

MINUTES
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION
MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2024, 5:00 P.M.
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
(417 PENDLETON STREET, WAYCROSS, GA)

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Planning and Information Session of the City of Waycross was called to order on Monday, December 2, 2024, at 5:00 pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners Sheinita Bennett and Mayor Pro Temp, Alvin Nelson

A. Invocation: Commissioner Sheinita Bennett

Invocation was led by Father Vernon Knight

B. Pledge of Allegiance

II. GUESTS:

Eva Robinson, 800 Gilmore Street, Waycross Ga. 31501- spoke on the money management process of the city

III. TRAVEL/TRAINING SCHEDULE AND REQUESTS

IV. PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION

A. Bids:

1. WAYX 25-01 Surplus Land N. Augusta Ave (Scout Lake) - FOR VOTE
2. Set Listing Price for Colley Street Property

B. Discussion Items: *** SEE DISCUSSION NOTES***

1. Finance Update
 - a. ARPA Update
 - b. Utility Conversion Study Results - FOR VOTE
 - c. COLA 3-6%
 - d. SPLOST FY2023
 - e. Holiday Bonus
2. Infrastructure
 - a. Roads Update - FOR VOTE
 - b. Parks

3. Charter Changes
4. Handbook Approval
5. Appointment for BOZA
Post 5:
Post 6:
6. Grove Street Demolition
7. Appointment for Land Bank:
Post 3:
8. Chief Cox- Purchase of 6 Police Vehicles
9. City Manager Contract

C. Privilege Licenses Renewals:

1. Georgia CVS Pharmacy LLC DBA: CVS Pharmacy #3348, C. Goode, 1800 Brunswick Hwy, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only.
2. Flash Foods LLC DBA Circle K Stores #2745051, J. Bennett, 2307 Plant Ave, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only
3. Flash Foods LLC DBA Circle K Stores #2745133, J. Bennett, 1736 S Georgia Pkwy, Waycross Ga 31503, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only
4. Flash Foods LLC DBA Circle K Stores #2745085, J. Bennett, 1401 Tebeau St, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only
5. Ruby Tuesday Operations LLC dba Ruby Tuesday #4801, A. Williams, 2263 Memorial Dr, Waycross GA 31501 Beer, Wine and Liquor, Consumption on Premises.
6. Flash Foods LLC DBA Circle K Stores #2745068, J. Bennett, 1712 Memorial Dr, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only.
7. Flash Foods LLC DBA Circle K Stores #2745000, J. Bennett, 505 Reynolds St, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only.
8. Wiley's Top Shelf LLC, D. Wiley Jr, 409 Alice St, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Consumption on Premises.
9. Food Lion LLC dba Food Lion 2844, M. Hoyle, 1312 Plant Ave Waycross GA 31501, Beer and Wine, Package Sales Only.
10. Walmart Stores East, Inc. dba Walmart 4527, C. Stacey, 1630 Plant Ave, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only.
11. Walmart Stores East, Inc. dba Walmart #556, A. Tiner, 2425 Memorial Dr, Waycross Ga 31503, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only.
12. Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc. dba Cracker Barrel #744, N. Mactier, 2501 Memorial Dr, Waycross Ga 31503, Beer and Wine, Consumption on Premises.
13. Plant Café LLC, M. Howell, 504 Plant Ave, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer and Wine, Consumption on Premises
14. Edd's Package Store, P. Collins, 608 S Georgia Pkwy E, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, Wine and Liquor, Package Sales Only.
15. Shree Hari Krupa LLC dba Solar Food 26, N. Patel, 2198 Brunel St, Waycross Ga 31503, Beer, and Wine, Package Sales Only
16. Fancy Q Sushi, J. Huang, 514 Mary St. Waycross Ga 31501, Beer and Wine, Consumption on Premises.
17. Jay Maa Inc, dba Corner stop, J. Patel, 2401 Plant Ave, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer, Package Sales Only

18. Manshi LLC dba Stop N Save, U. Patel, 1333 S Georgia Pkwy, Waycross Ga 31501, Beer and Wine, Package Sales Only.
19. El Santo Coyote, C. Toll, 1506 Memorial Dr, Waycross, GA, 31501, Beer, Wine, and Liquor, Consumption on Premises.

D. Privilege Licenses: n/a

E. Proposed Ordinances: n/a

F. Proposed Resolutions:

1. Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia (the "City") Authorizing Participation in an Amicus Brief in the Chang V. City of Milton Appeal.

There was a consensus to place this on Tuesday agenda.

G. City Attorney Report:

H. City Managers Report:

I. Last Call

J. Adjourn to Executive Session

Mayor adjourned meeting to go into executive session at 6:31pm for the purpose of property.

K. Adjournment

CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:


MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:


JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk



*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. At this time, we have no traveling training schedule or request. We move into the planning information session. But prior to that, um, we're going to remove, um, the College Street property in Missouri for an executive session discussion. Uh, item number two. And with that, we'll go into the bidding process, starting with Miss Jackson, our procurement officer.

MAMIE JACKSON: Mr. mayor, commissioners, you have one item on the agenda. It is for the surplus land on North Augusta Avenue, also known as Scout Lake. We are asking that this property be Surplused so that it can be sold via a realtor or acquired by the city, so that we can add it to the tax revenue and, um, gain revenue for the city.

MAYOR: And thank you for sharing that with us. I know we don't have quorum tonight, so we won't be able to get a consensus. We have one commissioner who is very ill tonight, and then we have one who had a previous engagement, so we will forego. But thank you for sharing, having to make a consensus on that. Okay.

CITY MANAGER: All right. thank you, Miss Jackson. We move on to the discussion items, Mr. Mayor, and I'll start with the finance update.

CITY MANAGER: And, Mr. Mayor, I believe all citizens can see this report online right now. We have new TV screens here for you all to see it. Hopefully you can see it clearly. We discussed this last meeting. I want to do a follow up on the status of the offer. Right now, most of that money is appropriated outside about \$250,000. You see at the bottom where it says additional transportation, it's \$100,000 there. And we have another \$150,000 left from the transportation study. So, what I would like to do is kind of apply that to some needs for the city. It's mostly will go into bigger vehicles perhaps for, as I mentioned, our police force and some public works. I'm not sure if maybe we can squeeze out of that, but there's no way to spread that money any thinner. So that is a priority. And I'll say why that's important later on during the presentation. But we do have to appropriate money this month. So, I know we can't do anything right now, but hopefully next meeting we go ahead and appropriate that money to those resources. The other part there, you see where we had, um, the interest income. Um, most of that has been appropriated as well as, you know, I'm doing building maintenance. With that money, we will be getting the carpets cleaned, new flooring here, a new painting, some outside fixes for the building. Um, also, we put some of that money towards the Christmas lights. The Christmas lights came in today. They started going up. Well, tomorrow they'll go up tomorrow and we're going to probably find some other ways. Um, I think after all is said and done, we'll probably have about \$30,000 left from the interest rate money, and I'm going to have to be appropriate because of the interest. But I would like to take that money and appropriate it to city needs. And I'll give you a list of city needs at the next meeting. And if there are any questions here, I'll move on to the next agenda item.

MAYOR: Okay, commissioners did you have any question? No, sir. No, sir.

CITY MANAGER: All right, Mr. Mayor next we move to the utilities conversion study results. As you see, I have requested to vote on this, and I'm going to let our engineer brief the slides himself. I just want to kind of preface this how important this is. Um, you know, recently we've had some major infrastructure collapses, and we've had them a long time away across the city, just mentioned just now about where money goes. We don't have the money right now to do to do anything to fix a major infrastructure because we never put any money into it. So, this next slide is really talking about if we're going to invest in our projects, roads, infrastructure, sewer, water, all those things of that nature will divest from that type of stuff. Um, and as always, not throwing stones at any past commissions or city manager or anybody, you know, these are tough decisions. Um, they can't be taken lightly because it is the taxpayers' dollars. But we have got to start doing something just point blank. Um, we're about another catastrophe away from having our rates increase for us. And when they increase for us, they're going to be drastically higher because we got to start paying for things like right now

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

versus paying for them over time, which would be the smart way. So, um, I'm going to pause there and just make sure you all kind of understand where we're starting this conversation from.

MAYOR: Commissioner, do you have any questions?

Speaker 5: I'm sorry. No.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Good evening, everybody. Thank you all for having me again. Um, I'm going to really just recap, uh, some something that we've been over before, but I wanted to show you some video that we got. If you all remember a couple of couple of months ago, you offered, we had some sewer issues on Swett Street, and you authorized us to go get that section of sewer line videoed. And from that, we could come up with a plan of how best to address it. And we've gotten those results back. We've got that video. And I thought it would be I thought it would be helpful to show you just a clip of that video, just so you can see what's going on in our infrastructure. I mean, Patrick's at the ready. I'm going to see if I can do this on my own and not mess it up. Too bad.

