

MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION
MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2024, 5:30 P.M.
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
(417 PENDLETON STREET, WAYCROSS, GA)

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Waycross City Commission Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, March 18, 2024, at 5:30pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners, Katrena Felder, Sheinita Bennett, Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson, and Commissioner Hopkins (in at 5:41pm).

A. Invocation: City Manager

Led by James Smart, Public Works Director

B. Pledge of Allegiance

II. GUESTS:

None

III. TRAVEL/TRAINING SCHEDULE AND REQUESTS

IV. PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION

A. Bids: n/a

B. Discussion Items:

1. Infrastructure Update
2. Talent Management:

City Manager: we had a meeting with ESG last week to go over contract negotiations and considerations and considerations. We made some modifications to some of the language, and we're going to follow up with that next week. Kind of clarify that it was a good meeting. You have a summary response by ESG for your review over this weekend or over this week to kind of bring you up to speed. Like I said, it was a good meeting. Some of the big takeaways were work personnel numbers wise, roles and responsibilities. As far as some of the vehicle usage and some of the teams. So, we better defined all that. I think moving forward, we'll be

in a much, much better space as far as our relationships. But you have that in front of you to kind of review what we talked about.

3. Auditor Presentation

TREY SCOTT: I am a partner with Mauldin and Jenkins. We're your external audit firm and pleased to be here with you all this evening to discuss the results of the June 30th, 2023, audit. Really quickly, why I'm here today. Give you a quick introduction to Mauldin and Jenkins. In case you're not familiar with who we are, I'll give you an overview of our auditor's report, your compliance reports, and your financial statements. I will go over some required communications with you, some recommendations for improvement related matters and then answer any questions that you all may have quickly about Mauldin and Jenkins. We were founded over 100 years ago. We serve over 700 governmental entities throughout the southeast. Uh, we do this across. It's now 14 offices in six states. I almost misspeak every time. It used to be 13 and five. So, we continue to grow a little bit. We provide over 155,000 hours of service to our governmental clients annually, which we're certainly committed to, to the governmental industry. And the office serves you all as our Savannah, Georgia office. But enough about us. I think of particular importance to you all when it comes to your audit or our opinions on your financial statements. I think, as you all know, the financial statements themselves are the responsibility of the city's management. It's our responsibility as your auditor to express opinions on those financial statements based on our audit. And we do that by following generally accepted auditing standards and government auditing standards. And I'm pleased to report to you all this evening that we issued the city a clean or what we call an unmodified opinion. And what that basically means is that your financial statements present fairly the financial position and the results of the city's operations as of June 30th, 2023. And that's what you're looking for, a clean opinion. It's the highest level of assurance we can provide to you as your auditor. Also included in your financial statements are a couple of compliance reports. The first is our Yellow book report. It's a report on your controls and compliance. We did have a couple of findings this year. I think they were the same findings that we had last year. I'll talk a little bit about those later. Uh, but I think the most important thing is that I know that Greg and his team are working hard to make sure that the controls and things are implemented so that we don't have these findings going forward. But again, I'll touch on these a little bit later. The other compliance report is our single audit report. So anytime you spend more than \$750,000 in federal monies, federal grants, you're required to have a single audit of your major grant programs, and you all are required to have one of those. This year, it was on your Arpa CSF monies, and we issued a clean opinion on your compliance with that grant program. So that's certainly a great thing as well. Moving on from our reports to your financial statements themselves, I'm more of a picture and graph person than just a bunch of numbers or words on a page. So, within your financial statements, you all have two sets of financial statements. You have a government wide set of financial statements, which kind of takes all the funds of the city, rolls them all up into one big column, gives you a big picture view of the city, and then you have your fund level financial statements. So, your general fund, your public utilities fund, all the individual funds of the city. So, your government wide financial statements, that big picture view, you only see just

this one time of year in your audited financial statements. And this is kind of a snapshot of those government wide statements over the course of the last four years. Assets continue to increase. That's a good trend. Net position that gray bar continues to increase. That's a good trend. Your liabilities slightly going up. But they're still at a very manageable level. Uh, for you all. So, looking at your government-wide statements, looking at the government, I don't really see any kind of concern. And again, this is as of June 30th, 2023, if we I guess one of the more common questions, I get is how healthy are we as a city? And an audit is not designed to tell you whether you're healthy or not. But there are certain metrics that you can look at to kind of gauge that health. And one of those is how old or how new are your capital assets? Are we continuing to reinvest in the city? And if that blue bar continues to grow at a kind of a quicker rate than your green bar, you're continuing to reinvest. You're continuing to try to keep your asset base from becoming fully depreciated and very old. So again, we're trending in the right direction here with your capital assets. So again, I don't really have any concern as it relates to that as well. If we move on from your government wide statements to your fund level information, and I'll just hit on a couple of these bullet points here and more specifically, your general fund, which is kind of the big sibling fund of, of the government, that third bullet point down your fund balance. So, the difference between your assets and your liabilities. And this is not the cash you have available to spend. Just, again, the difference between your assets and liabilities.

With 5.5 million on June 30th, 2023, and about 4.8 million of that are unassigned. Um, we were talking about health a little while ago. So those. Bottom two bullets are good gauges of health in the general fund. How many months of expenditure do you have unassigned? Fund balance at around four GFOA recommends somewhere between 3 and 6 months, depending upon your year end. So, your kind of right in the middle where you should be. And liquidity is a good place to look as well in your general fund for health. And when I say liquidity, how often or how many times could you pay your current liabilities, the accounts payable, the payroll, those kinds of things that were due on June 30th. You could have paid those 6.4 times on June 30th, 2023. So that's a very good liquid position as well. You know, if that was 1 to 1 or 1.5 to 1, we'd probably be having a little bit of a different conversation right now. So, If we just look at the general fund kind of graphically, again, 2021 was kind of an anomaly year for most governments. A lot of places bounce back significantly from the pandemic year of 2020. So, we kind of like to look at things excluding 2021. And you can see you're trending again in the right direction. And all those categories, yes, expenses are up a little bit in 2023, but fund balance has continued to grow as well. So again, no real concerns as it relates to your general fund.

Your other large fund, your public utilities fund, which is a business type activity. Again, nothing really of concern here. You continue to generate good positive operating cash flow, which is what you would want to see because these things should be run kind of like a private sector business. And that's what that gray bar is. So, a little over a million in positive operating cash flow by your public utilities fund. So again, nothing really gives me any concern.

There actually did have a little bit of operating income this year in the public utilities fund, which is a good way. We move on from the numbers. Just some things that government auditing standards require me to communicate to you all. Uh, the financial statement disclosures, your accounting policies, your accounting estimates, all of those are the responsibility of management, and they're integral parts of your financial statements. We had no difficulties in dealing with management, no disagreements with management, or the performance of our audit. So that was a great thing. Very refreshing to work with folks that are happy to see an auditor, I guess, it's not really the case everywhere we go. Also, there are no uncorrected misstatements. So, any adjustments that were proposed, all of those have been posted to the accounts of the city. And then finally, we are independent of the city in accordance with all the applicable standards of our profession. And then these are the two findings that I mentioned. State law requires you to adopt budgets for all your special revenue funds. And I think there were a couple of small ones that there wasn't a budget adopted. But I think in talking to Greg, going through the budget process this year, that won't be an issue going forward. So that should be one that goes away next year and then you're enclosed. You know, I am here a little late, much lighter than I would like to be presenting to you all. I think that's a function of several things, but more so implementing proper controls to make sure things are closed out on time. A lot of adjustments are already posted before we start the audit, um, and those kinds of things. And I know from my conversations with, with Greg and the finance department that he's already putting things in place now to where that shouldn't be an issue going forward as well and that, of course, everybody's favorite, the new accounting standards that are coming out over the next few years. We don't anticipate any of these having a significant impact on you all. But if they do, we'll certainly work with the finance department on the best course of action for action for implementation of those. And that does conclude what I wanted to report to you all this evening. Again, clean opinion. Certainly, been a pleasure to serve the city, and we look forward to serving you all in the future.

4. Hotel Tax Rate Increase

City Manager: We're moving to the hotel tax increase. We mentioned this a few meetings back about the possibility of increasing the hotel tax. We did some research, so there were some pros and cons to doing that. Regardless of that, we'll start to work to kind of figure out how that looks long term. We did reach out to some other cities who have made the raise over the last three years both same scale and scope of Waycross. So, we did find out information there. And I'll let Mr. Simmons briefly on that where we stand right now.

PATRICK SIMMONS: So, we would like you to consider we're currently at 5% hotel motel tax. And you can see 60%, either 3%, \$0.03 of that goes to a non-restricted general fund. 2% of that is \$0.02 or 40% of that goes to tourism. So, we promote events marketing. But what does the City of Waycross have to offer to bring visitors into town? So, if we go to 8%, the city still gets the three pennies for the general fund unrestricted. But also, now we get a three and a half that goes to tourism, and one and a half that can be used for infrastructure to improve parks,

amusement parks, things like that, to also increase tourism. Or it could just be used to promote billboards on the interstate, or other things like that.

PATRICK SIMMONS: So, the good thing about this tax is this is only paid by guests that come to our hotels. So, they book a night, they pay this tax no matter where you go. Every city state has a hotel motel tax. But again, it can be used for billboards, wayfinding to improve our directional signs around town, to improve some of our attraction signs, also to add digital kiosks to our hotels and our attractions. And we can also use it to support some city events. Bringing back Jay Flyway Fest concert things that'll bring people into Waycross. So that's the benefit of increasing it is that we can use those monies in additional ways. And of course, you all know that means as more visitors come in, there's more spending for our city, whether it's the businesses, the gas stations, hotel stays, all those things, restaurants. So, it benefits us. Next steps the Web board. We've discussed it already and they're on board. Commission would have to approve the legislation or the drafting of it. Which city attorney will do? And, Representative Burchett would have to present that to the legislature to get them to approve it. Everybody is on board. The Wkb board is Representative Burchett. I talked to him this weekend. He's on board. He would sponsor the bill. So just for you to consider it if you think it's worthwhile for us. I will say Douglas is also considering increasing theirs. They're in the process of working on that. Alma is at 7%, so I think Blackshear is at five, but several. The Georgia Economic Department of Tourism is also recommended to several communities that they look at increasing theirs, because it's a benefit that you can do additional things to increase tourism and visitation around the around the city. Hampton Inn came when we discussed this and she said, honestly, it won't affect them because it's a tax that they just collect for us and send to us. She said she didn't think it would have an effect over the stays. But our plan, if you were inclined to visit them all and explain it to them, is to let them know even before we presented it, so they'd just be aware of, aware of what's going on.

RICK: I would just point out that this requires legislative action. As you know, I think the legislature ends at the end of the month. So, this is going to be something that must be developed, but it's not going to be able to be taken to the legislature until the first of 2025. Correct. But you can get everything you've got then 8 or 9 months to prepare everything for the legislative action.

City Manager: Mr. Mayor, just a point of clarification. So, like I said, we've talked to other cities and the reason they stay here is because we are lower than other cities around us. That won't last much longer. But with that being an option, and Backstreet is in the process of raising theirs as well. Everybody's doing that right now. They see there's a benefit. This is only a proposal right now. But eventually, sometime next year when they increase their rates, we will be behind, once again. So please take this into consideration.

5. Grove Street-Possible Buyer

City Manager: the Grove Street property used to be the old public works, and we have the National Guard Armory. Rick has given me some additional information today prior to inviting these citizens here. I have them here today. But we do understand that some things might not be able to be done based off certain rules. I would make a request up front that, once we get to the armory and before we ask questions, I would like to add something to that presentation after the fact before questions. And first we have a concerned citizen interested in purchasing the Grove Street property. Like I said, that's the old public works building. Y'all know the status of that building, and today he is going to come before you and kind of present their idea of revitalizing that space, for something that might help the community out long term as far as a community center.

BRIAN WARDLE: We come from a lineage of nonprofit starting in Minnesota. It was the Thomas Dale Block Club, and you please go look it up if you Google. You literally had a moment of silence in the Senate when we closed. It's benchmark for nonprofits. It was in Minnesota. Johnny Howard was the executive director founder. He worked at Ford Motor Company together. And what you see on this sheet here, the second sheet in, are some of the ideas we have for the area. Mr. Nelson, I do want to meet with you because it's in your district. And I want to take a deeper dive into that piece. I talked to the juvenile judge here, and there's a process to that, so that that will be followed. Its justice involved youth that are in trouble. They went to this guy, started a restaurant. It's been 12, 15 years now and it's a yearlong program. They must go through the whole thing. We're doing a similar thing here, but it's in the trades. Our belief is they get in trouble, they go into the system, they come out, and none of the problems that drove them toward that are fixed. Right now, a welder is making more after three years than the average college graduate. So are our carpenters, plumbers, all the jobs that seem to be not popular anymore. The guy that comes out and gets your septic tank emptied, nobody thinks about wanting to do that as a career. But by God, when yours is full you pray to God that man shows up. So, I mean, those jobs, I mean, we're losing them. We're losing industrial arts in the schools. And that was kind of the predecessor to it.

