

MINUTES

WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION
MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025, | 5:00 P.M.
WAYCROSS CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
(417 PENDLETON STREET, WAYCROSS, GA)

I. CALL TO ORDER:

The Waycross City Commission Meeting was called to order on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 5 pm by Mayor James. The meeting was held in the Commission Chambers of City Hall. Present were Commissioners Shawn Roberts, Alvin Nelson, and Mayor Pro Temp, Sheinita Bennett (in at 5:04)

A. Invocation: Mayor Michael-Angelo James

Invocation was led by Mayor Michael-Angelo James

B. Pledge of Allegiance

II. GUESTS:

Ms. Debra Giddens- 4985 Douglas Hwy, Millwood Ga. is here advocating for a special election for the District 4 vacancy to be held in June instead or November.

III. TRAVEL/TRAINING SCHEDULE AND REQUESTS

IV. PLANNING & INFORMATION SESSION

A. Bids:

1. WAYX 25-05 Surplus Firefighter Turnout Gear

There was a consensus to place this on Tuesday agenda.

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

1. Charter Vacant Commission Seat
2. Water and Sewer Meter Update
3. Charter Fee Increases
4. Code Leash Laws
5. Grant Writer Contract
6. Ethics Update

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7. Re-appointment of the Municipal Court Prosecutor
8. Michael Lusk- Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge
9. Kettle Creek Update
10. Confirmation of New Directors:
 1. Jim Blackburn- Chief Fire Department
 2. Matt Elwell -Public Works

C. Privilege Licenses Renewals: n/a

D. Privilege Licenses: n/a

E. Proposed Ordinances: n/a

F. Proposed Resolutions:

1. A Resolution of The City of Waycross, Georgia, To Declare Firefighter Turnout Gear To Be Surplused Property; To Provide For Sale On GOVDEALS.COM; and for Other Purposes

There was a consensus to place this on Tuesday agenda.

2. A Resolution of the City of Waycross, Georgia, To Appoint Joseph R. Johnson, Jr. As Municipal Court Prosecutor; To Approve The Entry of An Agreement Setting Out Terms and Conditions; and for Other Purposes.

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

K. Adjournment

CITY OF WAYCROSS

BY:

Michael Angelo James
MICHAEL-ANGELO JAMES, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jacqueline Powell
JACQUALINE POWELL, City Clerk



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MAYOR: Okay. Very good. At this time, we will look to our city manager for our travel training schedule and requests. And the remainder of our meeting.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. At this time, we have no travel training schedule request. Although this will be updated this at the next meeting. Something did come up. It just didn't make the meeting this time. We'll go ahead and move into the planning information session, and we'll start with the bids by the procurement officer. Miss Jackson?

MAMIE: Yes. Mr. mayor. Commissioners.

SPEAKER 3: Mr. Jackson.

CITY MANAGER: Purchasing has one item before you this evening. It is for. Excuse me, the 2025. I'm sorry. Waycross 2005. Surplus firefighter turnout gear. There was approximately 139 pieces of turnout gear that the fire department is asking to surplus according to NFPA standards. This turnout gear is either expired or is no longer. Um uh qualifies to be used for firefighters' protection, and we're asking that these items be surplus so that we can sell it on gov deals.

MAYOR: Very good commission. You have heard the request of our procurement director if you would. She needs a consensus. So, I'm going to go to each district by number. District one. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. And district five. Yes, sir. We have three consenting and so that gives us opportunity to do that. So thank you, Miss Jackson. Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Miss Jackson. Next, Mr. mayor, we're moving to discussing items. I'm going to start with the. try to update or we're not going to start there. I'm going to start with the vision and the mission, as always. So for residents that might be new to watching this meeting, once again, this is the vision and the mission of the city. Mr. mayor, we're moving to the priority's bands. They remain the same as well. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, within those bands, these are the additional priorities broken down. Uh, I did add revenue increases as a new priority. Um, it's on infrastructure, but it covers all four areas. Uh, have you been mentioning now we've got to figure out a way forward on that. Um, and I'll hit that more in detail as we go along during the slides. I can't leave that up for everybody to look for those who are just starting to watch the meetings, and these are the priorities and what they are reviewing the priorities. Mr., I did do, uh, appraisals with our directors, and we might be changing some of these, um, based off of current situations, and we'll bring that to the April retreat for the commission's consideration. And in case y'all were looking back, I know 3 or 2 of the commissioners were not there when we created these. So I'd like to give them an opportunity to maybe change these, um, or update these if need be.

CITY MANAGER: Um, is it the city plan has not changed. Uh, once again, we are in midterm or the yellow arrow for those watching in the audience online, that means you're at 2 to 4. Um, those are the direction we're headed in. I read some of them, of course, implement updated programs, policies, ordinances, uh, continuous improvement of standard base workforce, uh, research design, uh, fund infrastructure structure, quality strategy. That's a big one for us right now. We're really trying to get a better hold of that. Uh, and of course, the long-term financial strategy, which we'll go into detail during the budget hearings this year. And then just maintaining quality legal services. Um, any questions at this time, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR: Not from me. Not from Commissioner may have questions, and I'll let them ask any questions. No, sir. Two. At this time.

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CITY MANAGER: And we'll go ahead and move on to the agenda items. Uh, first item, Mr. Mayor, is a charter update. Um, we did try to pass this. Um, this is my third attempt to bring this to the commission body. And also, um, there was a misprint in the news media, and I felt like we had to

kind of cover this again, uh, to keep everybody updated. And I'll get the newspaper to change that because it's important that, um, as far as information flow. So, um, this update is just to update the charter chart to provide options in the event of an unexpected vacancies and absences. So I kind of go over some history with the commission during my two years here and kind of talk why this charter change is important. The city attorney did change a few things in the resolution. Like I said, Mr. Mayor, if you were to unfortunately no longer be able to be the mayor, we have different actions we have to take versus the rest of the commission body. But I think that's reflected in the resolution. So just to give some history, this is only from my time here, uh, 2023 to now. So march to march. Um, and I don't want to paint it's not the total picture. Some of the I covered a little bit. Some of these uh, districts attendances are, are a bilateral like district one. You know, Commissioner David, that's the majority of his time is in there. Well, Commissioner Roberts has been 100% attendance, if that makes sense. All right. And then some of these did have excused Excuse absences. And in many cases. And I can go over the excused absences, or you can marry at the end of this. So during my ten years we've had ten meetings missed due to lack of quorum. Um, and those are those times when we had a, a vacancy created through the death of Commissioner Davis and then through litigation, um, because of, uh, Commissioner Nelson's, um, situation back then. Uh, these are the percentages per district over the two years I've been here. Um, district one, 80%, 86%. District 287%. District 390%. This is for 61%. District five 100%. Um, and once again, that's a combination of, uh, then Commissioner Strickland and now Commissioner Nelson. As far as, as far as attendance and the mayor of San Francisco, like I said, it's a small portion of these that was excused, uh, due to sickness or other, um, identified engagements, previous identified engagements. So I want to start there with the premise of there. So, um, as I said earlier, uh, we had two commission seats that were vacated due to death over this two-year time span, and once he once he vacated temporarily due to litigation. And what we had been trying to do is pass this resolution like most other cities have, that gives the commission the ability to put somebody in temporarily until they can get it to a vote. Um, any questions so far, Mr. Mayor, before I continue.

