

## Regular City Commission Meeting (Tuesday, April 18, 2023)

Generated by Amanda Brown on Tuesday, April 18, 2023

### A. MEETING OPENER

Procedural: 1. Call To Order - Roll Call

- Meeting called to order by Mayor Redman at 6:00 PM
- Commission Present: Commissioner Sirmones, Commissioner Huggins, Commissioner Hendrix, Vice Mayor Stegall, Mayor Redman
- Staff Present: Interim City Manager Tillis, City Attorney Maines

Procedural: 2. Opening Prayer

- Opening prayer led by mayor Redman.

Procedural: 3. Pledge of Allegiance

- Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Redman.

Action: 4. Approval of The Agenda Format

- **Motion to approve the agenda format was made by Vice Mayor Stegall and seconded by Commissioner Hendrix**
  - **Unanimous Approval**

### B. CITIZEN INPUT

Information: 1. Provision for Citizen Input

- Mayor Redman read the provision for citizen input.
- Mr. Mac Johns, a Union County resident representing Union County Recreation, requested the Commission consider continuing the financial contributions that had been made to Union County Recreation in previous years.
  - It was confirmed that this was already budgeted.
- Ms. Margo Van Peterson would like to congratulate the newly elected Commissioner Huggins and let the Commission know that she looks forward to good things happening.

### C. AGENDA ITEM NUMBER

Action (Consent), Minutes: 1. Consent Agenda

- Commissioner Hendrix mentioned that she would like to have the fuel logs filled out more fully in the future.
- Commissioner Huggins suggested that City vehicles be numbered to help with tracking and accountability. He has ordered numbers for them that are approximately the size of a cell phone. This will be at no expense to the City and if they need to be redesigned, that can also be done.
  - The Commission agreed that this is a good strategy.
- No animal control report is available due to no activity this month.
- **Motion to approve the Consent Agenda in one motion was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Sirmones.**
  - **Unanimous Approval**

Information: 2. Presentation by Lake Butler Middle School Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT)

- Five students from Lake Butler Middle School, Javian Smith, Rebecca Langkau, Jiyah Palmer, Deion Givens, and Eric Hall gave a presentation to the Commission to gain their support to make parks in Lake Butler tobacco free. They explained that smoking is prohibited in state parks and new legislation allows cities to restrict smoking and vaping in public parks. The students presented the health risks of tobacco use in public parks and relayed that only about 10% of cigarette butts are disposed of each year, with the rest polluting parks and lakes. The SWAT students requested the Commission support an ordinance to make local parks tobacco free, and that if they do, SWAT will work with the city to provide signs.

- Ms. Jenna Hewitt, head of the tobacco prevention program in Union County which funds the SWAT program, stated that there is funding available for the signs and that they must be approved by the state.
- Mr. Tillis and Mr. Maines will review the proposed ordinance to determine what steps would be needed.
- Item was tabled to next month's agenda.

#### Information: 3. City Manager's Report

- Mr. Tillis discussed an issue not in his report regarding the splash park. It is currently out of service due to leaks, electrical, and pump issues. The pumps are in a ground vault and need to be raised onto an above-ground pad so water will not damage the equipment. The sump pumps in place cannot keep up with the level of the leak. The cost of restructuring and repairing the splash park is estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000. If the Commission would like, funding for this can be a part of the budget amendments scheduled for the May 2023 meeting.
- Regarding the sludge removal currently provided by Synagro, DEP had the City cease putting sludge on city property. The Synagro unit coming to the plant allows them to haul away the waste without all the water. Doing that, they can haul it off as a semi-dry solid and make a single trip instead of 10. The City is looking into other methods to see if they are as economic or efficient, but Public Works does not currently have a truck that can do that task. The previous sludge truck was purchased for approximately \$30,000 about 20 years ago.
  - Discussion was had whether the Suburban purchased for the City Manger's use could be sold to purchase a truck and Mr. Tillis commented that he would like to sell that but purchase a smaller SUV or car as a replacement.
  - Commissioner Huggins discussed the possibility of having a release to sign if someone wanted sludge dumped around trees.
- The second invoice from Jenkin's Electric was approved and paid. A more detailed invoice had been requested and was received. Mr. Tillis inspected the work and confirmed that it had been completed. No work has been done since purchases for the new Public Works building were put on hold.
  - Contractors will be informed that they should provide itemized bills and allow 30 days for inspection of the completed work.
  - Mr. Tillis explained that any purchases over \$35,000 will have to go through the bid process. The City has a purchasing ordinance that needs to be updated along with many procedures to benefit staff and citizens.
- After discussion with current and future auditors and staff, electronic payments will continue for certain purposes. If bills are not viewed before an automatic draft is processed, invoices are reviewed ensuring that the amounts match.
- Utility bill printing and mailing with the current vendor is cost effective to continue. Metered usage for customers will be reviewed more often to check for exceptionally high or low usage on meters and they will be investigated for repair. The City will encourage paperless billing to reduce costs.
- The current Animal Control officer is proactive about getting any dogs adopted and is a dedicated caretaker.
- The person contracted to clean the Community Center and Townsend building between rentals on the weekend is a City employee contracted with a 1099 for that work. The previous person was also a City employee, though before that it was a person outside City employ.
- City staff met with Verizon and discussed what the phone service covers. There will be a meeting with AT&T in the future to compare rates and services.
- Staff will also investigate service providers for backup internet.