I've talked to several of the tradespeople in town. For instance, Big Frog Electric, he's a master electrician who has a business here. He also has a business more toward Atlanta. He's going to consolidate those two. Now he'd like to come and teach at our center. I think a lot of the tradespeople are really that interested because they can't find anybody to work for them. And the whole concept is going to be they're not going to be electrician when they leave our program. It's going to be a yearlong process. My wife and I have been teaching independent living. We've racked up I'll make her get up and talk about that. But for 35 years, we've done it. And we have a lot of programmatic pieces that we've written, very successful. We've dealt with autism and whatnot. I'm a marine. So I have that in me. And she has more of the softer side of us, the disciplinary piece. And this is

what you must do anyway. So, some of the things are going to be entrepreneurship for the kids, for everybody. Anybody that wants to come.

Where the pool was filled in its foundation there. You couldn't build on it like that. If we put a greenhouse there and the rest of the pool as a garden, and the kids raise flowers and vegetables and every other week to once a month, have a, if you will, flea market kind of thing. We can build birdhouses and those kinds of crafty things more importantly and that's helped. That's going to obviously help self-sustain the program more. Moreover, whether they go into entrepreneurship or not, they're going to understand what most kids and most a lot of people don't. How many nails went into that birdhouse and how much did they cost? What's the paint by blah blah blah all the way down the line. So how much do we sell it for? And they will sell it. They'll have complete control of that program.

If you go in and work for somebody, do you understand that? Well, he's making a lot of money in this business. I should ask for more money. Well, no, he has a lot of cost. And if you learn that you're just a better to me person and citizen is you have more understanding of things. And it's not just a I'm entitled to something. the occupation I talked about the greenhouses, the neighborhood cleanup days.

I guess recorded history that you talked to a lot of people and the Four Seasons maintenance program up in Minnesota. We could mirror the same thing here, and that would be something that I would really like to get with you on. About Four Seasons maintenance program is a for profit business that a nonprofit can own, that we would do some stuff outside of, you know, private business to generate as well. But people, unlimited income, people that can't get that fence painted, they can't stop that running toilet because a plumber gets a lot per hour. But then again, the water bill is high. How do you balance that Four Seasons maintenance program. And you'll see in those if you look up Thomas Dale Blackwell, they worked with us. We worked the seniors and you know so you know shovel snow. You got to cut grass. The window was cracked. Something some whatever was needed. We did. And it grew to the point where we were doing bigger project. And then we would charge a nominal fee for, uh, what we did. That's a piece that we used, people that had just gotten out of jail. I can remember a kid that we picked up on a snowy night, buses weren't running, and there he was, sitting at the bus stop, I picked him up and gave him a ride to his hotel. And the next day he was working for us. We didn't do minimum wage. We were above minimum wage because of the community's backing. What we were doing, I mean, very successful. I want to replicate that here. We're both retired now, and neither one of us is about to retire. And this is where our heart is. And we decided to do this as opposed to continuing a 35-year foster care, special needs family. And so, we're coming to the city and asking, okay, help us make this happen. We don't want to hold you financially responsible, but we want you to help us make this happen.

City Manager: It is just industrial. So, some things we got to follow up on because that's a long conversation about asbestos. I'll follow up on it, I just want to give a quick introduction to somebody interested in the property. But you know we'll follow up Mr. Wardle and I'll follow up with the commission because we have got

some more people to ask me to thank you. I'll follow up with you at a later date. We just want the commission to know that it's potentially somebody that wants to look at either buying a property or a partnership with the property. Just something to consider because it is a requirement right now to see that we do something for the youth. Thank you.

6. Armory-Possible Buyer

City Manager: Okay, Mr. Mayor. Yeah. We'll move on next to the armory. We understand we can't sell the armory. The city attorney craft the language to better understand at our request. I'll let Rick, the city attorney speak on this a little bit to get some type of consideration, authorization, or guidance to seek something to do with that building. If you cannot sell it and we cannot lease it, and it's supposed to be used for public purposes, that's what public purposes which is not clearly defined. I can find it anywhere. So, it makes sense to me that we need to go to the governor's office for guidance on that. We do have some potential interest in that building and if all our infrastructure right now the city owns. That's the most well maintained. But I do foresee another 20 years going away and for it to fall apart eventually as well. And then we'll be cleaning that building up, too. So, if we can find a purpose for it is the question right now, at least consider going ahead and moving forward on it. I know each commissioner has given me guidance on the vision of that building. And I'm just trying to figure out what we need to do.

RICK: As you all know, we, the city of Waycross, received from the state in February of 2011, the old National Guard armory in that quitclaim deed. It's specifically clearly states that should the property be permanently abandoned or the use thereof for public purposes be permanently discontinued, then the property shall automatically revert to the grantor, being the state of Georgia, without the necessity of reentry and without necessity of notice, demand, or any action brought or taken by the State of Georgia. It is intended hereby to create a determinable fee and grantee with the possibility of riveter, meaning it goes back to the state if we don't use it for a public purpose. So, when the above stated event being a potential sale should occur, the title of the grantee to said property shall automatically be at an end. And by operation of law, the title to said property shall immediately revert to and reinvest in reinvest in the grantor state of Georgia so the city can only use it. Uh, you can't sell it, you can't give it away. You can't do anything because it automatically reverts to the state of Georgia and I beyond that, I know from reading legislation that this happens from time to time when the state surplus property, um, there's legislation that allows it to then be transferred, like in this case, to the city of Waycross. With that provision, I have no knowledge of anything where a city or a county has taken surplus property and tried to give it back, I just don't know.

City Manager: So, but the key thing is, is public use. We're trying to find what they mean exactly. Does that mean we have to put money into the city for public use? So, trying to figure that out. So, I'm just asking right now to at least go up there to the governor's office and ask that question. Because if we're not careful, it'll be in our hands for another 100 years, and then it will fall, and we will be fixing that clean up again. So, I just want to get some clear guidance to move forward this year. I know last year we kind of discussed it and discussed it. Just want to get some clear

guidance and possibilities. If we do figure out what that means, it may be a citizen who can use it, or an organization or profit or nonprofit. We figure out how that works, language wise and legislative wise, and go down that road, versus just let it sit there.

MONICA YOUNGBLOOD: Hi, my name is Monica Youngblood. I'm the administrator at Southside Christian School, and as you probably have heard, our school, the church where we're house, has voted to close our school. The school's been there 43 years. And so, you can imagine that we're looking for a new location. So, I approached Mr. Rayford, and like he said, he went through some of the government buildings. Mr. Hawkins showed me around, and the armory would be suitable for us. The amount of space there we are in the process of creating a new school we just met last night. It is the Lighthouse Christian Academy. We are in the process of incorporating and we are prepared to be accredited. We are prepared to be 500 and 1C3 in the upcoming months. And we are also prepared to continue serving our IEP students receiving IEP scholarships from the state of Georgia. And the SSO from the state of Georgia. So, if you would please consider the use of that building or if you know of another building, I would be very excited to hear about it. And I appreciate it. Thank You.

COMMISSIONER HOPKINS: What's your ENROLLMENT with the school?

MONICA YOUNGBLOOD: This year we have 130. Last year we had 178. Yes, ma'am. 130. Yes, ma'am. This year?

COMMISSIONER HOPKINS: Yes, ma'am. Those students will be. Go to it. There's one other private school in town, though.

MONICA YOUNGBLOOD: Yes, ma'am. In Blackshear, we have Crossroads Christian Academy, I believe is what their full name is. No, ma'am.

COMMISSIONER HOPKINS: So that building was a big building.

MONICA YOUNGBLOOD: Right? Yes, ma'am. We do. We have about 25% of our students come on scholarship. Other than that, they are full-time pay students. We are expecting it to boom in the next coming years. I'm sure you've heard of the school choices coming to Georgia. Uh, expected very soon. So, we're expecting that. And once we get our own building, we have quite a few people who are very excited to hear about it.