MAYOR: I don't have a question, but I do have a comment. Yes, Mr. Mayor, and I recall us having had these conversations multiple times. And when we brought this before the commission, January the 7th, we had the opportunity to vote. Correct. And this could have gone to the General Assembly. Correct. But according to what I understand is that though we had a majority vote, which was three, it did not go to General Assembly because you had to have all five to agree. Correct. So having not had all five, it didn't even make it to the General Assembly. great.

CITY MANAGER: And that was the misprint of the paper. And I'm going to correct that on Facebook. So we'll correct that and make sure that our citizens understand that we did vote on that. It did not go past here as far as this commission body. And like I said, I kind of touch on what this resolution is doing. If you can't pass tonight because everybody's not here, but hopefully the commission will show up tomorrow. So we're kind of still keeping on the agenda. If it's the commission's we're willing to. So the resolution presented would give the commissioners to pick a candidate temporarily, um, for that district. But that candidate will have to then go and get a, um, a list of 10% of the registered voters in that district. So it won't be like we're picking our own person. Um, and it specifically says registered voters, not just voters. I mean, anybody has to register the year prior. Uh, and that candidate got to get a petition, whatever 10% is. So we had 200 people that people voted. There'll be 20 people signed that petition saying they will back this person to temporary fill that position. It might not be as a big deal now, but over the last two years we really need to have that in place based on what was going on. Um, so I'm going to put you through one more time because other cities have this in their charter right now to kind of protect them, um, from certain situations. So I'm

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going to go I'm going to go back. So, uh, with that being said, um, I would like to address some of the comments, um, off of the Commission's decision to move the election to a later date. Um, and I can speak from that. Um, from what I know. Um, I was speaking with district one first when we had the same situation. Um, the positive behind that, that we did have coverage. So the notion that nobody has coverage. You can look here at the percentages. You can read there, but we continue to cover those districts or that district until the commissioner got there, which we'll continue to do now. Um, and to those watching again, the app will pretty much solve 85% of your problems. Just hit it. Um, weekend or weekday? Um, night or morning. And it'll pretty much resolve a lot of that stuff. And myself, I am open. Um, I'm seeing phone calls even now about issues. Um, so same thing with district one. It's the same concept with district four. Um, so there's, um, I, I stand by that. Um, I don't really, we don't really care city. I know the commissioner doesn't really care. Um, you know, everybody is the same to me. And that's been a part of if you go back to those arrows, the arrow chart. Transparency and commitment to everyone. So that's there. Uh, second piece and like district one. Um, initially we only had, I think, one person, one person thinking about running for district one. And of course, you want to give everybody an opportunity to really consider, because this is a hard job. Um, and I get a commission. We have a lot of tough challenges to do. This is a very difficult job. You want the right person to get in there. So eventually we had three candidates that ended up running for district one. Right now, we have five for district four. And I'm thankful to the commission to kind of see, um, down the road. They want to give everybody a chance to kind of really consider what they were going to do. This also gives, um, that district, you know, a good mix of people to represent them when the time comes. They have time now to promote what they want to do and what they're going to do on their vision and strategy. Um, there are a lot of things that need to be done a little differently. Um, just based off my assessment. So I think the timing behind this, although it might be, uh, not appreciated by some of the citizens. I'm glad that those five citizens have, um, you know, if they stay in this thing right now, those five Uh, have, uh, decided they would like to represent district four, and we'll go ahead as much as we can to start listening to them. Um, as far as addressing some of the needs of the district, and I apologize for any questions on that slide. Mr. mayor.

MAYOR: Just a question from me. And I know, Commissioner, I will open the floor for them. The idea that district four will have five people running for that particular seat. What were the requirements for them to even get started doing some of their campaigning at this point, or are they able to do anything at this point? I can look to our city's attorney if you want me to.

CITY MANAGER: Uh, I think you can answer that, Mr. Attorney.

HUEY SPEARMAN: It's never too early to let the public know that you intend to offer yourself as a candidate for a commission seat, and so anyone who is interested in doing so can start doing that. But qualifying is not until August. And so that's, uh, that's when it really counts. Uh, when we have the qualifying, I think it was the third week in August, um, when they will have to actually declare their candidacy at that point.

CITY MANAGER: And also, Mr. Mayor, the good thing about, well, a better scenario is, you know, in the past we have not did the debates and those things to really promote, um, civil service. This this time will be aligned with the other elections that are going on in November as well, to give all candidates, because we have other candidates for the current seats as well, during that time frame to kind of get out there and be the change they want to see, um, in the city. So hopefully, you know, we got these five, but we'll probably have hopefully 20 more that's going to run to. And I think it would be great to see those debates and that critical thinking, you know, put out loud in space so everybody can kind of see um, you know, who's going to represent them. So, uh, I'm thinking this is going to really push up the voter turnout as well. You know, historically Waycross has very, very low turnout for elections. And maybe this opportunity now for those citizens who are not satisfied with whatever

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they're not satisfied with, to go ahead and start voting and be part of the part of the solution. So, Mr. Mayor, I'll move to the next item. If we don't have any questions.

MAYOR: Okay. And I said I would open up for the commission if they have any comments or questions. So district one, did you have anything? No, sir. District two. No, sir. And district five. I did what he answered. Very good.

CITY MANAGER: Next, Mr. Mayor. This is the water and sewer meter update. Um, it's going to be two parts. One is an update on the ongoing process, and then the other part is more of a concern that

