Womack Paving for \$58,340 to mill, to cut the asphalt, the concrete, and to replace it in areas from Legion Hall towards Main Street. Georgia Department of Transportation has approved the permit. Womack Paving will start the project in the new year.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to award the bid to Womack Paving. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of resolution to increase hotel/motel tax

Ms. Hall reviewed that the resolution before council is to reaffirm the request to increase the hotel tax to a maximum of 8%. Ms. Hall stated the resolution will be submitted to Representative Dickey for review before taking before the Legislature for approval.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the resolution. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Pay Plan review for City employees – Greg Boike with Regional Commission & Janice Hall, City Manager

Mr. Boike reviewed the proposed pay plan to Mayor and Council. He stated that one of the key ideas of the pay plan was to ensure that City employees are equitably compensated within the City of Forsyth, and to ensure Forsyth's employees pay is competitive with other local governments throughout the region of the similar size within the state. He further stated that a merit system pay scale provides options for flexibility of salary increases based on annual employee reviews and performance.

Ms. Hall reviewed the changes necessary to the budget to implement the pay plan if approved.

Mayor Wilson stated the pay plan has been discussed with Council for some time. Ms. Hall further stated that everyone with the pay plan is receiving at least a 3% increase. If approved employees will receive increases based on their annual evaluations in the future. In the past annual evaluations had no bearing on whether an employee received an increase or not to their compensation.

Mr. Melton and Mayor Wilson discussed steps necessary to adopt the pay plan as a city ordinance. Mayor Wilson stated Council could vote to accept the pay plan as a policy as to not to delay the effective date. Once advertised for the appropriate time frame we could adopt the plan as an ordinance. Employees could begin being paid once the pay plan has been adopted as a policy. We would later adopt the plan as an ordinance after advertising has been done.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to implement the pay plan for the employees effective January 1, 2020; and to advertise the adoption of a pay scale for the City. And as soon as it can be administratively handled we would formally adopt the permanent pay scale for the City. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing for 2020 Budget

Ms. Hall stated a public hearing advertisement is currently running in the Monroe Reporter; the budget will be formally adopted on January 6, 2020.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor to the public. No one came forward Mayor Wilson closed the floor for the public hearing.

Award bid for asphalt replacement at Railroad Crossing on Tift College Drive

Ms. Hall reviewed work necessary to replace the asphalt at Railroad Crossing on Tift College Drive. We aren't allowed to work inside their right of way. The railroad isn't allowed to work inside the City's right of way. We will work to coordinate the work with Norfolk Southern. Ms. Hall recommends Womack Paving with the low bid received of \$24,900; that is to level out the approach to the railroad, increasing the distance out and to smooth out the transition.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to award the bid to Womack Paving. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of change order for demolition project for New City Hall site

Ms. Hall reviewed the change order request was due to an additional concrete slab under the building, additional asbestos testing was performed on the slab.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the change order in the amount of \$11,400. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Schedule date of 1st Council Meeting for 2020

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to schedule the first council meeting of 2020 on January 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to reschedule the next council meeting that is currently set for Monday, January 20, 2020, Martin Luther King Jr. holiday to Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:00p.m. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Workers Compensation Claim Settlement

Mr. Melton reviewed the settlement regarding Larry Jamison's 2006 workers compensation claim. The Subsequent Injury Trust Fund will reimburse the City for payments except for \$25,000. No further claims will be submitted; the claim will be formally settled.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the claim settlement. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Railroad Crossing Matter