7. Public Works Tap Fee Increase

MR JAMES: Mr. Mayor. Commissioners. As you all know, our infrastructure, stormwater, utility crew, they're versatile in what they do. We were given the task to extend 190ft of a sewer main on Turner Street in the 1300 block. Just within the last couple of weeks or so. And the reason why was no part to the residents that lived there or to the city itself. But again, as the city manager said, we were notified of a problem that was going on with a couple of residents over there with the sewer issues. After further investigation, we found out that instead of each one of the

houses having a tap to themselves to come into our sewer main, houses were built and constructed so that the houses were tied together. The sewer mains in the backyards, which has now begun to have a problem with everything backing up at residents. So, what we went and done, um, very limited expense as far as on our side as far as the, uh, pipe and stuff. We had some pipe that was left over out at the old rib site that, uh, Larry and his crew went and confiscated, and we extended it because ten inches, sewer main, we tied into Bay Street and went down Tumor Street working that area. And then we added an additional, uh, 30 feet of four inch to for the service line to go up to the residents up there. And that's going to be the resident's responsibility to have the plumbers come in and tie on there and tie into our sewer main. What we are suggesting, as we've gone along, and we found different things that's come about. This is where we're now. We're at the sewer main, where we built the box for the residents to tie in to. The rest of the stuff's been done. As a matter of fact, Larry and them just got through, repairing the street over there this past week. So, again, sewer tap fees normally for residential new construction is \$500, plus any additional cost for asphalt or the concrete.

Once we must remove it to tie into it. That's what the citizens are, are asked to pay. What we're asking it for is, where we have residents that have been paying for their sewer for all these years, which we find this kind of stuff to come about. We're asking that the residents pay at least half of that price, which is \$250, and any other as far as asphalt or concrete that goes in there. Now, us being good stewards, it wasn't the fault of the property owner that purchased the house. What we found, uh, when the stuff comes about that those people and good stewards thought everything was like it was supposed to be the city, the same way we never had knowledge that those properties were tied together. But what we're looking at doing is taking that \$250, adding the cost to the water bill so the people can afford to do it. Once it's all done. It saves our residents, which are older residents, from coming up and paying this \$250 all at one time. As we all know, it's tough times. It's hard for them to do it. They still need sewer; they still need the water. So, with this being financed over a period, it gives them a little bit more added to the water bill each month. So, it does occur a little more cost, but it's not all at one time. So that's what we're looking at as far as the city. An update as well as some other stuff. We had a failure over on Havana, where the fire station is over there, right across the street, the main canal that runs behind Walmart. And all through there, we had an issue over there with some deterioration of some metal pipes and stuff that were in there. Our stormwater utility crew went in, and they replaced this stuff. This is another shot of the failure on the canal bank. And this is what our stormwater utility crew was able to do. We put in 64ft of 36-inch drainpipe on Havana. Once all that was tied together, the concrete, concrete culvert that runs underneath Havana was added on to it. And in anticipation of preventing any other major issues, with metal pipe, metal pipe, as we all know in this area, it deteriorates from the bottom up. And you don't find this until later down this. Concrete doesn't do that. It stays there for a very, very, long time. This is the finished product. After everything was put back together, you can see where they went back and patched the road and put concrete and stuff around the mouth of the pipe, so we won't have any more deterioration in that area there. So that is a fixed product after everything is said and done.

City Manager: so right now, we're doing water study for rates. I know you have been here a couple times. That'll be part of the retreat as well. We have that water study back and they'll give you all some data to kind of look at catching up with inflation. You're asking the question about inflation. it came it hit hard here. A lot of our citizens cannot afford the inflated cost, so even \$500 back then is not 500 back, you know, now and with, what James was discussing, like, it is every time you open the ground, or somebody calls about a sewer, it's at least four taps on one line. So small things we want to start doing. We're going to ask that the residents do. Mark is working on this. We have got to do some home inspections when they buy these homes. I don't know. We haven't figured it out yet. That's going on. But other residents are coming and complaining about certain things that should be caught, uh, during the homeowner's inspection prior to them purchasing those homes. Stuff you can see on the surface. I know you can't catch plumbing all the time, like I said, we recognize a lot of citizens are in certain financial situations. But James brought it to my attention, like, we just covered a little bit. And when he said 250 to add to the bill, he meant over six months to 12 months for financing with no, no tax involved, just paying the flat rate of the 250 over time. Because we're going to keep incurring this problem. Especially when we start doing the lead testing, because we'll see it then too, when we do at that point. So, we're trying to get ahead of this. If you look at that ESG document, you will see that as part of the discussion. How do we get ahead of all this stuff? Because, like, it just pops up every time something breaks, and we find 1000 problems. So, one thing they're going to do, they're going to brainstorm how to do some pre inspection maintenance to kind of get ahead of all these problems. But unfortunately, you know it's going to be associated with the cost. We can't do everything for free. Now that being said the finance team today, James team and ESG they have done a great job of going way above and beyond what's required when they get out here and get these holes and fix things. I know the citizens appreciate that. And he didn't mention it just now, but we just finished college with, I think, and I know they had some serious rain last, last month, and I was able to walk over there with no, no water. So that's a big deal. And that's kudos to the team again, um, increasing that pipe size. we have a good team. They are motivated. So, we're going to figure out how to get figures out early. We're going to put some guidance out um here on social media. Once again, the diapers in the in the, in the wipes. That's killing us right now. We're going to keep stressing that the boys are not putting that down in the toilets. Especially with our hospitals on some of the main culprits. But, this is something I. We haven't done this yet. I just want to bring it to your attention. Now, we're considering it because it's something we do need to do. And, once we get that, that rate study back, we must talk about some other increases. But once again, we understand inflation. This all be done on time. Will be like, hit him in the head right now it'll be 5- or 10-year process just to kind of catch up

8. Retreat Contract

City Manager: next will be the retreat contract. So, you got the contract in front of you? Just showing you the dates and times, we're doing two retreats, one to start of the year and in the mid-year. The first retreat will be April 12th and 13th, coming

up. So, I would like to get the contract signed. Once you look at it, get her to sign tomorrow with her and then kind of build the itinerary. I took notes down what y'all want to put into there. Like I said, initially it was all about finance and some roles and responsibility, but the main thing was coming out of there. We want to make sure that we do address those rate increases. As some commissioners have mentioned before, that the narration behind that, our citizens understand why. Because all that money that comes in goes right back into the citizens.

9. Workforce Team Building Day Options: April 19th or April 26th.

City Manager: next we move into workforce team building day. This is something we have got to get with the directors. We want to take a day to take the workforce out. We're still picking a location and just kind of doing some team building exercises. We do the three-legged race, all those types of things you do to build teams and motivation. I'm looking at April right now because I know once it gets hot down here, we won't be able to do it in May, June, and July because it'll be too hot to go outside. But I'm asking you to go ahead and look at these two dates for the 19th or the 26th. And that'll be, um, still talking to the directors about the actual time frame. If it's half a day, if it's a whole day, if it's come in. We're trying to figure that out right now, but I feel like it's something we need right now. We need to kind of get everybody in the same place, kind of, um, have some fun conversations, and they have some fun and then kind of come back to work and work a little bit harder. So that's the goal of that.

10. April Volunteer Month Activities

City Manager: And the last item is the April volunteer month activities. So, you know in April we put out the big bins for all our citizens to get rid of their bulk items. This year, we reached out to some of our citizens that might need help. We also reached out to some organizations that want to help us out. As far as cleaning up certain areas that the city does not maintain. I'm checking right now with some of the legal aspects of some of the abandoned properties about cleaning up, if we can, or we cannot. But for the most part, we're just asking citizens to get out, kind of clean their own properties, to help their neighbors out that need some help. And then we do have some people that's going to volunteer to go around and hit some areas with us. They do their cleanup. And then some of the men's groups that I work with do clean up. So that's going for the whole month. We have events going on for cleanup and hopefully, this time around we will learn our lesson from last year. We get those senior citizens stuff out of their house, help them out because we know it's leading to other issues around the housing. So, we're going to post that update probably to you at the end of the month to just let you see all the events in the organizations that's going to help. And that way, if you choose to do so like you did last year, you can help get rid of some of that stuff.

