

June 20, 2022 – Meeting Cancelled.

Council Meeting

July 5, 2022

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

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

Invocation was given by Councilman McClain

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Councilman Greg Paige made a motion to approve the minutes of June 6, 2022 as presented. Councilman Terry McClain seconded with all in favor.

Alcohol License (Mehgi Corporation): The council was presented with an alcohol license application filed by Mehgi Corporation located at 811 Old Quitman Road. All fees have been paid and the applicant has successfully completed a criminal history background check. Councilman Greene made a motion to approve the issuance of the license. Councilman McClain seconded with all in favor.

Res #22-05: This resolution, calling for an election to impose a county one percent SPLOST (special purpose local option sales tax), specifying the purposes for which the proceeds are to be used; specifying the period of time for which tax shall be imposed; specifying the estimated costs of the facilities to be funded from the proceeds of such tax; requesting the election superintendent to call an election of the voters of Cook County to approve the imposition of such tax; approving the form of ballot to be used in such election; and for other purposes, was presented to the council. Councilman Cowart made a motion to approve the resolution. Councilman Greene seconded. The decision was unanimous.

SPLOST Intergovernmental Agreement: The intergovernmental agreement for the use and distribution of proceeds from the 2022 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax for capital outlay projects was presented to the council. The intergovernmental agreement allows for the collection of the tax for a period of 6 years with collections beginning on October 1, 2023. The county-wide 2016 SPLOST proceeds were estimated at \$12.6M with the 2022 SPLOST proceeds being estimated at \$17.5M. Councilman McClain made a motion to approve the agreement. Councilman Cowart seconded. All were in favor.

Res #22-06: This resolution, ratifying the certificate of distribution for the 1% LOST (local option sales tax) proceeds, was presented to the council. There was no change to the percentage of distributions for the County and municipalities. The City of Adel's percent will remain at .05%. Councilman Greene made a motion to ratify the approval of the certificate. Councilman Cowart seconded. There was no opposition.

DOT Resurfacing Project: City manager John Flythe advised the council that the contractor's estimate for raising the sewer manholes, gas and water valves for the DOT's resurfacing project on W. 4th Street increased from \$37,000 to \$74,500. This number was for the completed job and he needed to advise of the final cost. Councilwoman Hayes asked what it meant on the agenda by "4th Street final cost to raise utilities"? She was advised it was to raise the height on the manhole covers, water and gas valves to make them level with the roadway.

Computer Equipment (Police Department): Chief Chad Castleberry advised the council that there are three mobile data terminals (in-car computers) that are connected to CJIS that need to be updated in order to remain in compliance. He noted we began replacing computers about 4 years ago. These particular units are Windows 7 and need to be replaced with Windows 10. He further noted we are in the process of adding CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) and this upgrade will help support this goal. He is requesting the use of technology funds for the purchase at an approximate cost of \$10,200. Councilman Paige made a motion to approve the purchase using technology funds. Councilman Cowart seconded. All were in favor.

Natural Gas Discussion: The council was presented with a graph depicting the past usage of natural gas along with the capacity available from May 2020-May 2021. It has been consistently the same for 2022. We have an excess amount of non-used gas that four companies are wanting. The total estimated amount they would utilize is 520,760 mcf. This would help to fill in on the days we are not using what is available to us. We would have to pull excess gas probably four times per year utilizing Elba Island's storage facility. This would be a good way to add load to our system. He noted this was for informational purposes only and will come back with financing options.

Billing Discussion: The council was advised that we had issued a cycle of utility bills on 6/23/2022 and are expecting to send out another set either on Friday or the 1st part of next week. Councilwoman Hayes asked what we plan to do when we start billing for all these past months? It was stated that when we get to the point where the customer is receiving two sets of bills we will have to come up with a payment plan. She stated that we will always be behind. City Manager John Flythe advised that we will not always be behind. We had to get the software process right to make sure that what we sent out was correct. We had a few glitches in the program but noted we are the most advanced of the 7 cities that had a problem. Councilwoman Hayes asked when we would have a work session to discuss. Mr. Flythe advised he was open. Mayor Duke advised Councilwoman Hayes to give him a call and they would discuss when they want to have it.

