

March 20, 2023
Meeting Cancelled

Council Meeting
April 17, 2023

Members Present: Mayor Buddy Duke, members Terry McClain, Greg Paige, Walter Cowart, Celestine Hayes and Jody Greene.

Others Present: Mark Barber, Rhonda Rowe, Tim Tanner, Chad Castleberry and members of the public.

Invocation was given by Councilman McClain.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Councilman Paige made a motion to approve the minutes of April 3, 2023 as presented. Councilman McClain seconded with all in favor.

Ord. #23-01: This ordinance, amending the zoning ordinance by rezoning property located at 300 E. 4th Street from RP (Residential Professional) to GB (General Business), was presented to the council. Councilman Cowart made a motion to approve the ordinance. Councilman Greene seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Mayor Pro-Tem: Following the order of chair rotation, Councilman Greene made a motion to appoint Councilman Greg Paige as the Mayor Pro-Tem for 2023. Councilman McClain seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Utility Billing Update: The council was advised that the utility billing is now current and to a point that customers will be back on schedule of receiving one bill per month. The software programmer can now begin the work to modify the program to compute and bill customers that will participate in the 24 month pay back period of delinquent balances as well as the most efficient way to issue the \$400 credit agreed upon by the mayor and council. He advised that normal billing and payment procedures will resume. Customers will need to pay the full current amount due in the appropriate time frame to avoid service interruption. A letter was included with the April 14, 2023 billing statements explaining these processes. The next billing cycle will include the same information. A letter will also be placed in the newspaper and city website. He provided a sample bill to the council and reviewed the information that is contained on the bill. The council was also provided a copy of the letters to be included with the billing statements as well as the letter to be placed in the newspaper and on the website. A member of the audience asked if they had a zero balance, would they still receive the \$400 credit? They were advised yes, it is one credit per utility customer. The citizen then asked what the \$400 represented to which the city attorney explained it was a decision of the council to use ARPA funds received by the city and apply to utility accounts. Her response was "As opposed to closing streets when people didn't have money for Christmas, you're going to pave streets and give us \$400 back when our bills are \$200. Are

you just throwing us a bone? Mayor Duke advised we are doing the best we can. He is sorry she feels we didn't do a good job but the council felt this was in the bests interest. No one's utilities were turned off. He is sorry this doesn't satisfy everyone. Another individual expressed her concern with the letter and the fact that it was signed "The City of Adel" and not by an individual. She also stated it was ambiguous in containing statements such as "in the near future" or at a "later date". The city manager stated he would take her concerns into consideration and explained those words were used because we do not know the date these pieces will be complete. It has been the intent that once the billing side was brought current, then the other components would be addressed. We are just now arriving at that point. Another member of the audience expressed concern with adding 1/24 of the delinquent amount to the current billing. If someone already has a \$400 bill and an additional amount is added to it, they won't be able to pay it. Mr. Barber encouraged that if someone has a problem, they can certainly come see someone at the city hall to discuss their specific situation. The question was asked if customers would be able to see the total amount owed to which they were advised yes, any outstanding balances are displayed on the bill.

Council Comments:

Celestine Hayes – Stated that Ms. Gear had asked about changing the time of the council meeting. Where are we at on that? City attorney Tim Tanner stated it would require a motion by the council. Councilman Cowart stated he would think something like this would need to be discussed at a work session the next time we had one. Councilwoman Hayes stated that our meeting is at 5:30 and the county meeting at 6:00. It doesn't allow individuals to attend both meetings and is hard for people working to get here. Mayor Duke suggested that you could have a work session and add it if there was anything else that needed discussing. It would be up to the council and staff to decide. If there's anything that we need to have a work session about we could add that to the agenda.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

Luther L. Duke III, Mayor
