

Council Meeting
June 3, 2019

Members Present: Mayor Buddy Duke, members Terry McClain, Greg Paige, Michael Purvis, Vivian Sharpe and Jody Greene.

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

Invocation was given by Councilman Paige

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Councilwoman Vivian Sharpe made a motion to approve the minutes of May 20, 2019 as presented. Councilman McClain seconded. All were in favor.

Puddleville Music Festival: Downtown Development Director Brandie Dame, along with Jode Hewett, owner of Southern Fowl, came before the council to discuss a proposed 1st Annual Puddleville Music Festival. Ms. Dame advised the council that she is working towards the Mainstreet designation and a portion of that review includes events you are holding in your downtown area. The proposed dates for the event is July 26th-27th. In addition to closing a portion of S. Parrish Avenue and E. 5th Street, financial support from the city in the amount of \$5,000 would be needed for up-front costs. Mr. Hewett advised he has a connection with a country singer in Nashville, Brian Callahan, that he was able to contact. He and Brian, who has just signed his first record deal, are practically best friends and he has agreed to headline. They also have several other performers lined up for the event. Mr. Hewett advised this event is to spotlight the community and hopefully draw people downtown to shop with local retailers in addition to providing entertainment. They plan to have approximately 60 vendors, including food vendors, on site for the event. Ms. Dame added she plans to have 2 vans present to help transport individuals to/from the area. She also noted that event will be widely advertised through the local paper, radio and television ads. Councilman McClain questioned if the Downtown Development Authority had been made aware of the event as he had a member of the board to contact him and was unaware of the event. Ms. Dame stated she had tried to contact Jerry Connell, chairman of the DDA, but had been unable to reach him. She then went to the city manager, John Flythe, to get the city's approval because unless the city agreed to close the streets and for the financial support, the event could not be held. If this is approved, she will absolutely be presenting it to the DDA. Councilwoman Sharpe asked if considerations for security had been made. Ms. Dame advised they always have one officer present for events but they will be getting with Chief Castleberry regarding the number of officers needed as well as contacting EMS. Councilman Purvis asked if they had talked with businesses in the areas to be closed off to see how they will be affected. Ms. Dame stated they will not be closing the streets off until after 5:00 on Friday and most businesses in the area, other than a couple of retailers, are closed on Saturday. They will be discussing this with the retailers as this event could be used as a draw for those businesses as well that weekend. Mayor Duke added we just need to be sure we don't impede the business of those retailers. Ms. Altheia Paige questioned if this would be a request of off duty officers that we would have to pay overtime and if so, we need to be sure the city is reimbursed for this as well. It was noted that the financial support provided by the city would be paid

back, off the top, from any revenues gained from the event. Councilman Paige made a motion to close the necessary streets and provide \$5,000 up-front money to fund the event. Councilman Greene seconded. All members were in favor with the exception of Councilman Purvis who cast an opposing vote.

Ratification of Property Purchase: On May 9, 2019 the city participated in an on-line auction for the property located at 422 East Third Street. This property, if obtained, would be used for future recreational purposes. With authority given to the city manager to bid up to \$48K, the city secured the high bid in the amount of \$40,500 with a 10% buyer's premium. The city now has the contract in hand for the purchase. Councilman Purvis made a motion to approve ratification of the property purchase. Councilwoman Sharpe seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Electric Dept. Truck Bids: Bids were received on a 2019 Ford F150 XL (4x4) truck for the electric department. Bids were as follows:

Allan Vigil Ford	-	\$24,949.00 (state contract price)
Cook County Ford	-	\$24,702.40

Councilman Purvis made a motion to approve the low bid of Cook County Ford. Councilman Greene seconded. All were in favor.

Tree Trimming Bids: Bids were received for tree trimming and were as follows:

Kendall	-	\$156.28 per hour
Asplundh	-	\$100.48 per hour

The prices include the labor and equipment. Mr. Flythe stated we have \$50,000 budgeted for this item and with the low bid we would receive 12.44 weeks of work and 7.9 weeks of work with the other bid. Councilman McClain made a motion to accept the low bid. Councilman Paige provided the second. The decision was unanimous. Mayor Duke commented that with the last major storm, 85% were back on the same night; the others were connected by 12:00 the next day. Although you can't control the falling of trees on lines, tree trimming helps significantly with limiting other outages.

Pole Bids: Bids were received for various size poles needed by the electric department and were as follows:

Koppers	-	\$5,506.00
Gulf South Pole	-	\$6,741.00

Councilwoman Sharpe made a motion to approve the low bid followed by a second from Councilman McClain. The decision was unanimous.

Transportation Investment Act 2010 (TIA) Priority Changes: City Manager John Flythe advised the council that we had received approval from the Georgia Dept. of Transportation to change the priority listing of 3 road projects listed on the TIA schedule. The changes include:

- Alabama Truck Route Improvements to Hwy 76 - Move from Band 2 to Band 1
- Tillman Road Bypass Phase 3 Improvements – Move from Band 1 to Band 2
- Turn Lanes at New Recreation Facility on SR 37 – Move from Band 2 to Band 1

Retirement Discussion: City manager John Flythe advised the council he has a couple of different issues tonight regarding retirement. He is not ready to discuss his personal retirement tonight. The mayor had instructed him to provide numbers to the city attorney, which he has worked on. He feels there is a very viable solution where there will be no money up front and will even discuss some savings. However, he would like to present a request he has received from public safety officers (police and fire) that would allow those employees who have worked for 30 plus years to begin receiving their retirement pay but continue to work. He noted that other employees have asked about doing the same. Additionally, others have asked if they retire, can they return to work as a contract employee. He added we could hold a discussion regarding the latter request and bring back for action at a later date. However, we need to act on the matter regarding public safety employees. According to state and federal regulations, public safety officers can legally do this if the city approves. According to city attorney Tim Tanner, we would need to ask the Georgia Municipal Association to create an amendment to our plan that would allow public safety employees who reach, for example, age 55 with 30 years of service to be allowed to draw their benefits and continue to work. It would be a special retirement option for public safety employees but GMA would need a recommendation from the council to draw up the official document. Councilman Greg Paige stated that that is a tough one. He was military and in the army there is a saying “When you turn 25, you’re old”. He doesn’t think older guys can do what youthful guys can do for us as a police officer. He’s in total disagreement. When you reach a certain age, you might want to look at going somewhere else. Public safety is a tough job. Not only did he serve in the military he also served as a law enforcement officer. At 55 years of age, he’s not going to get out of his car and run down a suspect. It puts us in a bad position because if you’re not going to run down a suspect, it will be tough on this city to handle this crime. Councilman McClain stated with respect to those this might affect, he thinks it might have a negative effect on morale with people coming up through the ranks. We might lose some talent possibly because of not being able to see that they will be promoted since they see a 30 year employee that may be there for the duration, possibly even after their effectiveness as Councilman Paige stated. Councilman Paige made a motion to disapprove the request to allow public safety officers to begin drawing their retirement and continue to work. Councilwoman Sharpe seconded. All were in favor.

Clean-up Day: City manager John Flythe advised the council of a very successful clean-up day and reported the number of calls and amount of debris that was collected.

Other Business:

John Flythe – Presented the council with statistics on library usage.

Vivian Sharpe – Thanked the city manager for having the area mowed and debris cleaned up around the projects area and other locations. They did a great job.

Altheia Paige – Asked if the city had considered purchasing the old Del-Cook property. Mayor Duke advised this would be left up to the AIDA to purchase but there would be some parts not wanted. The property owners want you to take all or none. There would be EPD involvement because of what is in the ground. We would have to take short steps into this area to prevent placement into a financial burden.

Buddy Duke – Commended those responsible for the success of the Daylily Festival. We had more vendors downtown and commented on how well downtown is looking.

Michael Purvis – Commended Leadership Cook and Wiregrass on the mural in the depot parking lot that continues to look great.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

Luther L. Duke III, Mayor
