

Council Meeting
September 20, 2021

Members Present: Mayor Buddy Duke, members Terry McClain, Greg Paige, Vivian Sharpe and Jody Greene. Walter Cowart was present by telephone.

Others Present: John Flythe, Rhonda Rowe, Tim Tanner, Chad Castleberry, Randy Lane and Brandie Dame. There were several others that joined the meeting via the “go to meeting” telephone application.

Invocation was given by Councilman McClain.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Councilwoman Sharpe made a motion to approve the minutes of September 7, 2021 as presented. Councilman Paige seconded. All were in favor.

Ord #21-04: This ordinance, establishing the ad valorem tax rate at 6.387 mills, was read for the second time. Councilman Greene made a motion to adopt the ordinance. Councilwoman Sharpe seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Res. #21-04: This resolution, adopting the FY 2021-2022 budget, was presented to the council. Councilman Greene made a motion to adopt the resolution. Councilman McClain seconded. Councilmen Cowart, Greene and McClain voted in favor, with Councilman Paige and Councilwoman Sharpe casting opposing votes.

City Manager John Flythe stated there has been a lot of discussion going on concerning \$5M included in the budget for a new city hall. He stated that we have not determined what the revenue source will be at this time and he does not anticipate construction in the 2021-2022 budget year. A group of people has been asked to look at whether we need to build a new facility, expand, or renovate. The current building is 61 years old and consists of approximately 6,000 square feet. We have completely outgrown the current building. The architect has provided an approximate cost of \$325 -\$350 per square foot; providing a cost of about \$3-3.5M for a 10,000 square foot building. This does not include any land costs, any possible remediation, and other costs that would go on top of that. He stated this is a process that we’re beginning; it does not mean a building will be constructed this year.

Ord. #21-05: This ordinance, creating article IV Commercial racetracks of Chapter 10 “Amusements and Entertainments” of the Code of Ordinances, was read a second time. Councilman Greene made a motion to adopt the ordinance. Councilwoman Sharpe seconded. Members Greene, Sharpe and McClain voted in favor. Councilmen Paige and Cowart opposed.

Street of Sweets: Brandie Dame, Mainstreet Director, advised the council that the “Street of Sweets” trick or treating event has been scheduled for October 30th from 4:00-6:00 pm. Donations for candy are

being accepted and the event will begin on N. Parrish Avenue with the entrance being at Mitchell Street. To help alleviate congestion, the route will extend down to Parrish and 8th Street.

Use of Depot (Cornerstone Church): Brandie Dame advised the council that the pastor from Cornerstone Church has requested use of the Depot on Saturday, November 13th, for an event they will be hosting. She noted they will also have live music. She has spoken with the businesses on Burwell and there is nothing going on that day with their businesses that present a conflict. Councilman Cowart made a motion to approve the use of the depot. Councilman Greene seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Food Truck Friday: Brandie Dame advised she has had several requests to resume the Food Truck Friday events and would like to host this on November 12th, from 4:00-8:00 pm, and bring this back as a 2nd Friday of the month event. Councilman Paige made a motion to approve the request. Councilwoman Sharpe seconded. All were in favor.

Small Business Saturday: Brandie Dame reminded the council that “Small Business Saturday” events are held on Thanksgiving weekend, the day after “Black Friday”. She would like to partner with Tifton, Hahira and Valdosta in holding this event along Highway 41. She noted that Quick Consulting will be hosting their tree lighting ceremony that night so it would be a great end to the Small Business Saturday event. Councilman Paige made a motion to approve the event. Councilwoman Sharpe seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Pastor Andrew Lilly: Pastor Lilly addressed the council concerning the paving of Lavind Way. He stated there are three churches in the area, along with homes. He would like the council to place it in the budget to have the street paved. He stated he came back in 2019 to serve as Pastor and the road continues to be in bad shape. The address of the church is 714 Lavind Way. Mayor Duke stated they are working on getting work done in this area. He noted this is a new road paving project, not simply resurfacing. He asked that the council be allowed time to review. If we can't get it in this year's budget, they will certainly try to include it in next year's budget. They are trying to get the problem resolved and he advised Pastor Lilly they would be in contact with him.

Other Business:

John Flythe – Advised that he had received messages this weekend concerning the need to resurface 5th Street, 4th Street and a couple of other streets.

Mr. Flythe also advised there have been concerns about power rates. He noted that we have not had an increase in 11 years; however, we have had a rate study conducted and when the rates change from summer to winter, customers can expect a 10-13% decrease in both residential and commercial rates. He noted this reduction is directly related to growth in our electrical system and noted how vital companies are to us. He noted a list of large companies that are no longer here, stating we have lost many large loads, and have been working to replace those. In natural gas sales alone, we had lost 48% ten years ago.

Terry McClain - Asked if there was a mechanism for getting some improvements at Jim Battle Park. Councilman Paige stated that there is a committee which consists of himself, Councilwoman Sharpe and Mayor Duke concerning Jim Battle Park. There are no plans for the area that he is aware of. Mayor Duke noted that the committee can certainly meet if there are concerns. It was noted this facility is city funded.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

Luther L. Duke, Mayor
