

**MINUTES
FORSYTH CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
JANUARY 26, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order and Mr. Howard gave the invocation. Present for the retreat was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Julius Stroud, Greg Goolsby, John Howard, Chris Hewett, and Melvin Lawrence. Also in attendance was City Manager, Janice Hall.

All unanimous votes will be six (6) votes for (Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Howard, Hewett, and Lawrence).

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS GOALS

Mayor and Council reviewed the spreadsheet provided showing all goals with status of each beginning with the 2016 Council Retreat. Mayor Wilson specifically reviewed the goals that have been completed and commended all for getting those completed. Mr. Stroud pointed out that he is especially proud that the minimum wage paid to a city employee is now \$10 with the adoption of the Pay Plan. Mr. Lawrence commented that several employees have expressed their gratitude to him for the recent raise and Pay Plan. Mayor Wilson stated that the Pay Plan now puts our employees on par and ahead of most surrounding cities. Mr. Howard voiced concern that the first goal for 2016 to “define roles of Elected Officials and City Manager” still shows as ongoing. Ms. Hall reviewed that her rationale for leaving this as ongoing is that the Charter states that Elected Officials will only go through the City Manager rather than directly to city employees and some are occasionally going directly to the department head and/or the employee to get updates on projects or to have work performed. Council held a lengthy discussion regarding the need for Elected Officials to stay out of the day-to-day operations of the City and allow the City Manager and Department Heads to do their jobs. Council agreed that all would abide by the Charter and if not the City Manager was to “call them out”.

GOALS FOR 2020

The following is a listing of all goals presented by Mayor and Council and the final goals established for 2020.

Overall Goals for 2020:

Archway to City

Connecting sidewalk from where it ends on Johnston Street to Country Club Drive

Junior Council

more social on social media; highlight employees with recognitions; Veterans Day; operational information

Indian Springs Business Park - partner with MCDA and market

City have seat on the MCDA

website more informational - garbage pickup days; closing days; etc

City Park - citizen involvement

Work Based learning student for city & private businesses

infrastructure especially water & sewer

apply for Water First program

direct citizen complaints to website for form to submit

quarterly work sessions to discuss "where we are"; mid-year review while in Savannah;
hold 4 work session/retreat type meetings per year

educational incentives for employees; reward achievements; reward hires with college degrees

digital information board at new City Hall building (outside for information)

deep penetration test for computer systems; cyber security

speed bump policy

traffic planning for city; look at speed limits in several areas

tractor trailer traffic in town; signs on square to prohibit trucks on city streets; hire Carl Vinson Institute to do traffic study for city streets to include signage, patterns, need for speed bumps, etc

extend entertainment district to Georgia Bobs

buy vacuum truck

Economic Development Goals for 2020

automatic car wash

major sitdown restaurant

pursue grants

better use of Regional Commission

repurpose Aldermen Hall/Welcome Center

partner better with Work Force Development

support College & Career Academy; let State officials know we are behind this as elected officials

small business incubator/resource program

promote exit 185 interchange development

Narrowed Goals Down

Small Business Program

traffic plan for city (CVIG) include speed bump needs

infrastructure improvements to include sidewalks & storm drains

support College & Career Academy
educational incentives for employees
digital information board for outside of new city hall building
better use of social media

APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn into executive session for the purposes of discussing personnel matters. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion carried unanimously and council adjourned into executive session at 10:20 am.

Mayor Wilson called the meeting back into open session at 10:49 am.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the 2020 Professional appointments as presented with the exception of the City Surveyor position which will be eliminated and Mr. Hewett seconded the motion. Council discussed how the surveyor position would be handled and agreed that any survey needs for the city would be bid out on a project by project basis and developers would handle surveying on their projects.

The motion carried unanimously.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REACTIVATION

Ms. Hall reviewed that there have been some issues come up that it may have been helpful to have a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review. She also reviewed that a Historic District Map was adopted several years ago but the Guidelines for the HPC to follow were, even though presented to Council on several occasions, were never adopted. Mr. Stroud asked if the Historic designations that are currently in place are in jeopardy if we do not have a HPC and Mayor Wilson stated that those are just designations without benefit or requirements. Mr. Dodd stated that someone needs control over what is done in the City. Ms. Hall stated that she did not have any of the specific examples but that Mrs. Pierson had stated on several occasions that there is a need for a HPC to review applications. Mr. Stroud offered a motion to table the matter until additional information can be gathered as to the issues Mrs. Pierson may be encountering. Seconded by Mr. Dodd, the motion to table carried unanimously.

REVIEW POLICY TO ADD VETERANS DAY AS HOLIDAY FOR VETERANS

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve Veterans Day for Veterans only and Mr. Dodd seconded the motion. Ms. Hall reviewed the information provided to council stating that the estimated cost to provide Veterans Day as an additional holiday for all employees would cost approximately \$10,000 and to add for public safety only, which is where the majority of veterans are currently employed, would cost approximately \$6,000. Council discussed their desire to provide this as a holiday for veterans only as a small way to show them our thanks for their service. Council also discussed that this would include veterans, active duty, Reserves and Guard. Mr. Goolsby restated his motion to allow veterans, active duty, reservists and guard to take Veterans Day as a holiday and if they choose not to take Veterans Day off, they can use this as a floating holiday during the month of November. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Hall stated that she will prepare a City Policy to bring back before council for adoption.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL FOR RESPECTIVE BOARDS – SUMMARY OF WHAT BOARDS ARE WORKING ON

Council agreed to have monthly reports from the respective boards that they sit on as a liaison rather than just council reports. Mr. Goolsby stated that rather than calling on each council member for

comments that additional business could be added to the agenda and if a council member had something additional to report that would be the time to do so. Mayor Wilson encouraged everyone to contact Ms. Hall with issues of pot holes, street lights being out, signage issues, etc. rather than bringing those up during council meetings. All future council meeting agendas will include Council Board Reports for the 1st meeting of the month and Additional Business will be on all agendas going forward.

CITY IT (COMPUTER) NEEDS/COMPANY

Ms. Hall stated that she hoped everyone had reviewed the email she sent out from Sophicity reviewing issues other cities have encountered with IT. Ms. Hall stated that she has requested information from our current IT company and will reach out to them once more to see if they want to submit a quote to continue handling the city IT. Ms. Hall stated that she would bring a recommendation to council at one of the February meetings.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/BUDGETING INFORMATION

Ms. Hall stated that with the recent changes to how Accounts Payable invoices are approved and paid, she would like input from council as to how much information they would like regarding payments made, how they would like to receive that information and how often. Mayor Wilson suggested adding the reports to the city website similar to how the county does theirs and then council can review them any time they would like. After a brief discussion, council agreed that having the reports on the website would be beneficial for them and the citizens. Ms. Hall stated that council needs to have regular budget reviews and suggested that those be included in the quarterly meetings and council agreed.

MASTER PARK PLAN DISCUSSION

Ms. Hall provided copies of the presentation made by TSW at the September council meeting and stated that TSW is waiting on council to decide how they wish to move forward and how the projects will be funded. Once council makes these decisions, the agreement with TSW will be complete. Ms. Hall stated that TSW is willing to work with the city to develop and bid the projects but that would require an additional contract. After discussion, council agreed by consensus to have Ms. Hall work with the Regional Commission and return in March with cost to fund the entire project for all parks with the funding source being the City MCT and what payback that would be; funding from conventional source and what payback that would be; likelihood of obtaining any of the grants listed in the presentation and how much those would potentially cover on the projects; and to look at using the funds from the Adel project as the payment source for monies borrowed.