Speaker 5: Okay, here we go. Okay, not the most pleasant video in the world, but I'm just going to show you. Show you an example of something that we're, we're dealing with specifically on Sweat Street. But this we've got this situation all over town, not only in our, in our sanitary sewer, but also in our storm sewer. This is an example of sanitary sewer. So, we'll hit play here. See if you can. All right. So, this is a camera inside a sewer line on Sweat Street. And what they do is they go down and when they see something that they want to look at closely, they stop. Oh, I think I missed it. There you go. Right there. That's what I wanted you guys to be able to see. So, what that is, is a crack in our sewer line. And that's water and sand. It's entering the sewer collection system right there. And this is just one example of what we've got on this entire line. This whole video is probably 25 minutes long. Um, it's about an 800-foot section of Sweat Street. And what happens is that sand and water, over time, enter our sewer lines and create clogs. And ESG has to come in and pump that sand out. But as you can see, it continues to come in. So, every time they pump it out, it's a temporary fix and we have to come back every so often and do the same thing. So unfortunately, the only remedy for, for this situation here is to dig up this existing sewer line and replace it with a new sewer line. So, I just thought it might be might be neat for you guys to, to see and just kind of give you an example of kind of what we're fighting, um, all over town. Um, before I proceed with the, the, the rate discussion, any questions about what we were looking at just then? Pretty self-explanatory.

CITY MANAGER: Because they get the video presentation back up. I just have to say this. This is everywhere. It's not one location. Um, to say prioritizing would be difficult. I mean, it might become a thing of available funding. Um, but of course, we recognize that anything connected to a state-owned highway would get a parade on because we got to maintain that area first. Um, regardless how we feel. So, um, that will probably be our priority moving forward, although we've got multiple infrastructure needs across the city. So, we're going to go into now. Um, we had these large studies done. I was being, um, you know, I was being conservative, but in reality, we need to be aggressive. So, these numbers reflected 3%. We probably should be at 79%. Um, and Charlie will show the numbers how that works. Um, but once that breaks, we have a full commission body. I'm going to probably present the 7%, um, suggestion as far as the utilities commission, because that would let us quite more money to go towards our capital gains project, which is going to be on. And once again, I hope the public can understand and hear this, this, you know, we cannot keep on not putting money towards this and continue to get worse. And I just need everybody to understand, um, you know, we had pretty much I say ground zero right now as far as the catastrophe about to happen, which has been ongoing for years now. So, it's about to implode over, and it will be this commission that decides, you know, to take that challenge to fix it or, you know, or not fix it. And then we'll just go from there. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: I'll be relatively brief. Um, we've, uh, I've presented this to the commission, um, a couple of months ago, and I don't I'll certainly stop and ask questions whenever you guys have them, but, um, we've already talked about some of it, so it's just kind of a refresher and wanted to kind

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

of lead into it with that example of what we're dealing with on Swett Street. But as I said earlier, it's all over town. We had a similar situation over near Ossie Davis that we just had a repair sink hole on. It's all over. It's all over town. And the reason why is the majority of our systems, water and sewer were built in the 60s and 60s and 70s, some of them even older than that. And so that's, you know, a lot of this stuff is 60 years old and hasn't really been repaired or replaced since. Um, and the commission recognized the age of this infrastructure back in 2020 and tasked ESG engineering with developing a capital improvement plan, which we did. Um, and really to, to fix everything in town. Uh, the way it needed to be fixed to replace everything that needs to be replaced would probably be upwards of 50 or \$60 million. And we knew that there was no way we could implement a rate increase to fund that. So, what we decided to do was prioritize everything. And we're right around 20 million total. And so, the important thing to understand is this is not running new sewer lines to serve new customers. This is not running new water lines to serve new customers. This is simply rehabbing and replacing the existing infrastructure to Structure to serve existing customers. And so again, I'll be relatively brief. Prepared in 2020 is the capital improvement plan. And that's water. And sewer is what we're talking about. Roughly 19 million wastewater treatment plant repairs. Some of that is being done now. That number was more like 25 million. And so some of that's being done as part of our current wastewater plant project. So now we're down to down to 19, um, treatment plant repairs, sewer main rehab and replacement and water main replacement and all work currently moving is being funded utilizing existing GFA debt. So, you guys paid some debt off several years ago. And the idea is that we could fund additional debt with um, with that debt coming off the books and with this rate adjustment that we talked about, and we'll I'll go into here in just a second. So, what do we do? Um, we have to adjust rates and. And the reason why that is, is for a couple of different reasons. Um, what we found when we did our rate study is there's an imbalance, and you guys will remember me talking about this. I think, in what the commercial customer pays and what the residential customer pays. Now, that doesn't necessarily mean that the commercial customers pay less. It's still based on usage, but in terms of proportion, the commercial customers currently, the way the rates are structured are paying the way I'll say it is less than their fair share, if that makes sense. Um, and then the I apologize my my slide I had two different colors on here. Made it a little bit easier to see. But you can see on the left is residential. Um, and it's on the right is commercial. The left column is Um, is what they pay is. Um, and then what they use is on the right. So, you've got the two columns on the left are residential. It's their what they pay is more than what they actually use proportionally. And then on the right, the commercial, they pay less than what they use proportionally. And that would make a little bit more sense if I had my different colors. But anyway, fast forward and where we end up is with a, what I'll call a a rate adjustment for commercial customers and then, um, a rate increase for residential customers. And so, um, the, the commercial water rate increase, the way we charge is by usage, but it's by meter size. And this gives you just some different examples of the different size meters that we have. And it shows an example of what we're talking about is going up 3% over the next three years. And in the grand scheme of things, if you if you can see that last column total over there. It's not it's not a tremendous amount of money in terms of dollar amount. And what the individual customer is going to is going to feel at the end of the day. Um, and then here's where the big adjustment comes in. This is a 7% adjustment for commercial sewer. And so that dollar amount I know that's tough to see based on meter size is a little bit more impactful. But this just gets them back-to-back to even with what the residential customers are paying now. Um, same thing for, uh, residential water and sewer rates. And they would just go up 3% over the next three years. And what we've done here is we're trying to generate roughly 200 and additional \$250,000 a year. That's not to go straight to capital projects. That's to the idea was that we would fund a GFA loan in which you guys qualify for Grant. What we've been getting in the past is about 50%. Percent. So if we borrow, if we if we borrow \$3 million, you only have to pay back roughly 1.5 million of that. And by generating an additional 250,000 in revenue each year, that will fund that debt service for these capital projects that we're talking about, just that three that first 3 million, um, again, residential sewer rates, same thing, 3% increase across the board. And keep in mind, we haven't done

a rate increases here since I believe, 2016 or something like that. And is that right? 2012 okay. Um, and like everybody said, everybody knows everything's gone up with

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

inflation. And so, construction costs are kind of the same way. But, um, you know, our cost for the city to own and operate a water and sewer system have also gone up. So anyway, that that's really where we are. Um, and I know I've talked about all this before, but capital improvements are needed. It's not just something that we want to do. We really need to do it. And that's kind of evidenced by the video I showed you. And we get there by a commercial sewer rate adjustment and 3% increase for commercial and residential over the next three years. So, I know that was a lot of information. Um, put you all to sleep, but I'd be glad to answer any questions if you have any.

MAYOR: Characterizing it and saying that we are looking at compromised infrastructure all over the city, basically. Yes, sir. What are you suggesting? As far as how we would prioritize? I understand our chief, our city manager tells us that we're going to have to specifically deal with those things closer to the state streets and the state-owned properties. So, my question is, what? How are you suggesting what are you suggesting?

CHARLIE BRIDGES: I would agree with that. I would also agree that especially sewer lines and water lines that are in the road under asphalt are going to cost the most to replace, but also to repair when they fail. And so, I would suggest, especially on sewer, where we have the advantage of being able to video like we did on Sweat Street, I would suggest a concerted video effort on our sewer system. And ESG operations would be a fantastic resource here. And to be honest, that's how that our capital improvement plan was generated to begin with is working with ESG operations as well as city staff about where they're constantly having to having issues fixing water and sewer lines currently. And so, I think that's where we start, is where we know we have problems, and then we work our priorities based on close to state routes and then under city streets.

MAYOR: Just that question that came to mind. And then another thing that I wanted to know, I know that we've already had a street or two that has actually been compromised and caved in.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Yes, sir. Ossie Davis is one.

MAYOR: So, we need to get those done immediately.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Yes, sir. Agreed.

MAYOR: You mentioned something about rate adjustments versus rate increases. Could you clarify this a little bit?

CHARLIE BRIDGES: So, I use the term rate adjustment just for commercial sewer. Those are the rates that I believe are, um, proportionately lower than they should be. And so I'm using the term adjustment to illustrate the fact that we're bringing that commercial sewer rate back up to even not even with the residential, but proportionally to with the residential. And then everybody gets a commercial and residential gets a 3% increase across the board. So that 7% increase for commercial sewer gets them their rate structure back to where it needs to be.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: That's a good question.

MAYOR: You mentioned the 50%. The one of the concerns I had is once we paid off something and we were able to go back in and get more, you were saying that there's a way that ESG can assist in this area?

