



CITY OF THOMSON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 14, 2021

6:30PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Scott Whittle, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Lucretia Ferguson, City Clerk
Mike Stewart, Interim City Admin.
Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney

Also Present:

Acting Chief E J Bess, TPD
Kelly S. Evans, East Ga. Public Housing
Chase Beggs, Planning & Zoning
Lewis Boykin, Convention & Visitors
Elizabeth Vance, Convention & Visitors
Bonnie McCorkle, Convention & Visitors
Nora Douglas
Nathaniel Usry
Wayne Parham, McDuffie Progress

Present By Phone:

Elaine Johnson, Councilmember
Keryl Corley, Councilmember

At 6:31pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order and gave the invocation, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag.

CITIZEN COMMENT:

There was no Citizen Comment

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The motion was made by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember Scott Whittle to approve the agenda as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Work Session, 12/07/2020. A motion was made by Councilmember Scott Whittle and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 was taken to approve them.
- b. Public Hearing, 12/10/2020. A motion was made by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Scott Whittle to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 was taken to approve them.
- c. Council Meeting, 12/10/2020. A motion was made by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 was taken to approve them.
- d. Called Council Meeting, 12/29/2020. A motion was made by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Alton Belton to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 was taken to approve them.

BUSINESS:

- a. Representatives of the Convention and Visitors Bureau presented the elected officials with swag bags in appreciation of their hard work this year on the behalf of and support of the Bureau. COVID restrictions prevented the Bureau from having their annual dinner this year.
- b. The Crab & Hibachi House located at 191 W. Hendricks Street has applied for a Beer and Wine License. They have met all criteria and paid all necessary fees. A motion to approve the license was made by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember Scott Whittle, Councilmember John Smalley abstained for religious reasons and the motion passed by a 4-0 vote.
- c. The City has an extensive RFP for Solid Waste Services out for bid. As Don Toms is no longer employed by the City, Interim City Administrator Stewart recommends hiring a consultant to advise the City on the process. He spoke of Billy Edwards from Hinesville as a good candidate for our consultant. A motion was made by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Scott Whittle to approve hiring the temporary consultant. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.
- d. ICA Mike Stewart addressed the need for assistance in hiring a new Police Chief. The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police has a program to help municipalities maneuver the process more smoothly. They assist in the job description, review applications with the City and after the City narrows down the field, they physically and mentally test and do all background checks. A motion for contracting with the Association was made by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Alton Belton. A vote of 5-0 approved the motion.
- e. Ordinance #571 was approved on August 13, 2020. The truck weight limit was erroneously written as 36,000 pounds, and should be 26,000 pounds. This is the first reading of the amendment.
- f. The slate of Budget Amendments for the end of the year was presented to the Council. A motion to approve the amendments as a whole was made by Councilmember Alton Belton and Councilmember John Smalley seconded. The motion was approved 5-0.
- g. The reappointment of Municipal Judge Robert E. Knox, Jr. and City Attorney Jimmy D. Plunkett was brought before the group. All are in favor of doing this. A motion for appointment was made by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember Elaine Johnson. A vote passed the motion, 5-0.
- h. East Georgia Housing Authority Executive Director Kelly Evans presented a Limited Access and Barring Policy. She would like for the City to agree to the Policy and allow the Police Department to enforce and serve the notices for the Housing Authority. Interim Chief E. J. Bess has agreed to this and City Attorney Jimmy Plunkett requested that the appropriate signage be placed at the Housing Authority. A motion was made by Councilmember Scott Whittle and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley to approve the City's agreement to and support of the Policy. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.
- i. Riley Stamey, as the joint City/County appointment to the Development Authority, has tendered his notice of resignation as a member and chairman. Mr. Stamey's recommendation for his replacement is Jamie Alfriend. Councilmember Alton Belton made the motion for the new appointment and was seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

- j. The City's policy of providing up to ten paid days of leave to employees who have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus expired on December 31, 2020. ICA Mike Stewart recommends extending this benefit through February 15, 2021. A motion in favor of this move was made by Councilmember Elaine Johnson and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. It was passed by a vote of 5-0.
- k. The application for Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) is due to GDOT. The city streets that need work have been listed. ATLAS Technical Consultants can take the list, grade the streets and apply an estimate of cost for each one. We would need to sign a contract for this work. Councilmember Scott Whittle voiced his concern about manholes not being brought up to grade with new paving. Mayor Usry said that this would have to be in the proposal for bids. Councilmember Scott Whittle made the motion to contract with ATLAS for the work and was seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Council: Councilmember Alton Belton would like to be signed up for the Cities United virtual conference. All councilmembers were reminded to turn in their yearly Financial Disclosure Statement.

City Administrator: Mike Stewart spoke of the projects to be bid out this spring, noting that they come to over \$12,000,000. He and Interim Chief Bess have been working on an inventory of equipment and cars. About ten cars need to be sold that have over 250,000 miles or are inoperable. There is an ongoing discussion of whether to lease or purchase replacement vehicles, using the money from the sale of those ten cars to help fully equip the new cars. He also brought up the need to get in a routine of replacing equipment.

Mayor: There may be a called meeting of the council on January 21st.

Having no other business, the motion was made at 7:17pm by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley to go into Executive Session for the purpose of Personnel discussion. A 5-0 vote passed the motion.

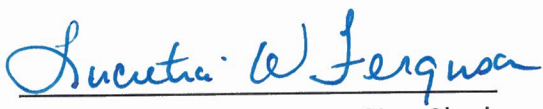
Executive Session:

Personnel Issue

After the discussion, a motion was made by Councilmember Keryl Corley and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley to return to regular session at 7:43pm.

A motion to adjourn was tendered by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. A vote of 5-0 ended the meeting at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk


Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor

