

**Minutes  
Forsyth City Council  
February 3, 2020**

**Call to Order**

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

**Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation & Roll Call**

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Hewett gave the invocation. Present for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson; Councilmembers Greg Goolsby, Mike Dodd, Chris Hewett, John Howard, and Melvin Lawrence. Also present was City Attorney, Bobby Melton; City Manager, Janice Hall. City Clerk, Regina Ivie was at Clerk's Training and unable to attend the Council Meeting.

Councilmember Julius Stroud arrived at 6:35 p.m. Therefore, all unanimous votes prior to his arrival will be five (5) votes (Dodd, Goolsby, Hewett, Howard, and Lawrence). After Mr. Stroud's arrival at 6:35 p.m. all unanimous votes will be six (6) (Dodd, Stroud, Goolsby, Howard, Hewett and Lawrence).

**Approval of the 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 January 21, 2020 Council Meeting and January 26, 2020 Council Retreat**

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the minutes for the meetings as presented. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of street closure request by Glen Watson for the purpose of a festival on April 18, 2020.**

Ms. Hall reviewed the street closure request to close Jackson Street from Adams Street to King Street from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on April 18, 2020.

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

**Approval of Resolution Supporting Legislation for the Georgia Local Government Infrastructure Finance Authority Act**

Mayor Wilson stated he received an email from Tom Gehl, Lobbyist with Georgia Municipal Association regarding the resolution that would allow governments to work together on financing projects jointly with other governmental entities. It's being supported by Georgia Municipal Association; I feel it would benefit the City.

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

**Approval of Training and Travel for Councilman Mike Dodd**

Ms. Hall reviewed the travel request for training for Mr. Dodd to obtain his next level of certification. The estimated cost to include transportation, meals, registration and lodging is \$1,362.05

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the training and travel request as presented. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried with four (4) votes (Goolsby, Howard, Lawrence and Hewett). Mr. Dodd abstained from voting.

### **Award Construction Bid for City Hall Building**

Ms. Hall reviewed the low bidder and recommended builder of Pellicano by Clark Nexsen. The base bid is \$4,639,000.00. We had three alternates that could be bid on. One was a deduction for a level 4 finish on the interior walls in the lobby. One deduction is for a 42 inch black vinyl chain link fence. The fence would surround the lower employee parking lot; this is a deduction of \$13,500.00 with Pellicano. There is an addition for an emergency generator of \$14,874.00. The generator would run sufficient lighting for the building, computers, electrical outlets, air conditioning in the billing area, and some air conditioning in the remainder of the building. To deduct for the vinyl coating, and add the emergency generator the cost will be \$4,639,000.00. If the chain link fence isn't considered into the cost, and add the emergency generator the cost would be \$4,653,874.00 which is still lower than the next lowest bid. Next lowest bid is \$4,996,250.00. Ms. Hall further stated that a fence is required for pedestrian safety due to the height. If we choose the vinyl coating option the City would have to issue a variance for it.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to award the bid to Pellicano for the construction of the City Hall building, and to include level five (5) finish in the lobby and the addition of the emergency generator.

Mr. Michael Garrison, Senior Vice President with Pellicano stated a fencing cost can be provided at a later date. The construction begin date is March 03, 2020 with a 10-12 month project completion.

Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Revised Resolution to increase the Hotel Tax**

Ms. Hall explained that a revised resolution to increase the hotel tax is necessary for council to approve; previously a resolution was signed with a maximum increase up to eight (8) percent per the Department of Community Affairs recommendation. The resolution must have a specific percentage indicated.

Mayor Wilson stated Representative Dickey recommended we increase it to six (6) percent now, then reevaluate at a later date.

Ms. Stanbery stated that hoteliers aren't happy with the increase; they feel that the activities in the area aren't putting customers in the hotel rooms. The training centers do not contribute to the hotel tax. The increase in revenue will assist in Forsyth being more competitive with Macon and Locust Grove for hotel stays. Most surrounding areas are at eight (8) percent.

Councilmember Julius Stroud arrived at 6:35 p.m.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to increase the hotel tax to six (6) percent. Seconded by Mr. Dodd.

After discussion regarding that increasing to six (6) percent now will require that we submit another request in the next year or so to increase to seven (7) percent, Mr. Howard amended his original motion to increase the hotel tax to seven (7) percent. Seconded by Mr. Dodd.

Mayor Wilson reiterated that Representative Dickey recommended we increase the hotel tax to six (6) percent at this time, and we could reassess if we need to go higher at a later date.

The motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Contract with Womack Paving for Highway 41 and Tift College Drive Crossing Projects.**

Ms. Hall reviewed the scope of work for Highway 41 and Tift College Drive Crossing.

Ms. Stroud offered a motion to approve the contract with Womack Paving for both projects. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Hall stated the Highway 41 project will start just as soon as contracts are presented to Womack Paving.

## **City Manager's Report**

Ms. Hall provided the following report.