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Yes, sir. We've done in fact; the wastewater treatment plant work being done currently is being done with a combination of loans and grants. And the way for loans and grants work. Did you submit a pre-application and GPA evaluates your ability to pay that loan? And they also

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

consider, um, things like, um, median household income and those types of things in the past. Waycross has qualified for roughly 50% what they call principal forgiveness, which effectively

is a loan that you don't have to pay back. So, if we go take out \$3 million, for example, if we got those same terms, we would only have to pay back 1.5 million of that direction.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: It's the best deal you can get for infrastructure projects. Um, to be honest, and its Waycross just happens to be one of the communities that qualifies for the good terms for principal forgiveness or grant.

MAYOR: Very good. Commissioner, do you have any questions of Mr. Bridges? Hearing none. Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: Thanks, Charlie, I'm going to go back one slide just to touch on one point before we move on. I just want to see us and see what we're proposing at 3%. And they can see it much better on the screen. And I would encourage every citizen to look up other cities, towns, same scale, size and scope and what they pay for all utilities, and they will see that we are drastically way below that. And although that might seem, um, of course it's good as far as coming out of their pocket, but like I said, we continue down this path. It's going to be really expensive when we got to start really fixing these disasters. This is affecting 3%. And what happened is Charlie mentioned to me about 150,000, but the 7% we track on a million extra every year. Looking at compound every year, you can see how much that would really pick up on all our projects. Um, it actually would allow us to do all these things that citizens, you know, complain about much, much faster. You know, I'm saying you're talking about you putting in the extra 2 or \$3 on your bill over three years. Um, that would be millions for the city. And all this money goes directly back into these projects. It can't go anywhere else. You know, you would really see that on day one. So I'm trying to message as best I can because as a community, we have got to start understanding this. You know, we can sit here and throw, you know, Facebook stuff and this and that, but to clearly fix things. We've got to have a plan and we got to be consistent with the plan. By no means would this be done overnight. We're still talking about 5 or 10 years of fixing everything, but at least it will be it'll be fixed. It'll finally be fixed. And we won't continue to have all these issues that we've been having for the last, those who've been here for 50 years still. So, I want to make that clear. Um, when I do present this, next time, we'll be more aggressive numbers, but we'll have how much it cost to the system. I'm just asking them to just look at it tonight and kind of reflect on it, because I know it's hard for the commissioners to to do this because it is. I know we said we're going to rate conversion, but it is in some cases it's an uptake in what you're paying. Um, but as we get things done the right way and projects fixed, then those costs will go back down. You know, it'll be disclosed. So, I just want to make that hopefully everybody can understand that. Um, as we move forward, and I'll pause there before we move on to the next slide.

MAYOR: Commissioner, did you have any questions

CITY MANAGER: Okay, good. So next, Mr. Mayor, I'm going to the cost-of-living adjustment. As you remember, last year, we moved this around quite, quite a lot during the budget discussions. And I'm going to read this is forbidden from the slide because I based off. I'm basing what I'm about to say here after really evaluating my year and nine months here and what we can, what we can do if everything is done the right way. So, I'm looking at last year's numbers. I'm looking at the collective taxes, um, some cost saving techniques that our, uh, our senior city budget analyst, financial director, Mr. Smith has come up with. So, it has saved us money in many ways that we reflect on next year's budget, increased efficiency. Uh, we've been really trying to be better and benchmarking. And that comes to us not just for gas, not going around, um, just putting out every time a fire comes and being physical on doing our jobs, that goes a long way. Um, benchmarking just what we can do on a daily basis. So, and then of course, scheduling. I feel right now we didn't do anything. We could sustain a 4.0 Cola adjustment. And that would be the easy way to do it without us making any adjustments. However, I feel like this number could be higher hire if we make certain adjustments to the budget. And I'll touch

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

on that probably a later date. But versus us to keep having this discussion over and over and over, and then we get to the budget and we're having it again. You know, I'm, you know, as your city manager, like I said, I will stand firm right now. We could do a 4.0. I really want to

pass a resolution tonight to help our employees feel the risk that we don't go down the road. We did last year. Waiting till the last second. Well, way past the last second. Passed the budget and affected them adversely. Um, and, um, you know, the citizens just said, now we're doing her questioning session, you know, not just police and fire public works. They put their life in danger, too, every day, every storm. So, they all deserve a raise. But until we once again invest in this type of thing, we're all going to have this problem every year. So, um, I'm comfortable with this standing right now. You know, we'll adjust as necessary. But as you read this, um, as we get to the month of April, and I feel like we can do higher than that. You know, we'll come back to the commission and brief that, you know, once me and the finance director and the directors go through our budgets and we're going to start that, like right now and make sure we're tracking all that stuff. We probably can come in and I don't want to commit to any numbers, but I'm probably 4.0. But I do want to go ahead and put something on the books. So at least our workforce has to keep worrying about this every year, about what's going to happen. Because I know we can do this by not doing nothing, but we do more and keep doing what we're doing right now. We probably can raise a little bit higher every year and we aren't got no corn. We really can't say anything past that. But I want to bring to your attention definitely the workforce so they can hear that. I know it's been bothering them for many years now. So, this is this is feasible. This is easily feasible and possibly more if we stick to like I said, um, the district is doing a great job of finding cost savings and just the best marketing schedule. It does so much, you know, so much for us as far as saving money and not wasting money or wasteful has been. So, I apologize for any questions on that subject or recommendations.

MAYOR: Any questions?

CITY MANAGER: And, um, no question, Mr. Mayor. No. Okay. Mr. At this time, we're going to move into the next item. That's the 2023. So, you know, we started collecting money then and as of March, uh, everything willing we should have had our money completed as far as commitment to the Albany overpass. Um, am I correct? Yeah. So. So at that time frame, we'll be able to start spending the money collected from that SPLOST. And right now, I didn't put the cost there, but I want to say we thought it'd be around \$320,000 maybe each month. Right? 320 each month. Um, you know, when this first came out, those of you who were here, y'all did a priority list of wants and needs of the body directors. So, I'm going back right now and read that list because, you know, it's not going to cover everything, but we're going to try to get as much as we can done each month. Um, and, you know, each director is going to have to we're all going to have to kind of give some to get some, if that makes sense. So, I'm going to redo that list. I know y'all got a list back in 2023, but I'm going to redo that list just based off of the current priorities I think we might need. So it's mostly operational focus as far as vehicles. And then we get to the other things that, uh, that those directors back then kind of submitted. So next meeting I will have that list or the prioritized list for the commissioners for consideration. Um, and I'm asking for approval on that. And then we can go ahead with the March time frames. Come. I don't have to bring it back. We can just start the process of buying those vehicles. And I pause there for any questions on that item number.

MAYOR: And you're looking at March is what you're saying.

CITY MANAGER: We will start having the money or the funds available to purchase stuff in SPLOST.

MAYOR: And we were talking about going back just in reference to the colon. Yes. You made mention that we probably started that around April or before that.

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

CITY MANAGER: Well, I'd like to go ahead and pass the resolution that we're moving forward on every budget. It will be 4.0 unless the finance director and myself come back to you by April and say it cannot be done, but I am confident we can do 4.0, but doing it in the month of April, I will I will come to you on the Commission, the body, if you could do more and request more at that point in time based off those previous eight months prior to us, prior to you approving the budget. So I would try to put that language in that resolution just so it could be in there permanently. Um, but like I said, I

feel very comfortable right now about the things and the approvals and the changes we made that we could do that kind of easy.

Speaker 6: Okay.

CITY MANAGER: Next. Mr. mayor, this is just an update on holiday bonuses. You know, y'all, the commission graciously gave, um, our work for us. \$200 holiday bonus. It looks like right now we're putting that bonus out during the week of December 9th. It'll be the same concept. We'll cut the checks. Um, we'll do the auditorium. Um, we'll put it on the newspaper so that you guys can be there at this time. And we'll hand out those, uh, those much-deserved bonuses to those to the workforce. And we'll probably have coffee and donuts at that point in time. Um, I'm looking at a time right now. I'm not sure I got to get with Mr. Simmons, um, on the availability of the auditorium, but it's probably going to be. I would like to do it at this time. We'll give them a check and then go home versus last time. We'll get the check and stay at work. But, uh, you know, so we try to do what they can, just get the check and leave. So and I will pause for questions on that subject.

MAYOR: I don't have a question, but I think it's good that you made mention of allowing them to leave after they've received the check.

CITY MANAGER: Yes, yes. and while I'm talking about the checks, Mr. Mayor, I do want to thank the finance department. You know, we had a mishap with pay period last week, but they were able to get those checks cut to the workforce prior to Thanksgiving. So, some people bought some extra turkeys for Thanksgiving. So that was well received by the workforce.

CITY MANAGER: Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, unless you have any questions about that.

MAYOR: No, just compliment the finance.

NELSON: Yes, sir.