Dr. Treva Gear: Dr. Gear addressed the council inquiring about the hiring process for the City of Adel and the city hall. She asked how a potential applicant could access the applications. Mayor Duke stated that when there is an opening you can come to the city hall to pick up an application. She further inquired if that was the only way a person could obtain an application? She was advised that if anyone requested an application to be emailed to them that it could be sent that way as well. It is not on-line. She discussed the application not being up-to-date, noting specifically the specialized skills area. She also discussed an additional sheet included that is used for statistical reporting, stating that it is a violation to ask for that information. If we are trying to be sure we provide equity, equality and opportunity we need to increase accessibility to and assess the applications. She hopes this will be brought up to par in 2022. She also asked what the process is from the point of application to interview, who is involved, what does it look like? Are they hireable with an interview or without an interview?

Mayor Duke noted that Dr. Gear's time was up. He advised we would get answers to her questions if she would provide them.

Councilman Paige stated we just recently hired a person. There were several applicants, in which no one was called for an interview. How was the hiring process done? The person he's talking about is the former City Clerk of Sparks. City Manager John Flythe advised the applicants were looked at and we went with the one most qualified, so that that's the one we hired. Mayor Duke asked if Councilman Paige recalled when the former city manager, Jerry Permenter, left the city? We had 52 applications and chose to interview 6. We then opened up the process again. Just because someone applies doesn't mean they will get an interview. Councilman Paige inquired if he thought that was fair? Mayor Duke stated that it was fair then. Councilman Paige stated that you had some qualified people with college degrees that were not looked at. We're not getting top people if we are not interviewing. If the city manager is not doing it fairly, then maybe we need to take that power back from him. Councilwoman Hayes asked if this person filled out the same application that Mrs. Gear had earlier to which she was advised yes.

Altheia Paige: Mrs. Paige addressed the council about the lack of African Americans or minorities in management positions. We haven't had any minorities in management. What is it going to take for any minorities to work in management? There is one in the police department, zero in the fire department, one at the city hall, zero in the recreation department. We don't have anybody to say they are in management, can you give me a reason why? No qualified minority is hired or put in management positions that are qualified. The city manager advised Mrs. Paige that her statement is incorrect. Councilman Paige stated that he disagrees. There needs to be truth in the matter. He is mad and angry. There are no African americans in any management positions up here. Mrs. Paige stated that she heard, and correct her if she's wrong, that there were four that applied. Two were late and one was up here to fill out and the lights were cut out on her so saying she is late. You passed this nepotism so its family oriented. We need to be getting out of this. We have several minorities qualified. We have failed to get any answers. Are we going to have to file a lawsuit? Mayor Duke stated that he was not in charge of personnel but knows the city does its best to critique the applications. If the applications don't come in, such as for police and fire, what are you going to hire? Mrs. Paige said that several have put in with the police and fire. We had two in the police and one went to Brooks County. There's been no one replaced in fire since the last one was replaced. This is not the 1900's; we've got to do better as a city and as a whole. Several have management skills, several have degrees, but they're not in positions they're qualified for; you know why? Family and friends. Councilman Paige asked the city manager what he had to say? Answer the question. Mayor Duke asked Councilman Paige to calm down. Councilman Paige replied if he don't have one to get one, or fire him. Councilman Paige then made a motion to terminate the city manager tonight. Councilwoman Hayes seconded. After a call of the votes, members Paige and Hayes voted in favor of the motion. Members McClain, Cowart and Greene opposed. Councilman Cowart made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Paige stated we're not going to adjourn so fast. Mayor Duke asked if there was a particular need to stay? We've got one that wants to stay and complain and one that wants to adjourn. Councilman Paige stated "I'm going to complain when it's wrong. It's time out for this racial stuff." Mayor Duke asked Councilman Paige to calm down. Councilman Paige stated to stop this racial stuff and it needs to stop now.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

Luther L. Duke III, Mayor