- Alcohol license for change of ownership for Stop & Shop and Holiday BP are being advertised for public hearings on February 17<sup>th</sup>
- Continue to work with Night Market for them to handle the bands and vendors for the monthly concert series; Mrs. Pierson has spoken with all of the businesses that could be impacted and most were ok with the added vendors for the concerts and most were in favor of blocking from Johnston to King Streets rather than the square. Those businesses with alcohol license were concerned that selling alcohol within the event would hurt their sales more than the food vendors and we have spoken with Night Market about this. They usually offer the alcohol sales to the local vendors first and if no one is interested then they contact outside alcohol vendors. I am working with the DOR to see what would be needed for our local alcohol license holders to sell during the events. Night Market has sent a draft agreement that we are reviewing and hope to have everything ironed out to bring back to council for approval at the next meeting.
- We discussed at the retreat the need for additional cemetery lots to sell. I met with Mr. Freeman to discuss this and get his input. Mr. Freeman feels he has sufficient lots remaining for sale at Rest Haven but needs additional lots at Memorial Hills and would also like to determine the lots on the top far right as to whether those are usable or not due to amount of rock previously hit. Mr. Freeman suggests continuing in a line from those at the top rather than attempting to curve the lots. I will be contacting surveyors to see who has do this type work and get pricing.
- Mr. James Green came to the last council meeting with questions regarding the utility bills that were turned over to collections and subsequently submitted to the Credit Bureau. I met with Mr. Green last week and went through each of the accounts that we should for him as bad debt accounts meaning that they were turned over to collections. During the meeting I contacted our collection agency to ensure there were no additional bills showing with them that I did not have for review with Mr. Green. Of the 14 bills that we show as bad debt, Mr. Green agreed that one of the bills was left in his name in an effort to assist the person moving in but that person failed to pay the bill. They have voiced agreement that this bill truly is theirs and we are working with her to obtain payment for that bill but it remains in Mr. Greens name until it is paid in full. There was one bill that had several adjustments that need to be researched so we are holding that bill as well. The remaining 12 bills were reviewed with Mr. Green and he paid the full amount owing of those bills. I want to take this opportunity to strongly discourage landlords or anyone for that matter from putting a utility bill in their name for someone else to use. Your name is on the account and you are the one that will be held responsible. Also, moving forward we will send out 2 final notices before turning accounts over to collections. Hopefully we will do a better job when someone has services disconnected to let them know that it could take 30-45 days for them to receive their final bill it just depends on when the billing cycle is for that location and also to make sure they understand that the bill paid at disconnect is not the last bill they will owe.
- As previously reported, we found a problem with the wiring in the Legion Hall and have disconnected all power to the building. Brian is getting quotes from local companies to rewire the building. Hope to have that information to bring back before you at the next meeting so we can get the wiring replaced and start renting the building again.
- Cotique will be moving back to their permanent location this week and next. Once they have moved out, we will be able to complete the interior work in the back room and do the roof repairs.
- Another item discussed at the retreat last weekend was information discussed at both of the classes that I attended. I reported to council that it is not a requirement of the Open Meetings Law to allow for public comments but went on to commend council for always including public comments in their meetings. Mayor and Council voiced agreement that they want to hear from the public and want this continue as an agenda item. I also stated that this is a time for comments and not for debate or Q&A from the public as this could turn into an agenda item that was not approved on the agenda. I just wanted to clear this up as it was reported that I just wanted everyone to know that you did not have to allow for public comments and the remainder of the discussion was omitted from the story.

- American Tank doing regular maintenance next week on River Forest tank; could take up to 6 weeks to complete. This is all interior maintenance on this tank.
- Carlos had a cancellation for this past weekend so he came up and removed the old pad from the Splashpad. He is working on getting the materials needed to get all the pumps back to operating correctly and to replace the pad. He will return weekend of March 21 and stay for a week to get all of this taken care of so we can open April 6 for Spring Break.
- Materials have been ordered to replace mulch at Kynette Park Playground.

### **City Attorney Report**

Mr. Melton stated two alcohol licenses are being advertised.

### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Wilson stated we had a great retreat and Cities United Conference. I, Councilman Goolsby, and Councilman Stroud were recognized with certificates for our training. We discussed numerous items during our retreat for the betterment of our community and our parks. We are creating a community where people want to live. I am proud to be a part of this team, and proud of all of the Councilmembers. We talked extensively about handling council comments at the meetings; we agreed to remove that from the agenda. The idea was to facilitate a quicker, more efficient process to take care of the issues. Any issues can be directly reported to the City Manager.

### **Council Board Reports**

Mr. Hewett stated a Housing Authority meeting is scheduled for Thursday at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Dodd asked about what grant was applied for the golf course project. Ms. Hall stated it is a Land & Water Conservation Grant. Two State agencies are working on the funding process for these grants and once they have that worked out, they will award the grants.

### **Additional Business**

No additional business was brought forward.

### **Public Comment**

No one came forward for public comment.

### **Executive Session-land transaction matters**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn into executive session to discuss land transaction matters. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to adjourn the executive session and move into open session at 7:16 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.