CITY MANAGER: So next, Mr. Mayor, we're moving to on the roads and park updates, and, um, we don't have, um, slides for this, but, as you know, um, last meeting, I requested we go ahead and do Scriven Street, uh, just to stay consistent with the with our robotics program. Um, to go back to the capital gains games you know, we got to stay consistent with what we're doing. We start by jumping around that's where we get started getting lost on things. So, I wanted to take that to vote tonight. I know we can't do it right now, but I wanted to go ahead and do scribblings. Um, I'm working with the engineering department on this. Yes, that 1.9 million won't cover the entire street, but it will get a lot of it done. You know, so I want to bring to your attention with the parks, the engineer department met with each commissioner who had the associated part. I think we got all the budget down on the parks, and everybody's satisfied with the direction of those. So, we'll start going those with construction. I think maybe next week, pre-construction bids next week maybe, and then hopefully have those parks up and going at least by March of next year. And the weather kind of turns back nice.

CITY MANAGER: And if there is no questions on that, Mr. Mayor. I'll move on to the suggested, charter updates and changes. And once again, these are only suggestions. however next meeting I would like to have all, all the suggestions, listed for you because you need to take with you to legislation in January and we got to have that done next meeting. So hopefully we got, the quorum next meeting to

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

do the changes. So, the first change, and this is kind of based off of what happened in district one. We had that prolonged vacancy, had the charter been written differently, we could have immediately filled that spot. So, what I'm the question now, I still have to work on some of this language with the city attorney, but we are working on the proper language. But I'm going to let the citizens read that online. So, we would like to do next time is changing the charter so the Commission can select a temporary candidate immediately upon the vacancy versus what the charter is written. Now, we have to wait till the special election. Whoever that candidate once selected and prior to

assuming the role, must have sent a petition affecting 10% of the registered voters in that district. And this is important so that, um, to create that total transparency. So those residents have a vote too, on who they want to be their temporary commissioner until we get an actual vote. Um, I think this is the best way to do it. It also removes any bias from the commission, you know, picking maybe the person they want to be there versus who should be there. And I just think it's the best way to kind of go moving forward. Um, we've discussed this, me and the city attorney many, many days now. Um, and we just feel like this is probably the best way. You know, if this ever happens again, that we have a vacancy versus us going on ten months now without a commission on commission for that district. And although we're thankful that the commissioners have filled in and support that district, of course, every, every, every district there is on commission. So we don't want we don't want it to happen ever again where we take so long to get somebody in the seat. So once again, only recommendation. If you have time to look at this over the next couple of weeks. And if you want to change some things or scrap it, just let me know. Um, but I definitely feel like we and we and we looked around at other cities and other charters. And this seems to be this is a mix of what different combinations of cities and towns do. Now I will pause there for any questions or concerns and recommendations.

MAYOR: And I understand here the vacancies even in our county, if something were to happen and the Commissioner was unable to fulfill their role, they have a way of placing someone prior to immediately. So, we need to have that same mindset. I do think it would be wise, and it would be less stressful. On making quorum and having individuals who can verify what needs to be done at that time. I think that's good.

CITY MANAGER: Okay, like I said, Mr. Mayor, me and me and the city attorney, we still got to make some of the verbiage legal and some things might be not applicable all the way. I'm still verifying the petition, but I just think, you know, that petition will really show the transparency for that person that we really know they want to be. I hope I say it by the registered voter, not anybody. You have to be registered to be on that petition. But next, Mr. Mayor, um, and this is not me trying to influence the current ethics committee, but I have been looking at that and I've listened to the committee as they spoke about wanting to make recommendations to change to the overall process. And once again, this is our first crack at this when we go through it. This was our first crack at this, at least my first crack at this. And, uh, me and the city attorney again, we're all looking at this to clean this up a little bit. Um, so that's, you know, better understanding and clarity of what's going on. I know, um, I hope everybody can appreciate what I'm about to say. Um, like I said, I'm not trying to throw stones at anybody, but we have to be honest about just perceptions on certain things. So I'm a question that we change how this committee is formed to create better transparency and accountability. I'm requesting.

Speaker 9: That we create a pool of registered voters. I mean, all registered voters. Um, and then we select someone from outside the city selects them. No one in the city. And it says five names, two alternates, but really the ten people. And that way, um, we're not building our own little teams. You know, I could bring in a, um, a fellow commissioner or anybody, and it's more of a jury pool type system at that point in time. And then we'll pull multiple names and then we'll let them know, hey, you've been selected to be on the ethics committee, and then they'll want to move on to the next person. But I think this way we don't put ourselves in a predicament where it might be some cloudy stuff. You know, as far as somebody picking somebody who's not going to be ethical on the board. So and once again, this is just observation of how we how we've been doing stuff. And um, like I said, it wasn't clearly stated in our charter either. I think they just help us all out; you know.

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

MAYOR: Just a comment regarding ethics committees. Do we know how long the ethics committees have been in the city of Waycross? For one. I do understand that since I've been on commission, we have on several occasions tried to ensure that we do things correctly. We had the GMA to give us recommendations and different kinds of things regarding this, and we've had to take courses on this. So this is another area of concern. I'm sure that when the full commission is seated, we will be able to

all have chosen someone. But the question that you bring before us tonight is someone outside of the city, as well as someone within the city. So, I'm sure that the commission will probably have some questions about that.

CITY MANAGER: And once again, just total transparency. Not throwing stones at the current ethics board, but just for transparency because. The makeup of the board is important. They want to do the right thing on the board. You know, all the way through. And I mean, I applaud the current board. This is really tough, you know. Um, but at the same time. Allegiance to a commissioner might prevent the doing the right thing. Just be honest with you. And I've seen the comments. I watched the comments. I did call GMA, and I think when this was made in the charter and this being, we're all trying to get the open and transparency that we all want, you know, we continue to strive to have. It was a way for the commission to protect themselves, you know, by picking their people. And I'm not sure if that's what the merit should really be.

MAYOR: Just if you don't mind, I'm thinking through this for a little bit. And I thought when we initially seated a board or committee. The individual who has a charge against him. No one from their choosing of the names was supposed to be a part of that ethics committee. Correct. And somehow in this this setting, we've allowed for persons who are chosen by individuals. So, if something were said or railed at me as the mayor of the city of Waycross, my choice of names would not be in the pool. Amen.

CITY MANAGER: Yeah. And that's. We messed that up, too. And we recognize that. And that's going to be changed as well. But even to that note, um, I'm the city manager. And although I got y'all my bosses, you know. But if the ethics complaint is against me, I would not feel comfortable about some of the choices I know they would not be. They would not be honest about what they're doing. Just, you know, so to protect everybody, I think it's just important that, you know, we the pool is bigger, and we pulled from a bigger pool, and I think it needs to be somebody outside of us. This body and that way, whichever citizens get pulled, hopefully do the right thing. And they come over here and I mean, do the right thing.

MAYOR: So, could we have our attorney to speak to what we just made mention of? Because I know this is more along those lines, and it could run into legalities that may not want to have to go into. But there's a great possibility.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Yeah. I've been discussing, um, reconstituting how we select a board of ethics with the city manager, and he has shared his ideas with me about selecting from a much larger pool rather than just have commissioners, you know, nominate, uh, two individuals each. Um, with regard to the comment that you just made about, um, not having someone serve on the board if you chose them. Um, our ordinance does not actually read that way. Uh, I mean, that makes sense. You know, that's a commonsense approach. Uh, to keep everything transparent and remove any appearance of impropriety. But the way our ordinance is currently written. Uh, the commissioners and the mayor each select two people, and the names are put into a receptacle, a cup, and the first five that are pulled constitute the board, and the other two are the alternates. It doesn't say the ordinance. It doesn't say that if you are the respondent in a complaint and you name somebody that those people can't serve. I mean, it's not it's not actually written that way. So, we have a lot of, uh, areas where we can improve our ethnic ethics ordinance. And, I mean, I guess it's been that way since, uh, it was passed, you know, several years ago. And apparently, We, the city has not had an opportunity to go through it the way we have over the last

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

couple of months. And we're finding now that it's deficient in several respects. And so, we really do need to update it and make some changes that that are along the line of what the city manager said. To make it make it fairer, I guess, and have a wider pool. So that's something we're going to be looking at very, very carefully.

CITY MANAGER: And once again, Mr. Mayor, like I try to lessen my involvement, but I probably should have been more involved. I mean, you know, just looking back now, but I still think the board did a good job based off what the information they had, the rules they had. We still got to follow the charter. I mean, we can all, you know, got to follow the charter and they follow the charter and that's the outcome. So, but I think in fairness to them, I think next time we do need to look like change up a little bit. It's other things too. Um, I'm going to sit down with the current ethics board and get and get their recommendations too. I know some of them have recommendations to be changed. It's a good thing that they actually went through this process. And we'll put that in here as well because that's very important too.

CITY MANAGER: Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, and this kind of thing online, just some things that I'm looking back about accountability with our finances. And, you know, what is city business? Uh, and currently in the in the handbook, it states, well, in the charter it says it must be approved by the body, the commission body or just the body. I'm not sure if how that's interpreted. Uh, is that something you bring before the commission? Because I want to make sure that we're all covered for now when we're using these government credit cards. Um, if we're doing official business. Um, you know, we've got some of our business Cop wasn't here now. And just looking back. We were trying to assist them in bringing businesses here. I understand that part, but they probably should be brought to the commission for vote. Um, I'm going to throw Jason out here since he's sitting right behind me. But if he has somebody coming in here for development like he does sometime, and they need to talk to myself or whoever, probably should have put that in the open. You know, if it is just, it's just a dinner, but just to make sure everybody's on the same page. And right now, we're it's wordy. It doesn't read that way. So, and that's kind of throughout the charter between commission and body and vote. It was too much in there to kind of change. So, I just picked the first area I kind of was, you know, looking at. Um, so also this is kind of in our handbook too, which I'll hit a little bit. Even that verbiage on who is not subject to any authority. That's definitely got to change. You know, just for the transparency that we're all looking for. But that's my recommendation there. Just update the verbiage on what is official city business.

CITY MANAGER: All right, Mr. Mayor, the next one. Oh, my bad Mr. Mayor. Does anyone have any comments on that?

MAYOR: I was just responding to the. We basically need an operational definition for everything. And yes, because everything is so ambiguous rather than specific, you can interpret it in various ways depending upon who's sitting in the chair. Yes. And they can determine it based upon their being, their sway, or their worldview on how things are. So, we in some cases, we're just as you said, we need the verbiage to be more specific. Correct.

CITY MANAGER: Next, Mr. mayor, and this is, uh, once again, a lot of this is coming from my mouth and my year and eight months here. Um, and not being political, but the last year, you know, we've had a lot of meetings. We didn't vote on anything, or people didn't come to meetings. I'm just, you know, want to be transparent. Um, we all know what happened in the budget, um, process. Um, and now right here, we are drastically in danger of holding up people's alcohol licenses right now if we don't have a meeting next week. And, you know, we're already behind by not having one this week. So, I've been thinking about this. You know, you have emergency powers, um, to a certain degree during emergencies being weather related. Um, but we get hit by a, a weather-related emergency. Well, probably three times a year now. Before there wasn't that much, but now it's a lot. But our financial emergencies are starting to get more frequent, and then we don't have any ability to move on them or be, you know, agile because of how we kind of made up. And we can go multiple meetings without planning. And once again, I recognize this is hard on the commission. Um, but definitely it's proven tonight we'll move this to the

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

next meeting and probably the next meeting and then these kids got their licenses and that's going to upset them really probably. They can't make money at that point in time. So, I did call Jimmy today. Um, I noticed a long discussion between myself and the commission, but we got to have some type of oversight, and we can't just do anything. Um, because we stood still for, like, seven months, and we didn't do anything. We didn't pass anything. We kept moving stuff from meeting to meeting or. No comment? No

comment. Just don't want to do that ever again because that only makes it. I think, like Susan said, it was bad, and it hurts everybody, you know? So, uh, I hope everybody can read that. I'm still trying to draft this language too, but I am in certain situations. Um, we have insufficient number of commissioners to make a meeting that the measure has some authority to do resolutions. And this is when we have a timeline for, for financial matters. Um, we're definitely going to see next week if we don't have a full body because that's going to going to really upset everybody, um, with these licenses. So, um, and this resolution does give you for emergencies. I mean, like, it's got to be time sensitive for us financial matters. Um, and a few other things. I'm kind of I'm looking through that. Looking back, we put ourselves in a financial situation because, um, some of the street stuff, not voting on the streets, you know, and the street continues to fall apart. Sweat Street is one of them. You know, we don't have to do something on Sweat Street. We're doing it now, and we're bringing the total cost to you all here shortly. But we've got to do something. If we if we come in here and we argue about it and that street falls apart, it is connected to the to the state highway. That's going to be a catastrophe. And I think everybody saw this. Now, what the petition can be led to in those situations. We got to find a way to move past that. We can't sit here and come back the next month or I don't agree with the prioritization of that street. So I've been brainstorming this the whole time I'm here, um, since I've been here.

CITY MANAGER: And I'm just. I'm just trying not to overstep my responsibility, my authority. But we got to do something when these situations come up, because it's really hurting us all when we don't do anything. So hopefully I can appreciate it's just a thought right now. I still have to work with the city attorney on this, on what we do. Uh, once again, make sure we craft what the emergency financial emergency really means. And I'm right now I'm saying, um, like this next one, we've been this close to the end of the year. That is a financial emergency. If we deem a project a financial emergency, that's an infrastructure project. That's a financial emergency. And then if we're not going to vote on it because whatever somebody got, you know, got to come over the top, you know, before we all pay for it. Way more money. And I pause there for a question on this recommendation.

MAYOR: Yes, sir. Commissioner Bennett wants to come.

BENNETT: Um, thank you, Mister mayor. City manager. I understand what you just said, but in a case like that. That's where our mayor steps up, correct me if I'm wrong and make those executive decisions? If it's to that point, like Sweat Street or something, that should be the mayor. We're not together if everybody's not here. Should the mayor make that call?

CITY MANAGER: So, right now, he doesn't have any authority to do that. I'm using the last year as an example. We always sweat commission with two. We had three commissioners and we got nothing done. You know. And it will never be a tie vote. Yes. He has tie vote to a certain degree. Not everything. Certain decisions. But I'm talking about like merging finances. Like we got we got to do something, and it will be the mayor to be the mayor. I understand the commission decides the budget and everything. I'm fully understanding that stuff. But we just can't keep going like we've been going, you know, and that resolution, you know, like I said, me and the city attorney are still trying to craft what it says because we definitely want to define what the financial emergency is. So, we want the mayor to be You told me, you know, just dictatorship. You know because it'll be similar to the weather emergencies, you know, a 30-day period. You know, so we come in here is a great example. You know, we I cannot we cannot wait on that. We cannot wait on that for meetings to decide if we're going to vote on it or we're going to push it back. You know, so, um, and then if we don't do business licenses next meeting, that's going to be a financial disaster. Um, just with the people looking from the outside of our

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

city, you know, the people that bring in our revenue, you know, they can't get their revenue in. So, um, and just being transparent, I'm afraid we might not have a quorum next, next week, so. Okay.

MAYOR: And this is a comment. I know that it may sound a little bit sensitive for this side of the table to talk about it, since I'm the person that's. The person of interest in this conversation. I would

think that, And it seems weird to me that the mayor wouldn't have the ability to make decisions when there is no war, for instance, to push something forward that needs to be dealt with immediately. But I know that we are generally this this commission and possibly commissions prior to this, if there were not three votes, I can't even sign a document.

MAYOR: It may be something very simple. But although there is no, you know, no quorum and no three votes, no consent. And generally, I talk to every commissioner. I call them by phone, I speak to them, I share with them. I'm the person that says Happy birthday to everybody. I'm the person that probably checks on everybody to see if you're okay. That's how I would know that our commissioner is not feeling well. But that's one of those things that I believe that if I were to call a person to find out what the commission's feelings are toward that, I that I could make a decision, but not everyone. I think one of the concerns that I recall. Commissioner Nelson making a comment, the reason why they like the weak mayor mindset versus, and I'd rather say council manager government form of government versus the weak mayor conversation because weak mayor is worse than council manager in the sense that you can't do anything, you can't make any decisions unless there are maybe 2 to 2 that I can make or break a tie. They're not going to ever have that to happen. Most times that happen not because as soon as everyone gathers together, we decide unanimously to vote. The mayor here has no executive duties, has no veto power, has nothing but the ability to sign after the commission gives permission to sign. That's all this mayor does in the city of Waycross. And I'm not just talking about me. I'm talking about all 65 before me in these 66 men that's sitting here and as I was saying, they like it that way. So I don't know if that's going to be something that will get approved when it comes down to that. I'm not sure if that will happen because there's a there's a power. Struggle there. If the mayor was able to do that now I understand, I agree. I know when the weatherization problems come on the weather events take place. Everybody's okay with it for that time being because it's only 30 days. But when we have an extension and a state of emergency comes from not only the governor or the president, I have to still get three before we can declare something is a state of emergency.

CITY MANAGER: Commissioner if I may? I know we strong mayor that concept. I'm just simply saying it gave me some parameters, no doubt. But like this. We've done nothing for eight meetings right this last year, and partly because it's everything's connected. It's all this slide show. It's connected. Commissioner Davis unfortunately passing um, district five, not being seated for a time period. That really hurt us really bad. Yes, sir. Um, and us being the city manager too. So, those, those parameters need to be set on what that financial emergency is. I'm like I say, if next week, I mean not next, we got the next if we don't have the quorum to vote on that alcohol license, that is a financial emergency. If we cannot walk out of here just because we don't have a quorum. Yes, sir. That's what I'm trying to address. Everything else. I told my stand while the commission is set up and the type of system we have. But that's dangerous. That's going borderline dangerous. And like I said, eight meetings I can go into who don't show up and this and that and this and that. But if everybody cares about this city, like I think we all do, then we need to do something to ensure we're not constantly in this, this little dogfight or in the phone booth with everybody, or we can't move or do anything. And like I said, that's really slowed down the momentum that we had to achieve in the first six months, you know, together when we were all working together. So, I understand the verbiage has to be crafted in nature, that it's not too dictatorial for yourself. But at the same time, if if nobody's here, like right now, this is wasted meeting. We can't have a wasted meeting like this. And this is critical. We're at the end of the year. And, um, yeah, so that's important.

MAYOR: And Commissioner Nelson wants to speak to that.