Mr. Melton reviewed the Consent Order that was approved by Judge Kimberly Schroer. The Indian Springs Drive/South Crossover crossing will close January 8, 2020. Norfolk Southern has agreed to the conditions of the consent order which has been signed by Judge Schroer. The conditions of the Consent Order include upgrading the warning devices at the Tift College crossing by installing warning lights, bell and gates; resurfacing Tift College and Lee Street crossing; and removal of debris from within the Railroad right-of-way within the city limits. The anticipated time frame for completion is two (2) to two and half (2 ½) years; previously a timeframe wasn't specified. Mr. Melton further stated Norfolk Southern will clean-up of debris and railroad ties from Hwy 18 to the City with an anticipated completion timeframe of 120 days. At the South Crossover Street crossing Norfolk Southern will remove the asphalt within the limits of their right of way, grade and seed the area also. The case remains pending until completion of the work called for in the Consent order; with an estimated target date of May 1, 2022. If failures occur the City can seek recourse.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to accept the consent order as stated. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of requisitions greater than \$5,000

- i. **Ten -8 \$6712.00**
- ii. **Ace Pole Company Inc. \$6133.00**

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the requisitions listed. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

City Manager Report

Ms. Hall provided the following report:

- New recording equipment installed; would like feedback from those watching regarding sound and video quality and any issues that you experienced while viewing. When we move to new city hall building, this equipment can be moved with us with a couple changes and work well in the new council chambers.
- Provided list of boards with those appointments highlighted that are vacant and/or will expire 12/31.
- Also provided list of professional appointments for the organizational meeting for first meeting in January. Have two new appointments to make and my recommendation is highlighted on the list provided.
- EPD inspected the North East Waste Water Treatment Plant on December 4 and has submitted their deficiency findings. Utility Partners, Hofstadter and I will work on a response and have that submitted back to EPD within the 30-day timeframe. Deficiencies were trash in aeration basin, leak in compressed air piping and SCADA system not working. We were already working on all 3 of these before the inspection.
- As required by our agreement, the Golf Club Board has submitted an annual budget. Anticipated revenues are approximately \$6,000 more than anticipated expenses.
- Public hearing was held on November 15 for CDBG. Currently working to clear all grant conditions which should be completed by December 31 with design work being completed by January 15.
- Copies of latest draft from Regional Commission regarding cemeteries is provided to you tonight for your review.
- Pre-qualifications for general contractors for new city hall building were due today at 3:00.
- Open enrollment held last week and council forms are
- Census is hiring. Mr. Ray Parker will be at city hall/police department again tomorrow then again on January 3 and 6. Those interested in applying can apply online at 2020census.gov/jobs. It is very important to government agencies that everyone submits the census forms when received as most grants and funding depend upon the population. Jobs start at \$14.50/hour plus mileage and are typically evening and weekend work.
- Thank you to all that came out and participated in the Christmas tree lighting, it was a great success and the lights around town look great again this year. Huge thank you to public works and electric departments for their help in getting the lights and decorations up. Also make note of the new holiday banners replacing the old ones that are now up.
- Reminder of sign unveiling for Julius Stroud Jr. Lane on December 19 at 2:00 pm at the intersection of Country Club Drive and Quitman Lane (entrance to Armory)
- Reminder of NYE Forsythia Ball drop on December 31. Entertainment begins at 9:00 pm with Conquest Show Band being the concert band.
- Shop With a Cop last day for donations is Wednesday, December 18; want to help at least 11 children; try to provide \$150/child; make checks payable to Forsyth Main Street this is a tax deductible donation.
- Wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

City Attorney Report

Mr. Melton had no further business to report.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Wilson stated he attended Electric Cities annual meeting recently; it was informative with lots of information about solar. We are only one of few cities that have adopted a distributed generation agreement.

Mayor Wilson further stated he's honored to be the Mayor and to be working with City Council. He's looking forward to the upcoming retreat in January with lots of accomplishments and good ideas to come from the retreat. Merry Christmas to all!

Council Comments

Mr. Lawrence stated he is looking forward to serving on the Council for the next four years. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Mr. Howard is appreciative to have the opportunity to work with City and Council for the next four years.

Public Comments

No one came forward for public comments.

Executive Session

No executive session was held.

Adjourn

There being no further business Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the council meeting. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.