C. Privilege Licenses Renewals: n/a

D. Privilege Licenses:

1. La Jalisiense LLC, A. Valdez, 508 Alice Street, Waycross Ga. 31501, Beer, Consumption on premises.

E. Proposed Ordinances: n/a

F. Proposed Resolutions:

1. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, To Accept and Adopt the Annual Financial Reports for the Fiscal Years that Ended June 30,2022, and June 30, 2023, Prepared by Mauldin and Jenkins, CPAs of Savannah, Georgia; and for other Purposes.

There was a consensus to place on the Agenda for tomorrow.

2. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, Recognizing Georgia Cities Week, April 21, 2024, through April 27, 2024, and Encouraging All Citizens and Residents to Support the Celebration and Corresponding Activities; and for Other Purposes.

There was a consensus to place on the Agenda for tomorrow.

G. City Attorney Report:

H. City Managers Report:

I. Last Call

J. Adjourn to Executive Session

A motion to go into executive session for Personnel was made by Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson seconded by Commissioner Felder. All voted in favor and the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:52.

K. Adjournment

CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:

+ Michael Angelo James
MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jacqueline Powell
JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk





MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024 – 5:00 PM
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Waycross City Commission Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at 5:00 pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners, Katrena Felder, Sheinita Bennett, and Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson.

A. Invocation: City Manager

Led by James Smart, Director of Public Works

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. City Clerk to Read Section 2-66 (a) – Decorum.

Read by Jacqueline Powell, City Clerk

D. Request Motion to Approve Agenda

Motion to approve the consent calendar was made by Commissioner Hopkins, seconded by Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

II. PUBLIC REMARKS ON OFFICIAL ACTIONS

III. EXECUTIVE DUTIES:

IV. OFFICIAL REPORTS:

A. City Manager's Report

Went over the City Report

B. Mayor's Report (To Include Any Public Service Announcements).

Made announcements about the upcoming activities taking place in the city.

V. CONSIDERATION OF OFFICIAL ACTIONS:

A. Consent Calendar:

1. Approval of Minutes:

- a. Waycross City Commission Planning & Information Session, Monday February 5, 2024, at 5:00pm.
- b. Waycross City Commission Meeting, Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 5:00 pm.
- c. Waycross City Commission Planning & Information Session, Monday February 19, 2024, at 5:00pm
- d. Waycross City Commission Public Hearing, February 20, 2024, at 4:30 pm.
- e. Waycross City Commission Public Hearing, February 20, 2024, at 4:45 pm
- f. Waycross City Commission Meeting, Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 5:00 pm.

2. Ordinance Second Readings:

- a. An Ordinance of the City of Waycross, Georgia, To Create the City of Waycross Mayor's Advisory Board; and for Other Purpose.

3. Privilege License Renewals: n/a

Commissioner Hopkins made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Bennett. All voted in favor and the motion passed. There were no votes in opposition.

B. Privilege Licenses:

1. La Jalisense LLC, A. Valdez, 508 Alice Street, Waycross Ga. 31501, Beer, Consumption on premises.
2. The Place on Pendleton Street, L. Hickox, 311 Pendleton Street, Waycross Ga. 31501, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Consumption on premises.

Commissioner Bennett made the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Hopkins. All voted in favor and the motion passed. There were no votes in opposition.

C. Bids: n/a

D. Ordinances: n/a

E. Resolutions:

1. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, To Accept and Adopt the Annual Financial Reports for the Fiscal Years that Ended June 30, 2022, and June 30, 2023, Prepared by Mauldin and Jenkins, CPAs of Savannah, Georgia; and for Other Purposes.

Commissioner Hopkins made the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Felder. All voted in favor and the motion passed. There were no votes in opposition.

2. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, Recognizing Georgia Cities Week, April 21, 2024, through April 27, 2024, and Encouraging All Citizens and Residents to Support the Celebration and Corresponding Activities; and for Other Purpose

Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson made the motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Bennett. All voted in favor and the motion passed. There were no votes in opposition.

VI. LAST CALL and/or ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Bennett- wanted to make sure all the citizens were aware that the hours for City Hall will be changing April 1, 2024, from 8-5pm to 8:30-4:30pm.

Commissioner Felder- thank everyone for coming.

Commissioner Hopkins- thanked everyone for coming.

Commissioner Nelson- thanked everyone for coming.

Mayor James- he reminded everyone about the event happening at the fair grounds Rev Up For Kids on April 13, 2024. He also thanked everyone for coming out.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor James at 5:30pm

CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:


MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:


JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk