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

NELSON: Yes. Um, Mr. Mayor, I understand his sense of urgency because he can't manage. And I myself being a being a license holder for alcohol. If we can't get this passed, I'm covered. But there's 19 businesses here that's going to go without a license to sell alcohol, and that's going to put a hardship on them. And there's some other things that we that that we need to address because one of those are the absenteeism or the constant absenteeism. And right now that rule is kind of outdated because you could miss so many and then come back and be at one meeting and then miss several

more. There's nothing we can do about it, intentional or not, that hurts us. So now when I came back home, we had to go through other things that we've already discussed. I stayed abreast of them because I was watching the YouTube. But other commissioners, by them being out, you know, they're coming back saying that. Well, I wasn't aware of this, and I wasn't aware of that. And then you're having to kick the can down the road. Time is going on, and that's costing us. So, these things my concern is the absenteeism intentional or not. If you can't be here for your citizens, why be here at all? And that's.

MAYOR: I understand, Commissioner. I think right there is a place I know that's probably one of those areas we need to revisit and revise. What we have done in the past has been the commission voted to allow for that individual if they went past their allotted time or missing. We voted to either allow for them to come back because in a sense, you could lose your seat. You can lose your seat if you don't fulfill your time. So in that same note. That's up to the commission to make that decision about themselves. So we would have to do this within our own meetings amongst ourselves, and make sure that we hold each other accountable for being present or absent while present, doing what we should be doing. So that's in the purview of the commission.

CITY MANAGER: Great. And, Mr. Mayor, I mean, just all these recommendations, I'm going to present all of them at the same time next meeting, because you all have to have them to take with you all the legislation in January, and you actually got to present to our state officials probably sooner than that if we're going to make any changes. And like I said, you know, starting with Commissioner Davis. Commissioner Davis untimely, um, transition, um, it just a lot of holes was, was created in a lot of ways. And then all these other things was going on and like, it just, you know, maybe they wouldn't happen that way again. And this never becomes a subject, but I think it needs to be in place just in case. So. Um, um, is there any question on that, Mr. Mayor? I'll move on to the next question.

MAYOR: I think it sounds like if we had one more person, we would have consensus about anything.

CITY MANAGER: But you're in agreement. Okay. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor. I'm moving to the handbook, and I was going to ask, um, for us to get adoption of this. But I see now we won't be able to do that either. So, um, with the handbook, it's the same thing. Um, parts of the handbook is not in accordance. Um, this is one thing that this board brought out to our attention is not in accordance with state law. And that's the executive legislative contractor, um, who can do what? And that's got to be changed because we're just in accordance with state law. We can go back and forth or whatever. But, um, everybody should be accountable to the handbook. We did the research on that. It needs to change immediately. And, um, the handbook, I think the last time they did it was actually, I think 2022. I might have been mistaken. Mistake in 2022. Um, so with those new updates, we need to go ahead and vote on again. Uh, that was already I'm changing that. But everything else that wasn't anything additional. So it's mainly all those references because right now that does move accountability from a lot of people. You know, there are a lot of us as contractors that have credit cards for, for the for the city. And by now, City manager, uh, Rayford is excused from the handbook, and I definitely don't want to be that way. Um, as the, as, you know, the city executive, you know, on my side for our workforce. Um, because we all want to lead by example on everything. So, um, obviously we can't vote on that either tonight. So, I'll just be back on agenda for next on the next meeting. Hopefully we can vote on that and those changes and include all the rest of the changes that we've made over the handbook over the past two years, which are minor detail. We just added, uh, certain updates. Its um, in accordance with state law and then some recommendations was made by the directors, and I apologize for questions on that.

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

MAYOR: I think you understand. Will we have. The state mandates that are required for handbooks alongside our handbooks so that that can be challenged or do we need. And I'm not saying we would challenge to say this is that we need to challenge our own handbook.

CITY MANAGER: It's actually in there. It's the reference in the handbook. State mandates applicable to it. It's just conflict with that statement. And it can't be that if the state says everybody is subject to the handbook, you know, without necessarily to the handbook, but to the money management and credit card management, everybody is subject to that. Nobody is oblivious from that. So, I just want to change. If you want reference in there to, to uh, once again, we had the discussion. The only two executives in the organization, as yourself and myself, who can sign for the for the city. Everybody has a legislative, you know, who made the laws. I mean, and govern the, uh, the budget. So even that's funny because once again, I'm technically a contractor, so I'm changing that too, because I shouldn't be. Probably. Well, I have to sign for a city manager, but me being a contractor, that's where the funding to how we got the contractor as defined in the charter. It's a whole different person. And that's something to get to a later date because that entails a lot of change needs to be changed on this position, which I'll discuss hopefully next year. Some time frames. Okay. Any questions on that?

MAYOR: I have a question regarding a couple of things, but I don't know if I need to deal with all those at the same time. I'll just deal with one of them. The first of them, when I came in, we had the right the mayor could give the oath of office to someone who came in office somewhere along the way. I don't know. I didn't know where it happened. I know that one of the mayors, the mayor pro temp in the two administrations back, was able to give the oath of office to a person coming in. It was the clerk, I believe. So, the clerk came in and the mayor pro temp at that time read that person in. Now, since that time, I'm not sure if there was a change, but the mayor does not give oath of office.

CITY MANAGER: We'll check that, Mr. Mayor.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Generally speaking, a person who is authorized to give an oath of office is someone like a notary, you know, who is authorized to give oaths or a probate judge or a superior court judge. Um, but I guess at the at the very least, it should be someone who has a notary seal because they are, by law, authorized to give oaths. And so.

MAYOR: Even as a notary, I will be able to do that as well.

HUEY SPEARMAN: You could do.

MAYOR: That in court. That kind of interested me, because I noticed that my clerk was able to give the oath of office beginning of the year, and then others were able to give, such as an attorney and maybe a judge, but never the mayor. This not this mayor. Now, before me were people who did give the oath of office, and I don't know if they had notary abilities or that kind of thing, but in that case, that would be my administrative assistant could do it because she's in.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Notary, right? That is correct.

CITY MANAGER: And that goes back again. The charter has a lot of items that need to be updated. And once again, you are the executive, you would have that I mean, the federal state has that ability, you know, so you will be equivalent to the president and the governor who can do that. So that's how each government is set up to be the same as the next hiring. So, but it's a lot that needs to be changed. I thought we could get to it sooner, but like I said, we just got behind on for various reasons. And definitely next year we'll make a stronger, we'll make a better, you know, jump forward of catching all those changes. Because I think once we really definitely on the roles, responsibilities, and definitions,

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

once we really clarify that stuff because like our charter, you know, we had the biggest in the southern region. You know, we're one of the smaller cities, one of the smaller cities. Once we make those changes, we will be more defined on, you know, what can be done. And it probably works better for our citizens, too, because a lot of stuff in there that actually works against our citizens. So, it needs to be it needs to come out, you know, and I just, um, you know, we don't have a lot of people to go dig into that charter like it's supposed to. We tried to set up the, uh, the charter working group, and that got nixed. I will present that again, because there's no way I can pull directors away like I tried this time. And me being there every night doesn't help either. Me calling the city attorney every two hours doesn't help. You know, it wouldn't, you know. I think having a group of citizens, you know, help, help us help ourselves would be a lot better and faster. Um, but they got nixed, so I will be presenting that again next year just to show. Because even when they did have. That's why I got most of the changes from before that. Mr. mayor, any questions on that? No, sir. Okay. Um, unfortunately, we can't do any, uh, nominations because they don't have any ability to do nominations. I request that, um, the, um, the Board of zoning, you know, we put it on the agenda for next week, hopefully be able to know that those individuals move on, uh, Grove Street demolition. So that property has been on the market for some time multiple years now. I did talk to some investors about why it's not selling. Of course, nobody wants to buy properties with, you know, dilapidated buildings on those properties. The unique thing about Grove Street, it can be, um, I think it's commercial, medical, residential is everything. It can't be everything. And it will probably go sell faster if we remove that structure on it. That makes it look so bad. Um, and I got the public works director. Look at how much that cost. Um, there's some situations. We probably can't afford that point in time if we can't remove that structure. I was going to request to the commission that we lower the price, and we can talk about that in executive session when we can have executive session, because I think, um, more likely we need to lower the price if it's going to ever sell. And we need to really get rid of these properties needed to add to the tax base, making money versus right now. Um, and, you Get this done alone. It's costing us more money because eventually we'll have to knock it down. And that's going to cost us a lot of money. So that was the only reason that was on the agenda. I'll leave it on the agenda for the next meeting for your consideration. When we have a full quorum.

Speaker 6: Uh, cannot do the land Bank nominations at this time? We'll put that back on the schedule for next meeting as well.

MAYOR: While you're doing that, this is just a question. Maybe the commission can respond to this.

Speaker 2: I'm not certain. I know when we were going through the season with Covid and there were occasions where we could not all meets. Is there a possibility that this may be a legal question? Is there a possibility that we can have remote attendance?

HUEY SPEARMAN: You can have remote attendance. It's in the charter now, but it's limited It to 1 or 2 times per something. I have to look and see, but you can only do it on a limited basis. Very limited.

CITY MANAGER: And that's something else. Once again, the charter needs to be updated as well to reflect that. Um, so no nominations. Uh, next, Mr. mayor.

NELSON: May I Mr. Mayor.

CITY MANAGER: I'm sorry. Go ahead, Mr. Mayor.

NELSON: Um, the appointment for the land bank. Who's on there right now from the city.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Um, is it Larry Rude.

CITY MANAGER: With the city.

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

NELSON: City commission, because. Well, let me go there. Um, we're not supposed to have any commissioners sitting on that. Um, we're strictly advisors, not voting members. Yes. So, I've been told that we have sitting commissioners on there, and it's not right.

CITY MANAGER: Correct.

NELSON: So, we may need to look at that as well.

Speaker 7: And commissioner. Of commission on.

CITY MANAGER: That recommendation was made prior to you getting here. Mr. Nelson. I will go back and read it again. Okay. Um, so, um, we'll bring it up again. Uh, last thing before we move on is, uh, police cars update. So, I presented the update about buying a police car with that, um, police cars. And once we were back and looked at it, um, I'm actually going to let Miss Jackson speak on a little bit. You want to speak on a little bit? Yeah. Okay. Just to clarify the situation, it kind of changed up since the last time we had a meeting.

MAMIE JACKSON: Mr. mayor, commissioners, uh, Chief Cox would, uh, be requested to purchase six police vehicles. Um, the I guess the dilemma is the route in which we're going to do it. Um, we spoke to a dealership that actually has a state contract and they have they have the, the vehicles physically on the lot, which means if it is approved tonight, we could put the order in tomorrow and they could probably go pick them up by the end of this week. Um, that's if they were purchased outright with the state contract, that particular dealership. And I believe the way the state contract is written; they don't finance it. So, if we wanted to finance it, though, we could purchase the vehicle under the state contract. We would have to bid out the financing, which would take up to 45 days from the time it is actually put in the newspaper to the time we brought it before the commission for approval. And by that time, the vehicles that we wanted per se, that were on the ground could be gone. So I guess that the debate or the dilemma that we're having now is are we going to purchase them outright? Which means that the bulk of that money will come directly out of the police department's vehicle budget for that purchase, or if we finance it, it will come out in equal payments monthly for the next 5 to 7 years. Um, but we wouldn't be able to get the vehicles that he specifically wants or sees this on the ground. And once we bid it out for financing, if we bid it out for financing, then at that point, if the vehicles are no longer there, then we're on a search for vehicles again, and we're still having issues post Covid with having availability for vehicles.

MAYOR: So, what is your recommendation?

MAMIE JACKSON: Yeah. Uh, my recommendation would be to purchase it on the state contract. Um, and purchase it outright versus financing. But that's not my call to make.

MAYOR: Mr. Commissioner Nelson.

NELSON: So, Mr. Mayor, um, we we've already discussed this. Well, we already voted on it last. What meeting? That we could do. What? Because we need to go and get this done because we don't have.

MAMIE JACKSON: The, the I believe the discussion was to purchase, and the approval was to purchase the issue now is how to purchase.

NELSON: Okay. So, we can still move forward after tonight. Um, regardless of absenteeism. Okay. Okay.

CITY MANAGER: So, uh, Commissioner, Mr. Mayor, I'm going to do I'm going to sit down with the finance director and police chief tomorrow. Um, because we don't have all the money to outright purchase. I was under the assumption we could just finance them financing, and it would take up to 45

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

days, and we'll lose those vehicles. Yeah. So right now, we need. I think you said \$210,000 for the 8280. Um, right now, I'm not committing to anything. We might be able to purchase half of them and probably try to finance the rest at a later date, if we could. That he needs cars. Um, so, like I said, we got some money. We got some other money, um, available. But I got to make sure that's, you know,

that's applicable in the right way. So, we're going to sit down tomorrow morning and really go over this. Um, when we first presented, we didn't have the information that Jason has now, um, I was on the assumption we could just write our financing and that would be it. But we can't do that. Um. What? We can do it. But it will take 4 to 5 and 60 days to be to bid them out, and then we will lose them. So, um, we'll probably end up doing once we talk, I will contact each of you individually and tell you about the discussion. And then that way we come to the next meeting, y'all. We can go from there.

MAYOR: Thank you everyone. Hopefully still be there.

CITY MANAGER: I do too I do too I know it's important and if not, you know, we'll keep searching and we'll have to have it in our pocket ready to go next time.

NELSON: So can we go ahead and get some 1 or 2 at least that's something.

CITY MANAGER: I think we can jump on. I think.

MAYOR: We can start. Talking to them tomorrow and you get your briefing for us and maybe we can move forward. Yes. Miss Jackson wants to share.

MAMIE JACKSON: I just want. To add one thing. Is that particular vendor or dealer that definitely has them on the ground that we've spoken to because we purchased from them in the past. So they were one of the first people that we called because they do have a state contract. Um, we could call other vendors. They're not the only dealership that's under the state contract. So I can call to find if they have it on. But that one we particularly knew we actually had them on the ground. But the issue still would be will those vendors still have them 60 days from now? Right. Yeah. Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you. Uh, Mr. Mayor, last subject on here, my contract runs, every February. So actually, um, 60 days out from my renewal. You know, last year, we didn't do anything. Um, because a lot was going on, and we just kind of kind of rolled through. Um, I do want to Negotiate some things this year, so I'm doing that now. I'm not asking for any pay raise or anything like that, but I put before y'all just looking at other city managers and what they have. I have a \$250 vehicle allowance. If you look down this list on the boxes on the vehicle, I run my car through the dirt and the mud, you know, whatever I'm called to do and, you know, um, my own insurance. \$250 doesn't even cover my gas for the month. Um, I ride around, and I go to travel. I don't get reimbursed for any expenses on travel or anything like that. As you see, most other city managers do. Um, look at their car allowances. Most of them got the same size city with me. They're \$1,000 a car allowances a month compared to, you know, I'm 250. Um, and not necessarily me. You know how long I'm here. I think the next city manager, you know, to be more effective. You can't have a Stone age contract like I got right now. You know, uh, additionally, um, I know why it's written that way. So, you can get rid of, you know, personalities you don't like, but no city manager can come here and be effective how its written right now especially year to year, where you can get fired for any reason. And I'm requesting I'm going to put it right now in the open space that this will be a three year contract because, um, whoever follows me, they're going to need a year to, you know, regardless of experience, it is because unless we get everything aligned with the charter, it's going to be unfamiliar to them, especially coming from a place where they follow the charter strict detail, you know, and they're going to they're going to need at least a year to figure that out. And then if I leave them with all these dumb projects, they're going to figure that out, too. That's another year. So, they, you know, they're not going to get much done. I mean, and I don't think it's fair to be underneath that pressure. Um, definitely. We don't make the revenue changes too. So you can say fix the fix stuff, but you're not going to increase the revenue. You're just spinning the wheels. So, um,

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

like I said, I'm not an expert on increasing pay, but you look at the pay of the lowest paid city manager. I just throw it out there, but it's not on here. But y'all, we had a discussion before, but I do feel like the vehicle, it has to go up because I'm putting a lot of miles on my vehicles. Um, you know, my personal vehicle and, um, you

know, and with the year, with the year thing, if I can be fired for any reason with the three two. Back to the three two things. Yeah. Um, and I'm saying three years for a reason. You know, if that person is fired, they should be rewarded for the time they served, you know? And right now, it's not safe that way. And like I said, I don't think anybody can be effective here. I applaud the city manager before me, but we all know they all left for a reason and don't come in for another reason. So, I'm not trying to code or anything like that, but I want to go ahead and put it out there. My negotiations so everybody will know. I'm looking for three years on my next contract. some kind of relationship that I can't keep my vehicle on the ground, you know? And like I said, I'm not just making up stuff. Y'all see the numbers here compared to every other city. So. And once again, nice for a pay raise. Um, I think I said it before until the workforce gets a Cola and makes other changes, I'll stay at my pay forever, however long it needs to be. But um, yes. So that's what I'm asking for now. And I apologize for any questions on that.

MAYOR: I mean, over 25 cities that you've listed on here from the Blairsville down to Waycross, it's just that many of them have smaller populations.

CITY MANAGER: Yes, It's mainly Mr. Mayor reimbursable. You know they're going to go travel places and claim but there's no reimbursement for it. You know I don't need the money, but it doesn't seem fair to me, you know, because, you know, and then I look at the vehicle like that, 250 points covering additional insurance and maintenance and gas, and I can't have double insurance on the car. So, it's my current insurance.

MAYOR: So just to look at one has \$900 per month. Yes. And they also have contract calls and 24 hour a day service. And they're reimbursed mileage when using their personal vehicles within a 50-mile radius of the city.

CITY MANAGER: And this is GMA. I asked GMA to do this. So, I went and picked my own cities to go against this GMA. I mean every other city has all three columns marked. They got they got a car. They got they got a vehicle. I mean so you know anyway I'll make my formal recommendation to you next month when my contract negotiations I want to put out there where I'm seeking. So, I feel like I've done an adequate job here so far based on the circumstances we got going on. And I know there's a lot of work to be done. But, you know, for this to for this to work, it's definitely got to be a little more team player team involved in it. You know, for us to move the city forward, that need to be moved forward. And once again, all these items on the agenda tonight are connected. Every single one of them is connected to why we are in the state we're in right now. Not saying a lot of positive things that have not been done. We have a lot of victories this week, along with some contacts we didn't have before. That's finally kind of contact us back on some serious problems here in Waycross, but I just want to bring that to the commissioners' attention. Thank you. Okay. Any questions? Mr. mayor, I'll move on.

MAYOR: Did you want to comment or say anything to her?

NELSON: No, I just concur. Okay.

CITY MANAGER: Up next, Mr. Mayor, we had we had many previous license renewals, so we won't be doing that tonight. But, uh, to those business owners, I mean, we're going to try our best to make sure this happens. Um, this week, uh, if we have to figure out. I'm talking to the city attorney to see what everybody's available if they can't make the next commission meeting. But we definitely need to get all this done this month because January is when the process starts. So., We have no privilege

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

licenses. We have no proposed ordinances. Um, of course we don't have any resolutions because we didn't put them on agenda for tonight. Um, I'm going to turn over to the city attorney for his report.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Mr. Mayor and commissioners, we do have one proposed resolution. Um, obviously you can't do anything with it tonight, but just introduce you to it. Uh, I believe the mayor got an email from the mayor of Milton, Georgia, uh, regarding a lawsuit that was filed against the city of Milton. For those of you who may not know. And I didn't until I looked it up. Milton is located about 30 miles north of Atlanta, um, north of downtown Atlanta has a population of about 41,000 people. In any event, the city of Milton was sued by a motorist who was traveling along the street and for whatever reason, ran off the street into a median and hit a clay pot and ended up suing the city because of the obstruction that was in the city right of way, which doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. But he prevailed, and the city had to pay \$35,000, and the case was appealed to the Court of Appeals in Atlanta, and the Court of Appeals upheld that lawsuit from the trial court, and the case is now on appeal to the Georgia Supreme Court, and the City of Milton is soliciting cities around the state to join in what's called an amicus brief. A friend of the court brief, um, to, um, try to convince the Supreme Court that, Um, that was the wrong decision to make. Especially when a motorist leaves the highway and runs off the highway into a median. Um, there are different things in medians, you know, clay pots. Or there may be a light pole in a median. There may be some utility, uh, objects in a median. But for some reason, this Court of appeals held that the obstruction contributed to the person's injuries, even though, you know, the person may have been at fault himself running off the road. I mean, it could have been drunk or something, but for that, we don't have those details. But he ran off the road and it wasn't in the he didn't hit something in, in in his pathway in the city street. And so, um, the city of Milton mayor is asking that, uh, the city adopt a resolution saying that you support, um, the city's, um, Efforts to get the Supreme Court to change the ruling that the Court of Appeals in the trial court made that the city is not at fault, and the implications for cities around the state, especially smaller states or smaller cities around the state, is obvious. You know, you don't need to be in the business of paying somebody \$35,000 for bad driving. Yeah.

Speaker 1: Well, I definitely agree. Yeah, I know we have a triangle in Waycross that has sometimes we put flags there and various other things right. When we're celebrating certain times.

HUEY SPEARMAN: 4th of July and Veterans.

MAYOR: Day run into things all the time. I mean, what last year, sometime around this time, someone decided that my mailbox shouldn't stand. They told their car because it's made out of concrete and They messed up himself and totaled the car, and I was just grateful that they lived. But just you're going to have those kinds of things when people are not paying attention, or they're texting and driving and they sway or swerve and they end up in your yard or in your home, that's all possibilities. But in this case, the Milton Regency, I think we could possibly be a part of it if the Commission allows for this. Again, this is one of those situations where I could have just easily signed, but we have to have three for resolution.

HUEY SPEARMAN: That's correct.

Speaker 5: Okay.

CITY MANAGER: That's it. Thank you, Mr. Attorney. Mr. mayor, before I move to my report, uh, for the commission, my report. I'm going to ask that the chair for the ethics board make a quick presentation to you. At this time, it's just information purposes only, because we don't have a quorum. Okay. Very good. Um. Mr.

Speaker 5: If you can't tell by the tone, she can't make a presentation. No, not a thing about that. No, no. Okay, okay. Okay.

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

Speaker 11: Okay. Go. Okay. All right.

CITY MANAGER: My apologies, Mr. Mayor. So, we did make a change to the board based off this morning, and then we scheduled the next meeting, and then they'll vote, then go ahead.

MAYOR: Yeah. So, is the meeting scheduled for some time this week?

HUEY SPEARMAN: Thursday at 5:00.

CITY MANAGER: Um, for the next. My report, Mr. Mayor, the courtroom will be open tonight at the police station for adverse weather. I know it's supposed to get below 40 degrees tonight, so anytime it's below 40 degrees, we will have the courtroom and the police station open. If we need bigger space, we open the auditorium. But based off the last two years, we never had to open our auditorium. We average around 5 to 10 people in the courtroom at night. During this time of weather, uh, the report will be presented on Thursday during my update. As I mentioned before, you now get you get daily updates. But the city the city update will be comprised of all the daily updates and that will be monthly moving forward. So doing the update I'll post that sent to the to the commission itself, Mr. Mayor. And then it'll be every month doing my first update, my first Thursday update to the public. And that's all I have at this time, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: And thank you for your weekly updates and also the live updates on Facebook, which gives the community opportunity to know what's happening in the city of Waycross and what's going on around. Our world, which is good. Thank you. I will look to our commissioners for their last call, and we'll start with district two and then district five.

BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Um. I know we said that we can't do anything, and this goes well, but I'm out. Uh, Commissioner Nelson out. I feel like the, um, license renewal should not be in jeopardy because we are not here to vote on it. And I wish that there was something that we could do. To put you in that position to make that call. Because that's not fair to them. And another question, if I can ask the city manager, you said the city auditorium would be open. Um, or if it's a freeze.

CITY MANAGER: It can be. But right now, we have the courtroom open. Like I said last year, we never got over ten people in there at night.

BENNETT: So do we have any cots?

CITY MANAGER: We don't have any cots. We got the chairs and the blankets in there. Okay. Yes. Okay. In the police courtroom. Not the auditorium, though. Okay, okay.

BENNETT: Okay. And I just want to thank everybody for coming out and just speaking. And I just want to thank I had a situation Friday, and I just want to thank all those people that came to help me. I can't thank you all enough for what y'all did for me. I greatly appreciate it, I really do. Uh, thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you.

MAYOR: Commissioner. We're grateful that she is here. Uh, after having gone through what she went through on Friday. Uh, very, almost tragic. But thankfully, she was caught.

Speaker 5: Commissioner five.

NELSON: Um, I just have a question. So, it's safe to say that we're not meeting tomorrow because we can't do anything. Um. Is that correct? Mr. City manager and.

*****DISCUSSION NOTES*****

12/02/2024

W/S

Speaker 6: Mr. Mayor, we put it on the.

MAYOR: Calendar. I'm not sure you have to come here Call tonight. All is well. I'm not sure, but I'll keep you informed. Okay, so.

NELSON: So, these agenda items can't possibly be on tomorrows because.

MAYOR: We have not had a consensus.

NELSON: We have consensus, but. So that's futile. Uh, well, here again, I hate to keep beating a dead horse, but this is ridiculous. Um. That's it, Mr. Mayor. Okay.

MAYOR: Well, and I know, I know, we can't refer to or respond to personal comments about Commissioner, but we can say that we wish them well to get speedy recovery and get back so that we can get the business of the city completed. I do appreciate each person that has come tonight. Thank you so very much for your attendance. We appreciate this because it is necessary for you as citizens to be informed, to know what's going on in the city and know how to address those issues. So, with that, I would like to say thank you to Commissioners Bennett and Nelson for being present. And we do look forward to seeing our other commissioners in days to come. With that, to all the families that are going through death, I know that our church has dealt with three in a row. And just in this coming weekend, we're going to have three funerals at the same time at three different locations or different numbers. So, I want to give my condolences and words of comfort to the Armstrong family, the Ferguson family, as well as the Cobb and Hopkins or Cooke family. So, we just wish the best for those families during this time of bereavement. And so, we, two of you who are also dealing with bereavement in our community. Our prayers, as Commissioner Davis would say our prayers go out for you. So have a great evening.

BENNETT: I want the name the same as you did.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Mr. Mayor. Yes. Just for clarification. If you have a quorum tomorrow and you may not, you can approve the agenda items, then, you know, normally you would have a work session and then that would be consensus to move items to the agenda. And you still approve the agenda before you have your meetings anyhow. So it may be that if you have a quorum, that whatever items people feel comfortable discussing can be put on the agenda for tomorrow.

MAYOR: Thank you. Okay, so we will see tomorrow if we have an agenda that will be approved and move forward. And again, thank you all so very much for being present tonight because there is no quorum. I don't have to ask for a motion or vote every day.