we've been dealing with for the last two years. I want to address it with, uh, the commission. I will be asking for a decision. I'm not sure if y'all at this meeting will be enough for y'all to decide, but I'll go ahead and present it today. If I need more time, we'll circle back. Um, so right now I'm going to stick to the ten-meter Processing is. You know, I spoke last, last meeting about the pilot. What we're doing, this is kind of the pilot cost case scenario. And I briefed these numbers quite a while ago. Some kind of briefing. Again, I will follow up with additional information for the commission to kind of really look at and understand these numbers. But, um, for the purposes, I will go ahead and just kind of just touch on it lightly. So, um, as we mentioned before about using once we verify the media's work about using a backbone network of Georgia Power that will cost us roughly \$33,000 annually to use that backbone. Now, this is important because so far with the with the with the test pilot, I let Mr. Bridges jump in and need me if I misspeak, if I miss speak on anything, they can work. Um, they can communicate through Georgia Power Network, which is already established, um, and working. And this is probably if we do decide to go with those new mediums, I think the census, um. I mean, we've got to go on that backbone. This is probably going to be the most cost-efficient way is to jump on that backbone and go from there. And we can work with Georgia Power on this cost, um, multiple ways. Um, I don't I don't see it impacting us because once the meters start working, they will provide the correct revenue. And so that money will be there. So that's just us, you know, getting the meters. It's not it's not this doesn't show all the new meters. We got to buy it. Just showing the annual cost of the meters. Once they're working on that network the next cost 168,000. That would be a way for us to build its own network. Um, that would be meters, backbone, you know, everything included. Um, this price actually went up since we since I just put these slides together today. Uh, this is I got to get back in. I'm kind of looking at again because of inflation, it's probably more near 180, 200,000. Now the next cost is 350 K. And that's the bill a total um, platform. And this is like kind of bells and whistles with the smart points. I'm not an expert on smart points. Um, so, um, it's another form of data transmission. But, you know, uh, I was informed today. This cost is, I think, around now, \$500,000, if I'm not mistaken. So it has jumped over the last year as well. Of course, he never was going to go down that road. Um, because it was just too expensive. Um, it might be something long term to look at because this probably will be the ultimate solution, um, to fix everything. But you recognize right now we don't we don't have the cost. And then that 94,000, that was just that was the initial quote. If we got their meters and that would be the installation cost. I think now we're working with ESG to do the if the commission decides to take, you know, to follow the pilot recommendations and take those meters, uh, I think we're going to have ESG do it for us. That might be a cost saving, but if not, it will be that 94,000 for installation and then that \$30,000 annual. Um, but so far, the palette has worked great. It's really, you know, kind of I'm excited because it's been a thorn in my side since, I've been here. And, um, uh, constantly talking about failures and bills and stuff like that. So, um, I think these costs. Um, regardless, regardless of what it ends up being, it's just going to, you know, make things a lot better. That's all I can say at that level. So I present to you today because I want you to kind of be aware of that. When we come back, once the pilot is complete, I'm going to come back with the actual inflated, not inflated the numbers with inflation and time. So they will probably be a little bit more. And then we'll, um, then be requesting what decision the commission wants to go on, and you'll get an information paper on this that's kind of breaking down. Um, what that hundred and 68 K really is the

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parts and the labor transmitters, all those things. You'll get that here, um, through email. But I want you to go ahead and present it today. Um, so you kind of get to kind of give you a gauge of where we are right now with the meter mitigation, and I'll stop there. I know I said a lot on this. There are any questions, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR: I don't have a question. I look to the commissioner. District one. Do you have a question? No, sir. District two. No, sir. District five. Yes, sir. Mr. mayor.

NELSON: So, option A, the annual cost, it would be to us.

CITY MANAGER: We would pay Georgia Power.

NELSON: Pay Georgia. Power?

CITY MANAGER: Yes.

NELSON: To piggyback off of there.

CITY MANAGER: Yes, sir. Off the network? Yeah.

NELSON: So that 168 K would not be involved in that.

CITY MANAGER: Now we'll be trying to create our own network. Okay. But I just honestly, I just I don't know, we got the bandwidth to do that. Um, when we initially talked about this, you know, it was just in discussion. Um, and part of that would be the census kind of building us some additional cost to. I want to get away from that as much as possible. I want to get whatever we can as we're building. Stick with that. So I know I know Georgia Power Network works and hopefully, um, FC Infomart can put, um, The meeting is on the ground floor and save us some money. And like I say, this problem should be resolved at that point. And then, like I said, the money will be there because we'll get the real readings from the meters. And while I'm on that commission, I will say this. I know when we when we presented this last week, not last week, last month and over Facebook and some meetings. So, um, when the meetings start working, we're not going to hit anybody. Just bam, here you go. Pay all that stuff right there. We work with all customers. Um, they should be getting a letter here next month. Just telling them where they are right now. If the meter is not working or if it's a flat rate or pro rate, whatever it is, they should get a letter pretty soon to know that when the meters do start working, you know, um, in a lot of cases, uh, because we kind of prorated from the last known usage, it shouldn't be that big of an adjustment. Now, in some cases. Oh, yeah, it's going to be you know, you've been getting charged for 100 gallons every month, but you've been using 1000. So, um, but like I said, we put out the videos Use the county, inform citizens how to kind of cut back on that stuff. Um, and I missed this before on my, um, last update. You know, just a 15-minute running shower. I think we kind of figured out that's 282 gallons of water. So there's just some things that people can just stop doing, uh, to lower their water usage. Um, and then we'll come back. We know the summer is coming up, so irrigation meetings, all that stuff. That'll be all in the discussion as well. Okay.

NELSON: Thank you.

SPEAKER 3: Commissioner Bennett has a question.

BENNETT: Can you just tell me exactly? We'll remind you. Where would this cost come from?

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CITY MANAGER: Which cost.

BENNETT: For the meter plot.

CITY MANAGER: Uh, it will come out of the water utilities fund. Okay. Yeah. So, um, and, like, right now, you know, we just reached, uh, last month, we broke even. So, um, with the water because we've been in the red, um, the whole year. Pretty much. So, uh, I don't know, it's probably. It's the first time we broke even this early, you know. Greg. Thank you, sir. Yeah. Okay. Normally, we don't break even until June, so it's been a good thing. We kind of broke even earlier, but it'll come out of the water utility funds. And like I said, once the media start reading properly that revenue, it will be increased because we'll be getting the right readings. So thank you.

BENNETT: Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: All right. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor. The tap installation. Um, that fee is \$500, but I want to paint a bigger picture. Um, as many commissioners know, we get calls on this all the time.

And historically. Historically, mismanagement has, uh, you know, whoever we're building houses, um, through Waycross for the years. Um, they put a lot of homes on the same lines. We're dealing with this. Been dealing with this. This is the next problem that we got to really solve. And we recognize a lot of our citizens on fixed income, Social security, all those things. And we've been trying our best to do the work for them, but we can't continue to do that. Um, just because the policy and the labor, you know, it's getting to be too much. So, uh, like I said, right now, it's 500. I have, in certain cases, um, made concessions to do that for half the half the work. But that's in special cases where it's less stuff to do. Um, but I'm bringing it to the commission now because I want to make sure everybody time and space, uh, knows what's going on, because we've got to we've got to figure this out. Um, I know it's, uh, no fault to those homeowners that they bought homes or lived in homes where, you know, you got, I think in one case, eight homes tied to the same line, and then one home gets messed up. All the homes messed up. Wow. Um, like I say, I can't speak on the past. It's unfortunate. Those people were allowed to come in and build that way. Um, but I do read the commission and the citizens to understand, like, that's a big out-of-pocket expense for us to keep on moving. Taps and lines and drains and everything. And, um, I appreciate all our team with, um, info mark and ESG because they, they take a hit too by doing that. Um, a lot of times for free. But we have got to come to some type of resolution because it's going to be really expensive. I don't know what it is right now. Um, but I do want to bring it to the commission because you're going to get calls because I'm not going to I cannot back up from this \$500 anymore. It's got to be \$500. Um, that's the that's the cover. Just the parts, I think. Not necessarily the labor. So we're already taking another hit by just doing that. But like I say, historically with just a lot of bad insulation, there's a lot of bad insulation. We find that out right now. Um, during the budget discussions, you're going to you're going to hear us talk about that, about just picking an area and just start placing all that stuff. And hopefully the next 20 or 30 years, we figure all that out. Um, I won't be here, but we'll start that process and the citizens to hear that too. I know it's not what anybody wants to hear, but it's just it's the reality that we live in. And, um, we'll just start and try to fix what we know. Um, the areas we know about. Um, we all know the older districts. So is that like that? We will be picking a particular district, but some areas have been here a lot longer than other areas. So naturally we'll probably start there and just go from there. And with that, Mr. Mayor, I will just pause for any questions on the meter pilot and the tap situation.

MAYOR: Just how are we planning to rectify or make some corrections or accommodations for those places that have had misdirected lines? For instance, you said eight families on one line. How are we doing something differently now? We have to go in and do some things. What did we do?

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CITY MANAGER: Yeah, we're trying to like I said, we go in, and we do you know, we try to mitigate as best we can, but it's got to cost with it. And like the easiest thing to do is just to move, to move the taps to another location. Like I said, that's still \$500, you know, and most of us don't want to pay that, you know, or can't pay that in some situations. So, um, but, you know, we do a lot of, you know, a lot of other things. Like I said before, we got to be careful about going on private property. Um, that's one thing. Um, we got to stop doing as well. Um, many of these citizens don't want to pay for plumbers. Some of that plumbers could fix to probably a higher cost. But we just got to have the conversation. Um, you know, you can't just not do stuff for years. And like I said, no fault to nobody. Somebody built those homes the way they built them. And, um, we're trying to like I said, uh, the team does a great job doing what they can do, but it is it's getting really costly right now, and I don't know. I don't know how long we can keep doing that. So, um.

SPEAKER 5: And nobody's really taught. You want to speak on that? I covered that, right.

SPEAKER 9: I think so. I think the only thing I would add is that, um, there's two kinds of really two things we're talking about. It's an initial tap fee for new construction on a house is some things that we need to make sure that we're the city is not having to they're not losing money on a new water or sewer tap. And so that's something that we need to revisit every couple of years to make sure that the price that we're charging is actually covering the city's cost. And then I think the situation that Mr.

Rayford is talking about is some older lines in older neighborhoods where maybe there's lines that have gotten built on top of and just special situations and those in those cases, we just kind of have to attack it on a case-by-case basis and do the best we can. Um, as far as figuring out a solution, there's not a one size fits all type of solution that we can employ here. So we just kind of try to do the best we can on those type of situations.

CITY MANAGER: I didn't mention Mr. Lake because he has not yet got hit in the head with all this, but it's coming. So I mean, he can speak on it as well as he gets out there and tries to. He's doing a great job getting out there in front of me and other, you know, and trying to rectify these issues. So, uh, Tyler just mentioned fees, so I'm going to jump right into it. Um, the next, um, discussion item is going to be charter fee increases. And it's mainly for our business licenses and fines and fees associated with business licenses. So, uh, what's the what's behind this? We're going to update the charter to better align with inflation and increase city expenses. I'll go to the next slide. Um, um, the deadline for business licenses is April 1st. That's coming up. As I mentioned before, upon my arrival, um, I think we were like 30, 33% on business licenses. And then Miss Powell did a inhuman effort of getting all this corporate, all those business licenses. Amazing. if they do, I don't know where we are right now. I know we're close to maybe 80 or 90. I mean, we're close to where we want to be, but that's a lot of work trying to get information out to everybody and try to hold people accountable, because a lot of people don't want to be accountable. And we understand sometimes the reason behind it. Um, we are trying to better define this process as better license. And I'll go ahead and state that the goal is, uh, with this new software coming in, hopefully in the year, they'll be able to take a debit card and just go in there on the computer, log in and hit pay, and they'll get a business license in the mail. That's the goal. Um, I think we're close to doing that as well. But right now we got a lot of paper back and forth, back and forth, trying to get people accountable. And some people don't want to pay because they never paid before. And that's another whole story. But, uh, at first, the deadline. And as you remember, Mr. Mayor, when I first got here, I did request to give the benefit of the doubt. So I did say that the second year this would be coming, um, because we knew we were kind of weak in that area. So let us go out April 3rd for noncompliance. And then immediately following that week after that letter, if they don't respond, they will be asked on that. They will not be asked. They will be checked their operations. Um, so it's been two years of communication to business owners about this. Uh, and those listening right now, if you still don't understand or have questions about this, please come in right now. So we can have this conversation because the goal is not to close anybody down.

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But we can't have people go for 30 years and not pay any taxes in any sort. And then we got another business over here putting all in. So it's just about fairness. So um, also with that, with the business licenses, uh, alcohol licenses, all those things, I'm going to go to the next slide. I know people are looking at where it says, uh, increases or associated fees, and you can't see this right now, Mr. Mayor, but if you look at the those that can't see it, it's watching right now, and we'll come back and make sure we make this bigger for everybody. But Waycross again has historically not adjusted to Ta fees. Um, and what Miss Powell team has done is kind of went back and looked at other cities of same scale, size and scope. Some cities are much smaller than us and they got, you know, higher fees. And, um, we are the lowest, lowest fees pretty much in, um, southeast Georgia. Um, when it comes to business license, alcohol license, things of that nature. So, um, and this is an area again that, um, if, if nobody, if everybody wants super low taxes and all those things and they got to understand that means you have.

CITY MANAGER: Not services decreased services decrease, increase, increase all those things. It's they're connected. You can't have one and not have the other. So um, like I said, we're historically low compared to everybody else. You can see some of these other cities, how much they charge for alcohol licenses. Beer and wine. Packaged stuff. Um. You know what? When the team pulled this up, I already knew it. We were way behind. Um, so I'm a little frustrated because, like, I don't know how we. I don't know how we how we stay here for so long, but. And once again, I'm not trying to throw stones at any previous commission. I'm sure it was a reason behind all this stuff, but, uh, we got to we got to start doing stuff the right way. Uh, some other cities just looking at their stuff.

CITY MANAGER: And I'll talk about this on my live stream Thursday. And also, uh, Director Simmons and the city clerk going to do. Uh, they're going to do a meeting for business license owners. I think we're starting next week. I'm not sure, but they'll bring in any business. Owner was the first meeting will be December 2nd, and they're going to talk about the program because like I said, we're trying to get in the next year. Got stuff tied to the new IT system and, you know, really cut down on all the paperwork and bureaucracy that we have. And then taking the ideas of business owners about how to make things better, not just with the license process, but everything else. So code being there as well. So just want everybody to kind of see that, um, yeah, we're way behind everybody else. So we'll start there and I'll pause there, um, for any questions on those. So ultimately when we come to the finance update, the budget update, this will all be an update, um, for the recommended increases. And it'll be based off of just looking at all the other cities, some same size, some big, some smaller.

MAYOR: I was I was in Baxley. Brunswick, Douglas, Kingston, different groups like that. But also notice here you made mention of the new system coming in. Yes. And are we going to have accessibility to be able to have those persons who are getting their licenses. Can they do it through that at this point or.

CITY MANAGER: Not at this point, Mr. Mayor, um, and I'm going to have, uh, Director Simmons do an update at the next meeting on the software, and, um, Mr. Smith will do a tag team briefing, and we will have a lot of capabilities. I'm not sure when that will pop in there. Um, but it is scheduled to get in there, and we still got to fine tune because we still got paperwork, we got to get rid of, um, how to work better with the other, um, entities that determine business license, health department, all those things, because we're disconnected right now. That's the other problem. You know, we don't talk enough with the other agencies that help us determine business license. So but the goal is to streamline all that and make it digital. And like I said, um, it should be in one place for the customer. Hopefully by the end of this year. Well, no later than next March. But I'm being conservative on that. But we'll still be aggressive to make it happen. So it could be soon. Any other questions, Mr. Mayor, on that charter to change. And it's a charter change because we have to go in the charter and change

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the fees and fines and requirements associated with all those different types of licenses in the charter. So three.

MAYOR: I will look to the voters here looking at the district one. Did you have any questions or comments regarding this? No, sir, district two, no and district five.

NELSON: Yes, sir. I would need to say that we need to move forward as quickly as possible. Because I do know there are some businesses that are here that that have not paid like 3 or 4 years. Yeah.

CITY MANAGER: That's a long day. But yeah, like I say, I'm Mrs. Powell team has done a and Marquis who is not here, Mr. Nixon. But they have done a great job of getting out here walking around. I feel like we've educated everybody enough about this and the importance of having a business license and where that money goes. Like I say, it's not like there's a lot coming in and doing nothing else, but it is important, you know, and if somebody gets behind this. Well, to protect citizens, you know when they come to their establishments. So yeah, if anybody again, those watching right now, if you have questions, please contact the city clerk immediately. Um, if you if you think for whatever reason you don't have to pay. I know there was some discussion about, um, some people grandfathered or none of that's true. Um, nobody is exempt from paying for it. If you got a business, you got to pay for business. Um, so. Yeah. But, uh, any other questions? Mr. mayor?

MAYOR: Sometimes the words that come forth just. They're interesting. Grandfathered in to not being able to pay for it.

CITY MANAGER: I think I think it was the handshake deal for many years ago. Yeah. And in those situations, Mr. Mayor, I did talk. Yeah, I did talk to the business owners to explain to them. I could not honor that any longer. I mean, so I mean, yeah, they got to understand. I mean, you know, once again, we got we got a lot of business, a lot of business owners who've been paying on time. Um, through all the frustration they've been they've been on time. They've been doing the right thing. So everybody should kind of follow suit with that. Those who have not been on time or paid. Any other questions, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR: No sir.

CITY MANAGER: Okay. Next, Mr. mayor, we're going to move into, uh, the leash laws, and I wanted to police to be here. Um, but he has a different engagement. Um, and right now, I just want to inform citizens and address these concerns that we do have right now, because it's going to be a reaction to all this here next week. So we've had a huge uptick in dog and cat bites. And this is not stray animals. These are people that allow their pets to run outside unattended without following our leash laws. I didn't want to put the whole leash, um, ordinance on here. You can find it in our code book and the charter if you want to reference it. Um, anybody want to reference that. Um, it discusses what a leash is. Uh, what it is not. Uh, it discusses what containment is and what containment is not. Uh, your front yard does not have a fence. Does not mean your animal is contained. Um, and I'm bringing this up now. Um, as you know, the parks start tomorrow. Um, start the, um, construction pre-construction. And, you know, by the summer, we're going to have a lot of kids out here running around. And, you know, I understand somebody's going to say, well, what about strays? I got that, but right now I'm talking about the other pets that live in homes. Um, many of our apartment complexes. You're not supposed to have animals. They got animals, and they let them run out, you know, unattended. And like I said, it's, um, this is the most I've had in my two years. I can, you know, we've been tracking this, and we really, really, really need citizens help on this. Um, I know everybody thinks they're an animal or their pets, not biters. Um, but, you know, even the small dogs do bite. And the cats we keep getting tickets. They're probably the worst right now.

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CITY MANAGER: Well, I must be honest with you. I'm not trying to, because we allow cats to walk around. Um, although if you look in the leash law, cats supposed to have a leash as well. And, um. Yeah. So I got to say this. It's, um, it's pulling the police away from their work, too. Yes, sir. So they have to come. They have to come each and every time that we have identified dog bite, do a report. It's a lot behind this. You know, as long as we just keep the dog on a leash. You know when I'm. When we're fighting for every penny and every hour. Um, especially police and the fire department in some degree. Um, can't keep it forward because you won't let your dog run around. You know, um, that that includes the parks as well. So we have dog trails. I need to say this. Um, I probably our code is not going to speak to how dog a dog runs. We're going to call it works. But even then, you're supposed to have a leash on you on your pet. You can't let the dog just run in there with other dogs you know. It is not the city's responsibility to come over there and break up animal fights in those areas, you know, and we are just we're getting calls every day now about that. So I just I'm bringing to the commission, but I mainly want to bring to the citizens. We got to get we got to get some help on this. You got to us all got to do better. So, um, I think somebody made a comment, Mr. Mayor, but, um, they can't make comments right now, so. But I will address the comment after the meeting. Um, okay. So don't leave. Ma'am. Um, after the meeting, we can talk. Any questions on this? Mr. mayor.

MAYOR: I don't have one, but I'm sure the citizen does. And they will talk to you.

CITY MANAGER: Okay. Yeah. And once again, it's not this is a business case. I hate to say it that way. We don't have the money to be doing this. You know, when people can simply put the animals on leash.

BENNETT: Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Mr. Bennett wants.

BENNETT: Okay, so if they have a doghouse and they have the dog tied to the tree and the dog is able to get water, food and go into the doghouse, would that be a problem?

CITY MANAGER: You must have a fence.

BENNETT: Okay. I'm just asking if I could hear.

CITY MANAGER: Or structure something because and really, I'm looking at what it says about what? Leashes and rope are not a leash. I got to say that a piece of wire is not a leash. Um, a belt is not a leash. Correct, correct. That metal thing that. I don't know what it is. That's not a leash. You know, and it's dangerous for the animal as well. Um, that's probably why a lot of animals are aggressive. And I'm not a I'm not a pet. I mean, I'm a dog, but I, you know, that's, you know, that's probably why they're so aggressive with the way they're being treated on their leashes. So ideally, citizens, you know, you want to have a fence. I'm not sure why we continue to put dogs on front porches. And, you know, even then it's a danger of hanging on and off a porch, and especially if you get five steps. You know, we had a dog get home recently, so, uh, need to have a improvised fence or area in between the right of way. Your property. Um, it's all in the code. I didn't want to. It's long and it jumps around a little bit. But at the end of the day, what you're asking about is the right thing. Yes, Commissioner.

BENNETT: One more thing. You know, most people. Some people have an in-ground electrical cable. Um, that way the dog tries to get out the yard, get, like, a little electrical shock to him. It won't hurt him. So some people have that.

CITY MANAGER: Yeah, I got you know what great point. I didn't know. I didn't read that. Maybe electronic cause is in the charter and walk down here to validate that. But we'll go back and look at

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that. That might be in there too. Uh, that makes sense. But even then, if you're not by the, the, the charger and your dog's running around, you know, he might by that time, by the time you know what's going on. So but I do recognize the electrical stuff too. Any further questions on that subject?

BENNETT: No, sir. Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: Okay. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor. Uh, about two months ago, I did present a grant writing to the commission body, and it did drop off. So I'm presenting it again. But really, because of just the update, I want to ask for guidance, um, on the next course of action. Um, of course, we know we need more access to funding. We I think we recognize that, um, so far, we get most of our grants from GMA. Um, Southern Region Commission, our engineering firm, and then the police and the fire set programs tied to DNA, and then federal state programs that get grants as well. Um, but in all these situations, we are in competition with other cities and counties for the most part. Um, and so far, this is kind of it's scripted, but the ten grants in the last past two years, I'm talking about new grants, not necessarily the revolving grants that we get CBDG all those things. This is new grants. So this is not it has not been my goal yet. You know, getting 25, 30, 35g a year. We are looking at, um, trying to figure out the salary for a grant person, but, uh, what I'm going to ask tonight for the commission. Can I go ahead? And I know it's me. Can I ask that by negotiations? Can you ask that in the mean without really. I guess we could.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Yeah.

CITY MANAGER: You can. Yeah. That firm I want to go ahead and negotiate the contract. And I would like to start that, um, today. And then I come back to the, to the commission tomorrow. I mean, I can start tonight, and we can come back in session tomorrow and discuss the terms, if we could. Um, I've been sitting down analyzing this like GMA is a great partner, you know, some great partner in

engineering firm and great partner, but we just can't keep up with the grants that we keep missing out on. And I do feel like, um, y'all got the presentation. if they if they're going to pay their salary out of that, those grants, they added, I just got to see the nature of the whole contract. Well.

MAYOR: If you want a show of hands of the consent to go forward tonight, I can do that now. The commission if you if you're in agreement if you raise your right hand. Not that you're going to do. I'm not doing a okay. But just if you're in agreement with him going forward tonight, you can just raise your right hand to agree.

MAYOR: Okay. Okay. We have all three consents for our purposes. We have to have that in the minutes.

CITY MANAGER: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR: Issues one, two and five have agreed to go forward and negotiations.

CITY MANAGER: Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, we have the ethics update, and I'm going to say a few things, and then we'll turn it over to the city attorney. Um, and this is based off of the current case, and we have submitted everything to the court, and, um, we have got some feedback. And I want to turn this over to the city attorney for his remarks on that.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Mr. Mayor and commissioners, as of last Monday, I think it was February the 24th. Uh, I've worked with the city clerk and the assistant clerk, and we have, uh, transferred the Nelson Felder case to city court, uh, which was the order of this commission that you accept the recommendation of the Board of Ethics to transfer the case to city court for prosecution. And we have put together this large binder, which is the entire case, uh, very well organized with all of the exhibits,

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uh, orders, uh, exhibit tabs for anybody looking at this can find whatever document they're looking for. Uh, so that has been completed. Uh, the case has been filed in the city court has the case number of the solicitor received the binder of each of each of the parties. Attorneys received a binder. We had six binders. The city has a binder. I have a binder. Now, after filing the case in the city court, we have received calls from the solicitor and from the judge declaring a conflict because they are appointed by the city. Judge Gibson is appointed annually every year by the city and Mr. Joseph Johnson, the solicitor, is also appointed and we'll be talking about him next, I guess. But, uh, his he has an annual contract with automatic three-year renewals. But the point is that he's appointed, and he has a conflict as well. And so what they're trying to figure out is what procedures they're going to follow to have someone take over as And solicitor for purposes of this case. And what judge will take over in place of Judge Gibson? The state court and the Superior Court have very clearly defined conflict rules, but the city court unfortunately does not have clearly defined conflict rules. But the lawyers Code of ethics clearly state that if you have a conflict, then you have to get someone else to take your place. If you are a judge or if you are an attorney. So that is what is taking place right now at city court. And when that happens, then, you know, we'll know who the next judge is. And that judge will, um, appoint someone in place of the current solicitor to, to pursue the case.

MAYOR: So what do we do in the meantime?

HUEY SPEARMAN: Well, this commission doesn't have to do anything because you did what you were required to do. You passed an order that the case be transferred to the city court. So it is in the hands of the city court now. And I was just explaining to you what their initial conflict is, and they have to resolve that, and they will resolve it one way or the other.

MAYOR: And so we don't have a deadline or anything on that. No, we won't.

HUEY SPEARMAN: No, no, you don't have a deadline.

MAYOR: It's in their care and they'll be the ones to make the decision.

HUEY SPEARMAN: That is correct.

MAYOR: There will be nothing that the city can do. Neither can we push it to become anything. Because we've done all our part.

HUEY SPEARMAN: That is correct. That is correct.

MAYOR: All right. Just the whole conversation here is because there are people who are asking questions of us, and we want to make sure we say that it's not in our jurisdiction now. It's in the hands of the city court. And they'll make the moves from this point on.

HUEY SPEARMAN: That is correct. And you said it correctly. It's not within your jurisdiction. It is within the jurisdiction of the city court now. Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: Well, thank you, Mr. City Attorney. Uh, next, Mr. City attorney alluded to, uh, we'll be talking about, uh, appointing, uh, Mr. Johnson, uh, court prosecutor, and that's just his annual three-year contract. So I think we got a resolution for that. Should be on the agenda for tomorrow. Um, do you have any questions on that, Mr. Mayor?

MAYOR: I don't, but do you need a consent tonight in order for that to come on tomorrow? Well, we do. So, district one, what we're looking at. And if you don't mind, I'll let you explain even deeper,

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because I know you're right. Tell me what you mean. So I want you to tell him what we're saying so that when he makes his decision, it'd be based upon information he's received from you.

CITY MANAGER: I'm going to defer to the city attorney on that because he works with Mr. Johnson directly.

HUEY SPEARMAN: All right, well, Mr. Johnson has had a three-year contract with the city of Waycross back in 2021. His contract is actually from year to year with three annual renewals, so it ran from January of 2021 until December 31st, 2021, and then it renewed automatically for three years and expires at December 31st, 2024. And as a result of transferring this case over there and reviewing his contract, we discovered that his contract had expired. Now his appointment has not expired, but his contract has expired, and he is still the solicitor until such time as he is terminated by resolution of the city commission. And that's what the code provides. So he's still working as a solicitor just so he doesn't have a contract? Um, because it expired December 31st. So what the manager is asking you is to put on the agenda a renewal of his contract. It would be the same identical contract that he had in 2021. No changes to the budget. His compensation would be exactly the same as it was three years ago. The only difference is that it will be updated to reflect a beginning date of January 1st, 2025, retroactively going forward for another year with three more successive renewals.

MAYOR: Thank you for giving us such a succinct and carefully prepared statement. Listen, I wanted to make sure that everyone knows what's going on. We've already done the appointment back in January when all the whole team was here. So all five of us agreed. When we did the list of persons, including Judge Gibson and I believe the solicitor, well, we did not do the contract. So the contract is totally different.

HUEY SPEARMAN: The solicitor was not on that list. He was not on the list, but he was appointed by this commission by resolution in 2021. Starting in 2021. And that resolution follows the code which says that his contract automatically renews every January 1st. But instead of it just being a one-year contract back then, you gave them a three-year contract and that's what has expired. But he still remains solicitor until such time as he's terminated. But he doesn't have a contract now. And so it was probably an oversight. It was an oversight, you know, not to put him on the list back in January.

MAYOR: Okay. So I remember who was on that. Yeah, I got you. All right. So district one, you will put him on tomorrow. Yes, sir. District two. Yes, sir. And district five, Yes, sir. We're all in agreement.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Next. Mr. Mayor, we're going to move on to a presentation by Michael Lust for the National Wildlife Refuge. Okay. He's right here, sir.

MICHAEL LUST: All right. Thank you. Good evening, Mr. Mayor. City council members. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Michael Lusk, and I manage the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. And I just ask for a few minutes of your time tonight to let you know what's going on with our bid to become the United States next World Heritage Site. That's even though the designation is for the National Wildlife Refuge. That, of course, lies in where? Clinch and Charlton County. It wouldn't have been possible. We couldn't have done this without the Okefenokee Swamp Park. Doctor William Clark and Kim Bednarek and their incredible help and partnership. But I wanted to let you know. And I'm going to leave a copy of this with the city manager. This is our nomination document. As you can see, it's like a coffee book. And it's had, um, some of the cooperation we've had in producing it. We've had the world's leading expert on peatlands from a university in Germany. We've had one, a professor in biodiversity from the University of Florida, recognized as the leading expert in the southeastern United States, who helped write this. So it's a real, um, weighty document,

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if you will, and where it is now, just to let everybody know what's going on. This document has been forwarded to the to the United Nations through our State Department. And they have looked it over. And now the next step is for it to be evaluated by a group of experts. We're supposed to have a visit by 1 or 2 experts, probably sometime in the next month or two, just to make sure that the claims we're making in it are real and Invalid, and then if they accredit it and said yes, this is valid, then it will go to a full vote within the United Nations, uh, probably sometime in 2026. And that will then we'll see if we're inscribed as a World Heritage Site or not. But that's in a nutshell. I just wanted to let you know what was happening. And I'm going to leave this with the city manager so that you can look at it, but also wanted to answer any questions you might have as well. Okay.

MAYOR: I'll open the floor for questions. Commissioner. Commissioner. District two. District five.

NELSON: I'm excited.

MICHAEL LUST: Yeah. Me too.

NELSON: I read about it.

MICHAEL LUST: Yeah. Good.

MAYOR: It sounds like everybody's good.

MICHAEL LUST: All right. Thank you very much. And if any of you do ever have any questions from yourself or your constituents, please feel free to reach out to me. Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you. Sir. Uh, next, Mr. Mayor, we have, uh, Mr. Bridges come up and do an update on the Kettle Creek. Uh, update. This is one of our lift stations that need repair. Emergency repair.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Good evening commissioners. Thank you all for having me again tonight. Um, I'm going to stand in for Mr. Robert. Um, and this is actually one that that he's been working on, but our Kettle Creek lift station is out near out us one near, um, the jail and the airport out that way.

One of our larger lift stations. And we had a pump that is 28 years old go out. Not in the last, what, two weeks? Does that sound about right, Robert? Something like that. Um. And the pump is now 30 years old. So rather than send it off and have it have to have it rebuilt. Um, this thing is served its useful life and is just time to be replaced. And so we're asking the commissioner Commission for. Is it \$17,410 to replace. Is that. No, that's the repair. Oh, that's the repair. I'm sorry. We probably should have just come up here. 34. Does that sound more like it? Here we go. \$34,786.75 to replace that pump with the exact same pump that's in it now. So hopefully we can get another 30 years out of it. And I'll, I'll field any questions. Probably have to defer to Mr. Blake, but I'll do the best I can.

MAYOR: Commissioners, do you have any questions? District one. District two.

BENNETT: Um. Yes, sir. When do you plan on getting started and how long will it take?

CHARLIE BRIDGES: So this is we're not doing anything to the lift station itself. It's just pulling the old pump out and dropping a new pump in. Um, any idea on lead time for this product. Let me see if it's in here. The new one. Let's see. I don't see a lead time. Lead time is from the minute we ordered this pump. Lead time is how long it takes to show up on site. But when the pump shows up, it's less than a day to get the old one pulled and the new one put in.

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BENNETT: Okay.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Yeah. I do not have a lead time on here that I see anyway.

BENNETT: So you just need to all agree, right?

MAYOR: We need to agree upon the having purchased.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Yes, sir.

MAYOR: Commissioner Nelson, do you have any comments or any comments?

NELSON: So? So this pump supplies the water to the prison and the places around it?

CHARLIE BRIDGES: No, sir. This is lift station. This is wastewater. So this is getting wastewater from the prison back to the tree.

NELSON: Okay. Yeah, we need that.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Yes, sir. We do.

MAYOR: Commissioner Bennett wants to say something.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Okay. Yes, ma'am.

BENNETT: Where is this money going to come from?

CHARLIE BRIDGES: This money is coming from the water and sewer fund, I believe.

CITY MANAGER: Yes. And again, we just hit broke. Even. So, we had the resources for that.

MAYOR: We do have resources.

BENNETT: Okay.

MAYOR: Any further questions?

BENNETT: I think we're good.

MAYOR: Okay. So just for consent, I'll go down the list. District one. Yes. District two. Yes, sir. And district five. Yes, sir. You had a consent.

CHARLIE BRIDGES: Thank you.

CITY MANAGER: And, Mr. Mayor, for further clarification on. This is one of the many lift stations. Um, and as you will see in the budget process this year, we're going to try to get ahead of this and 30 years, punk. That means the other 16. They all have 30 years. Probably more than that as well. So we're going to try to look at the budget a little bit differently and try to go ahead and get these things ordered a little bit earlier. Everything is tied together. Like I said, all the revenue that we do get um, from raising the water rates if we, you know, do that and other things, uh, fixing the meters that give us that more capacity and flexibility to address these. And the goal is to get, you know, at least 10% of the, um, lift stations updated because they're all close to failing as well. Uh, additionally, and just briefly, we do have ways to provide wastewater in other ways to make that area work better, uh, with the county. Um, the last two years, that's been a no go. Uh, we'll be presenting that again to the

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county. That was that interconnection line we keep talking about. That would provide service. Both of us. Um, during that storm, when the storm happened, had that been there, everybody would have had water. So I don't want to be a dead horse with that, but we're trying to put that in place again as well.

MAYOR: So is this going to be a part of our service delivery strategy?

CITY MANAGER: Yes. And next, Mr. Mayor. This is my oversight. Um, I was supposed to get the resolution for the hiring of the Chief of Fire and the Chief of Public Works. Um, on resolution. And I did do correspondence with each commissioner. Um, again, um, for the chief of fire, we had we had four candidates, and unfortunately, many of them had not served in a previous position. That should have been the serve to be chief of fire. Well, two of them did. Two of them didn't. And then one had a I had some stuff going on and really, we didn't have any. I mean, Chief Blackburn was the choice anyway. Regardless, he was strong. He did strong, uh, interview. But, um, um, my apologies for not getting the information to you in a timely manner, which had its own last month's agenda. Uh, when we announced it, but we only had two people as well apply for the job, and I kept all these jobs out here for. I think we had them out here for at least 60 days plus. Um, and uh, of course Matt was already running public works very well. Um, still running. Well, the other candidate had not served and, uh, supervisor or chief position, so it really wasn't qualified, or I did interview. Good to see where it stood and might possibly offer that person another job within public works if he chooses. So. So, uh, but these are our two, um, new chiefs. Uh, I know I announced it at the meeting, but this is official because we have to do the resolution because the commission objects to the to the placement or the selection.

MAYOR: Okay. And do we need another consent?

CITY MANAGER: Yes.

MAYOR: Okay. District one. District two. Yes, sir. And district five Yes, sir.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Okay, Mr. Mayor. Next, we move into the rest of the agenda, we have no proof of license renewals. Um, we have no privilege licenses. We have no proposed ordinances. We're going to have two resolutions, actually. We're going to have actually have. three resolutions. We'll need a resolution for, uh, the Chief of Fire and Public Works, I think. Um, so we have another resolution for that. Um, and those resolutions are self-explanatory. I don't think we need to be asked that. And with that, I will turn it over to the city attorney for his report.

HUEY SPEARMAN: Actually, we'll have an ordinance for the increase in fees, uh, tomorrow. That's all I have.

MAYOR: Ordinance for increasing fees.

CITY MANAGER: Thank you. And, mayor, will that increase the fees on everything that we present now, as far as increases or deletions, in some cases, we're going to get rid of some fees. All that will not take effect to the next budget cycle. So we're trying to get it in now. And then next July 1st everything will impact. Then hopefully we all have been voting on all that stuff. We can get it out to the community, so they know those changes that probably going to take place. Um, from our city report, Mr. Mayor. Um, you all get this report every day. But just for those who might be watching. Um, just going to play it here from now on. Um, during both meetings, the working session and commission meeting so they can see what's going on in the city. Um, like I said, we post this every day, so everybody knows what we're doing. Um, definitely infrastructure, traffic, building maintenance, mowing, engineering and special parts of roads and streets. Um, and our water and sewer department, you can see we've been investing a lot of leaks. Um, I asked citizens like, um,

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please look at this. A lot of effort goes into putting it together for you. And a lot of times people make comments and concerns, and they have the information right here for them. Um, every day. So once again, please subscribe to our Facebook page because this is the first place that's going to be posted. And it's posted right now, so I won't stay too long on this. Um, go to the next one. This is the paving project right now. Continue to go on. This is the Splash money, uh, 2023 and 2014 for the dirt roads. And we're still building out the streets for the dirt roads. And you can see where we are on the paving list. Um, so right now we've got three of the streets complete. We're still doing the rest of them. And then once the tier comes in, we'll start those streets. So we I think we have like, eight more streets to get paved, and then we have some money coming in for two more streets, I believe. So, um, I did do a post. You're going to have a lot of construction going on. Um, especially when they start the bypass. So we're trying to get ahead of that and put out alternate routes for all of this. Uh, again, I encourage citizens to look at that stuff. Um, so you will go ahead and plan accordingly. Um, I know the question to ask why we're doing everything at the same time. It will be double the money to do it separately. And I just asked everybody to understand that we're really trying to conserve the other money. I mean, it can only go so far. So yes, it's inconvenience, but it's a needed inconvenience. Uh, definitely with the, the bypasses. And I need to get with the county manager on that schedule. Um, uh, when they're going to put that schedule because they're kind of leading that. So once they put that out, we'll put it out as well. But this is where we are as far as what we got, uh, direct control over. And then, of course, I want to explain this, Mister mayor. Somebody made a, uh, an online comment. So this all reflects the month. Although it's there every day, it only reflects the month. And we cannot, uh, adjudicate everyday spending like it's been possible. So once we enter the month and we, you know, then we update this. So it's not somebody made a comment. So yes, it's the same thing. But in the month, it does change. Does it change exactly at the end of the month. No, it might be a couple days later, but it's month to month. So I hope everybody can understand that. And once again, these are all our major accounts that we, you know, pay our bills, and execute our operational duties with. And you can see how that works.

BENNETT: Mr. Mayor, can I ask a question?

MAYOR: Yes. Go ahead.

BENNETT: Okay. I want to know. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Who actually puts all this together? The daily reports.

CITY MANAGER: Well, it's a team effort. Of course, it comes from the business integration director. That would be Director Simmons. But the finance team puts this report together. And of course, you all get every two weeks they put all this together. Um, and then the engineer will go back. The engineering department and public works provide this information. And then we combine everything together. So a lot goes into this. Like I say, I encourage citizens and I ask citizens, you know, just to ensure we all got the same understanding to really look at this stuff because, um, this is the information, this is the correct information. So when you throw stuff out there and it's incorrect. You know, it just causes chaos for everybody. So this way everybody understands. Now, one thing I don't here, I will address this now, Mr. Mayor, about the railroad. I cannot manage the railroad. I will say that we are thankful that they are there, doing their part on the schedule to get, um, the time increase from what they were doing and just for the general population to know, um, it was cheaper for them to do what they did as far as the timeliness versus bringing a whole other crew out there. Um, next week they do another spot. And once again, I hope citizens understand, like, you know, the budget process, why things are done the way they're done and know we could do we could do it the other way and be less of a inconvenience, but it would cost a lot more money. So I hope you understand that. Um, but like I said, we're working with them more closely right now. They do have some other stuff planned as far as some of the other crossings. So the goal was to do all the crossings and Red cross, and I'm very thankful that they recognized the importance of doing that. Um, making

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those crossings safer for our citizens. And then eventually, once the bypasses are put in place, I think that will lessen the stress that we have as far as the transit. And I know that's a couple of years away from completion, but it is real. It is coming. So. And I'll pause there for any questions on my report. Mr. mayor.

MAYOR: Any questions of our city manager?

CITY MANAGER: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, Mr. Mayor, we do have executive session. It will be for property and personnel.

MAYOR: So, I'll entertain a motion for going into executive session for property and personnel. So, Mr. Mayor, you have a motion from Commissioner Nelson. Is there a second? Yes, sir. I'll second that. We have a second from Commissioner Roberts. All in favor? Aye. All opposed. Motion carries. Thank you.