#### Action: 4. Financial Reporting for Period Ending March 31, 2023

- Finance Director, John Sapp, presented the financial report.
- The General, Solid Waste, and Redevelopment funds saw gains and the Water, Wastewater, and Street Reserve funds had losses.
- Grant funds of \$271,440 were received and disbursed to the contractors.

- Mr. Sapp provided a list of equipment sold and explained that he would follow up with the Forestry Department regarding a piece of their equipment that was sold with the City's.
- **Motion to approve the financial report for the period of October 1, 2022, through March 30, 2023, was made by Commissioner Sirmones and seconded by Commissioner Huggins.**
  - **Unanimous Approval**

Action: 5. Utility Billing Policy

- Mr. Tillis reviewed the utility billing procedures that are in place and the new additions to the billing policy.
- Water usage is reviewed twice a month before the final billing review and usage 25% above or below normal is investigated by Public Works. A technician is sent to take a manual reading and check the meter for possible malfunction. This will allow the City to catch issues before they affect customers. The City will notify residents of possible leaks when detected so they can look into it before their water usage and bill are severely affected.
- The Commission was presented with a copy of the extension and payment plan forms that staff utilize to assist customers with challenges paying their bills.
- The proposed policy offers a new option to allow customers to have a greater-than-expected bill forgiven one time in an 18-month period. A six-month average bill would be provided for that month. If the policy is adopted, this could be made retroactive for anyone currently on a payment plan.
- **Motion to adopt the Utility Billing Policy and Procedures, approve the Extension and Payment Plan forms, and make the one-time forgiveness available to those currently on a Payment Plan was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Sirmones.**
  - **Unanimous Approval**

Action: 6. Sale of Public Works Building

- Mr. Tillis recommends putting a portion of the new Public Works property up for sale. This would cover approximately seven acres and include the main building and the pond, along with the well and septic system. The smaller building would remain the property of the City and would be used for storage and equipment for the sprayfield. The suggested minimum bid for the property would be \$385,000. This amount was calculated based on the cost of land per acre including the pond, the cost of the well and septic, and the value of the land retained by the City.
- There is an entity interested in purchasing the building and pond. They would have a shared driveway with the City and could share in the cost of paving and maintenance.
- Southland Survey may be able to provide a sketch and description at a lesser cost than a new survey.
- The Commission discussed if this was a fair price or should it be raised to a \$400,000 minimum. The building currently will require approximately \$150,000 more to complete.
- A new Public Works building would need to be constructed if this is sold and is proposed to be located at the old water treatment plant property on SW 11<sup>th</sup> street and would be similar construction to the old building. The dog kennels located there would also be replaced as the original ones were destroyed by a tornado a few years ago. It is important to keep citizens off the property for security of the property and the safety of the citizens.
- **Motion to advertise the Public Works building for sale with approximately eight acres, pending a survey or survey update, for a minimum bid of \$400,000 was made by Commissioner Hendrix and seconded by Commissioner Sirmones.**
  - **Unanimous Approval**

D. REPORT OF CITY ATTORNEY

- No Report.

E. COMMENTS OR REMARKS BY COMMISSION

- Commissioner Huggins
  - Even with only 30% turnout for the election, it took a long time to count the votes. Ms. Osborne runs an excellent operation, but he would like to know if there is anything we can do to make the process better.
    - Mr. Maines explained that the Supervisor of Elections, Ms. Osborne, had contacted him and requested that the City budget for electronic count for the next fiscal year. She will send him the cost.
  - The Commissioner asked how the City can simplify the bidding process and Mr. Tillis explained that the process is specific and dictated by policy already, based on state regulation, but that the policy needs to be more strictly followed.
- Mayor Redman:
  - Farmshare served 234 families in April and the May Farmshare will be held on Mothers Day weekend.
  - The Mayor was informed that Welch's is not following through with his agreement to keep vehicles off the side of the road. She will visit and verify the information and follow up with Code Enforcement if necessary.

## F. ADJOURNMENT

Action: 1. Adjourn

- **Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Sirmones and seconded by Commissioner Huggins.**
  - **Unanimous Approval**
- Meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM