

Minutes
Forsyth City Council Meeting
September 8, 2020

Call to Order

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and Roll Call

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the invocation. Present for the meeting in person was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, Chris Hewett, Melvin Lawrence, and Julius Stroud. Mr. Howard was in attendance via video conferencing. Also present for the meeting with City Manager, Janice Hall; City Attorney, Bobby Melton and City Clerk, Regina Ivie.

Councilmember Greg Goolsby was not in attendance for the meeting. Therefore all unanimous votes will be five (5) votes (Howard, Stroud, Hewett, Dodd, and Lawrence)

Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Wilson stated two changes were necessary for the agenda; remove item #12 Approval of street closure request September 27, 2020 Jackson Street from Main to King Street and add a #3 Hydrocal, LLC \$6,829.00 under approval of requisitions #15.

Mr. Lawrence offered a motion to approve the agenda with the changes stated. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried with unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes from the August 17, 2020 Council Meeting

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

Walter Goodson – Police Complaint

Mr. Goodson was not in attendance for the meeting.

Public Hearing to consider sign variance application for Pintukumar Patel @ 119 N. Lee Street

Mr. Melton stated the application for a sign variance at 119 N. Lee Street; tax parcel F26 005 was previously presented and denied by Planning & Zoning. It was advertised in the Monroe Reporter on August 19 and August 26, 2020 as a public hearing.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor in favor of or opposition of the sign variance.

Ms. Pierson explained that the variance request is for the pole wrapping and the large Southern Comfort sign. Planning & Zoning unanimously denied the request.

Mr. Patel stated that he wasn't aware of an ordinance violation regarding the signage until Ms. Hall had informed him. Mr. Patel further stated he likes Monroe County and The City of Forsyth; he's happy to do business in the City.

Mr. Pierson suggested approving a portion of the variance if opposed to approving the complete request. Planning & Zoning didn't entertain approving a portion of the request.

There being no further comments for or against the sign variance Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Lawrence offered a motion to approve the sign variance application as presented. Seconded by Mr. Stroud. After some discussion Mayor Wilson called for a vote on the motion; the motion carried with four (4) votes. Mr. Dodd voted in opposition of the motion.

Public Hearing to adopt 2020 Millage Rate

Ms. Hall stated that Council previously approved to set the millage rate at 3 mills; this has been properly advertised. Lorri Andrews with Monroe County has the digest approved; tax bills will go out after millage rate is approved being due December 21, 2020.

Mr. Melton stated the public hearing has been advertised in the Monroe Reporter at 3 mills.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor for comments on the millage rate. There being no comments or interest from the audience Mayor Wilson closed the floor.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to set the millage rate at 3 mills. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Park Plan Discussion

Ms. Hall reviewed options for proposed park plan upgrades. We have requested assistance from the Regional Commission with submission of a Land and Water Conservation Grant. We can apply for up to \$500,000 match for a total \$1,000,000 project with the City's matching funds; land and water conservation grants are 50/50. Ms. Hall further explained the two proposed options at an estimated cost of \$1.2 million; the City would utilize the funds in the Special Projects account currently with this year's property tax receivables to have sufficient funding for either option. Funds would be depleted with the completion of either option; no additional grants or funds would be available until 2021 property tax proceeds are received. First option includes the following: Soccer Field, Amphitheater, Parking Area, Entry Drive on Ensign only. Second option included the following: Amphitheater, Parking Area, Entry Drive, Covered Basketball Court and a Pavilion at the Splashpad.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve option 2 which includes Amphitheater, Parking Area, Entry Drive, Covered Basketball Court and a Pavilion at the Splashpad. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

Consider Resolution requiring face coverings in public buildings

Ms. Hall reviewed the draft received from Georgia Municipal Association with the minor changes she made.

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

Consider Ordinance requiring face coverings in privately owned buildings

Ms. Hall reviewed specific sections within the ordinance; Section 1 (e) (1) Every entity subject to this ordinance which does not consent to enforcement of this ordinance upon its property shall post a clearly legible sign in one inch Arial font at the public entrances of such entity stating the following: "This location does not consent to enforcement of any local face covering requirement upon this property".

(2) If an entity does not post the signage described in subparagraph (1) of this paragraph it shall be conclusively presumed to have consented to enforcement of this Ordinance on its property and failures by individuals to wear facial coverings or masks as required by this ordinance shall be determined to be violations and enforced as contemplated in paragraph (f).

(f) (1) A person who fails to comply with paragraph (c) of Section 1 of this Ordinance shall be first given a warning and an opportunity to put on a facial covering or mask, leave the entity, or comply with one of the exceptions in paragraph (d) of Section 1.

(2) If the person violating this Ordinance refused or fails to comply with this Ordinance after being given a warning pursuant to subparagraph (1) of this paragraph then such person may be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$25.00 on the first offense and not more than \$50.00 on the second and any subsequent offenses.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the ordinance as presented. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried with four (4) votes (Stroud, Howard, Hewett, and Lawrence). Mr. Dodd voted in opposition of the motion.

Approval of sidewalk closure request of Life Chain on Sunday, October 4, 2020 @ 2:30 p.m.

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

Approval of temporary lease to CVB for City Hall Annex

Ms. Hall explained that due to recent flooding of the Welcome Center the Convention & Visitors Bureau has been relocated into the City Hall Annex Building; for that reason a temporary lease is necessary since the existing lease is for the Welcome Center.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the temporary lease to Convention & Visitors Bureau for City Hall Annex. Seconded by Mr. Dodd. After some discussion regarding the monthly rental and expiration date of the temporary lease Mr. Stroud offered an amendment to his original motion to keep the monthly rental at \$600.00 through December 31, 2020.

Mayor Wilson called for a vote on the original motion; the motion carried unanimously. Mayor Wilson called for a vote on the amendment to the motion; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of non-budgeted tractor purchase

Ms. Hall stated that a new tractor is needed due to the current 1994 tractor's repairs are more expensive than the value of the equipment. Steve Butler recommends a 2020 John Deere Tractor at \$56,000; it has additional equipment the City could utilize.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the purchase of the tractor. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of requisitions over \$5000

Synergistic Software - \$7,480 – 2020 SPLOST

4 computers, printers & necessary equipment for new PD vehicles

Williams Communications - \$17,787.83 – 2020 SPLOST

7 radios for PD vehicles (4 new and 3 currently in Fleet)

Hydrocal, LLC - \$6,829

Composite Sampler

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

City Manager's Report

Ms. Hall provided the following report:

- Notice of Violation (NOV) from EPD for violations at the landfill are considered resolved based upon the information that I provided to the EPD in my Corrective Action Plan (CAP). I will be sending out an RFP for contractors to take over maintaining the landfill due to this being a repeated violation for more than 6 years. The inmate details normally do the weed eating around the monitoring points and with COVID they have not been out since early March.
- Regina submitted required paperwork for CARES Act for the initial 30% of funding and for the additional 70%. We received the deposit for the 30% and today received notification that the documentation for the 70% has been approved. Initial deposit was around \$64,858 and this deposit will be \$151,337 for a total of over \$216,195. These are reimbursement funds; can be used as the city sees necessary.
- I have contacted several companies to get pricing to televise the storm drain on Adams Street from intersection at Lee Street east and west. Going west, we will go to Jackson and turn down Jackson toward the railroad looking to make sure there are no obstructions in the line that would be causing the flooding on Lee Street.
- Nathaniel Freeman submitted a claim for damages and repairs for storm drain that runs across his property on Willis Wilder Drive. Claim has been resolved with payment of \$2750 to Mr. Freeman and him signing a General Release of all Claims.
- Mike Leverette will be performing an independent load and energy forecast for us along with looking at market pricing for capacity needs.
- Take Home Vehicle Policy provides that the City Manager determines those that meet the standards for a take home vehicle. I will be adding the on-call lineman to the list of those with a take home vehicle. They will rotate the one vehicle between the on-call linemen each week. The truck will be equipped with the necessary equipment to handle blown fuses and the like during power outages. The on-call lineman currently rides the line when he comes in either in his POV or goes to the shop and gets a bucket truck and then rides the line. Hopefully equipping them with a take home vehicle will shorten the time of power outages.
- Received a call from someone with the Georgia Department of Public Health last week. They were requesting names and personal information for all employees that have self-reported a positive COVID test. I contacted our local health department and GMA and neither of them were aware of the GDPH calling to request this information. We will provide the contact information for them to all city employees and let the employee provide the information if they want to.
- I have received 4 names of those to vet for the P&Z Board seat. I will speak with all of them and make a recommendation to council at the next meeting.
- Legislation has been passed at the Federal level for employers to opt whether to defer social security tax payments for the employee portion of 6.20%. This is currently a deferral for September through December 2020 and if we chose to opt in, employees would repay at 12.40% beginning in January 2021 through April 2021. I recommend that we do not opt in at

this time as this could create a hardship on employees to repay next year. The employee does not have a choice whether or not to participate as that decision is made by the employer.

- We have a joint project with the CVB for an Art Grant. This will be a combination of the MPHS Art Class painting the fire hydrants for the dog park and surprise art around downtown.
- Wes Cone has applied to the Health Department for a permit to install a well on the property that he will build the new car wash. The well is reported to be for irrigation purposes only. The city ordinance governing wells inside the city limits requires that the permit is approved by the Health Department and then presented to council for approval. Once I receive the approved permit, I will bring the matter back to city council.
- HEJ Rental Properties has submitted an application for annexation for the northern portion of their property that is not inside the city limits. This is the Fowler Flemister property on Highway 83 North. This matter has gone before P&Z for approval and will come before council for a public hearing on 9/21. Mr. Melton has submitted the required letter to Monroe County Commissioners.
- Ram Krishna is submitting an application for a liquor store to go in the new building at the Valero that was demolished and being rebuilt; will be an outparcel to the convenience store. Once all information is received, it will be placed on the agenda for a public hearing before city council.
- LMIG contractor started the resurfacing project today. They will complete all milling and resurfacing this week and then come back next week to adjust the sewer manholes and water valves and do the striping.
- Contractor for water line project on Blount Street is progressing well with that CDBG project.
- Pellicano started pouring concrete for basement floor today, project should begin taking shape now that all the steel and underground work is mostly complete. Monthly meeting with contractor and Clarke Nexsen is scheduled for this week.

City Attorney Report

Mr. Melton stated a public hearing which is currently being advertised for the Fox City sign variance will come before Council on September 21, 2020. The sign variance request has been before Planning & Zoning.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Wilson recommended Council consider altering the flow of travel to one way streets near the square due to the influx of businesses in the area; North to South on Kimball Street and South to North on Harris Street. Mayor Wilson further stated that with the current parking issues, and additional businesses being added he feels that the change would be beneficial.

After further discussion Mr. Stroud offered a motion to advertise for a public hearing to alter the direction of travel on Kimball and Harris Street. Seconded by Mr. Lawrence; the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Wilson encouraged Council to wear the masks provided by Georgia Municipal Association; to post a selfie on social media as requested by Georgia Municipal Association. Mayor Wilson further stated that during a conference call with Georgia Municipal Association with Dr. Tom Frieden presenting that Dr. Frieden recently spoken with an infectious disease doctor who believed that masks were more effective at this time than a vaccine would be. Vaccines that are further along in the studies will require two treatments; and possibly only seventy five percent effective.

Mayor Wilson concluded with his appreciation of a forward looking Council with the recent economic development in the City. In the recent years we've had new hotels to open, Royal 7, several restaurants, QT and Shane's is coming with several businesses attached to it. All the boards work hard to promote the activities of downtown. He encouraged our citizens to continue to support our local businesses; and to support the new businesses coming. The signs around the square, and downtown have an encouraging message. We are caring City and a Welcoming City.

Council Board Reports

Mr. Dodd reviewed an update regarding the average rounds played back to 2014 is about 15,000 a year and to date this year 14, 283 through August. The lease for the golf employee is under review.

Additional Business

No additional business was brought forward.

Public Comments

Mr. Don Daniels inquired as to who would enforce the face covering ordinance.

Executive Session

No executive session was held.

Adjourn

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