REVIEW OF CEMETERY ACCESS DRAFT AND NEED FOR ADDITIONAL CEMETERY LOTS

Ms. Hall reviewed the draft plan previously presented by the Regional Commission and asked council if they wanted to move forward with restricting access to any parts of any of the cemeteries or to conclude the project with the information presented. Council discussed the pros and cons of limiting access to the cemeteries. Ms. Hall recommended that we not move forward with restricting access to the cemeteries. Mr. Stroud stated that he would prefer to see funds spent to resurface the driving paths in the cemetery rather than blocking access. Mr. Hewett stated that Vineburg Street should be closed at the intersection with the cemetery to prevent the property owner using the street as his personal drive and parking lot. Mr. Howard offered a motion to follow the recommendation of the City Manager and not move forward with this project. Seconded by Mr. Stroud, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hall stated that we have no more usable cemetery lots to sell at Memorial Hills Cemetery and very few left at Rest Haven Cemetery. Ms. Hall passed out photos of each cemetery and pointed out the

areas at Memorial Hills that could be surveyed for additional lots. Ms. Hall also stated that to add additional lots at Rest Haven would require logging of the heavily wooded area around the cemetery. Council discussed the need to regulate where headstones would be allowed in the additional surveyed areas. Mr. Dodd offered a motion to survey additional lots with the original regulations and Mr. Hewett seconded the motion. Mr. Dodd stated that we should survey everything that can be surveyed for Memorial Hills only and that we should contract to log what is needed at Rest Haven. After a short discussion, Mr. Howard offered a motion to move forward with surveying, logging and clearing for additional lots as needed. Seconded by Mr. Hewett, the motion carried unanimously.

ADOPT A ROAD PROGRAM – REQUEST FROM BEAUTIFY FORSYTH

Ms. Hall passed out information from the Beautify Forsyth Committee regarding Adopt a Road Program stating that the committee is interested in developing this program for Forsyth. Mr. Stroud voiced concerns over this type program stating that we have to be very careful as to the organizations/companies approved to “adopt a road”. Council agreed to review the information and discuss further at a later date.

KEY TO THE CITY PRESENTATION AWARD POLICY

Ms. Hall requested that council review the information provided and provide feedback as to changes to the draft policy.

MARKETING ITEM IDEAS FOR MAINSTREET TO PURCHASE AS PROMOTION/GIVEAWAYS

Ms. Hall stated that Main Street budgets annually for marketing and has requested any suggestions from council as to what they would like to see that money spent on this year. Mayor Wilson stated that he had an idea for a coin that he would like considered.

SPEED BUMP AND RESURFACING OF STREETS

Ms. Hall stated that Mr. Lawrence had requested this to be added to the agenda for discussion but it has been added to the list of 2020 Goals and has already been discussed.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

Ms. Hall reviewed 18 open projects in the city that are in various stages of completion and stated that there are others that are not ready to announce yet but will be coming forward in the near future.

Ms. Hall reviewed status on the new city hall building stating that bids for construction are due tomorrow. Ms. Hall stated she has spoken with the company that we currently work with for security at the public safety building and has learned that the system there can be expanded to cover our security needs at the new building. Ms. Hall continues to work with Ken Stereo to expand the recording system in Aldermen Hall to the new building. Mr. Dodd asked about holding court in the new building and Ms. Hall stated that she has spoken with Chief Harris and Major Daniels and both feel it would be better to continue to hold court at the Justice Center for several reasons but the main reason is security in not having to transport prisoners and the system in place at the Justice Center for visitors to go through when entering the building.

Ms. Hall reviewed that in the classes she attended this weekend it was discussed several times about public comments during council meetings and whether this was a requirement of the law or not. Ms. Hall stated that the instructors of the training stated that it is not a requirement. Ms. Hall commended city council for always allowing public comments but cautioned council to not let the comments from the public become a question and answer time or back and forth comments as this could turn into what

should have been an agenda item. Mayor Wilson stated that he always wants to hear from the public and council agreed.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.

Submitted by:

Janice L. Hall, City Manager