



CITY OF THOMSON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 2021

6:30PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

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

Absent:

Keryl Corley, Councilmember

Also Present:

Acting Chief E J Bess, TPD
Rodney Dunaway, Gas Dept. Director
Anna Dunaway
Ron Nickles, Maintenance Director
Pam Nickles
Chuck Cason, Public Works Director
Shanda Reese-Grant, HR Director
Toni Hutchinson, Utility Billing Super.
Lamar Fain, Waste Water Director
Kathy Usry
Mary Beth Waller
Nora Douglas
Mary Hill
TPD Officers Sanford & Knowles
Wayne Parham, McDuffie Progress

At 6:20pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order and asked Rodney Dunaway to give the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Work Session, 1/11/2021. The motion was made by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Scott Whittle to approve the minutes. A vote of 4-0 in favor was taken.
- b. Council Meeting, 1/14/2021. The motion was made by Councilmember Elaine Johnson and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley to approve the minutes. A vote of 4-0 in favor was taken.
- c. Called Meeting, 1/21/2021. The motion was made by Councilmember Scott Whittle and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley to approve the minutes. A vote of 4-0 in favor was taken.

BUSINESS:

- a. 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 second reading of the amendment. Councilmember Scott Whittle made the motion to approve the amendment and Councilmember John Smalley seconded. A vote of 4-0 to approve was taken.
- b. ICA John Waller spoke on the positive aspects of having all Utility components mapped with GIS format. The Thomson-McDuffie Water and Sewer Commission discussed this at their January 19, 2021 meeting. Their approved recommendation is Geo Spatial Technology Solutions of Evans, GA to handle the task. They have agreed to do this for the entire network of

water, gas and sewer at a cost not to exceed \$96,151.50. Councilmember Elaine Johnson made the motion to approve the recommended contract and was seconded by Councilmember Alton Belton. A vote of 4-0 passed the motion.

- c. Mr. Waller also reviewed the modification of GEFA Loan DW20170008 from which the Augusta Road Water Plant will be upgraded. The loan has been increased by \$122,900 to \$1,352,900. This amount is to cover any material pricing discrepancies and it is hoped that the increased amount will not have to be used. A motion to approve the increase and lower interest rate was made by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Elaine Johnson. A 4-0 vote to approve the measure was taken.
- d. For information purposes, GEFA Loan CW2020015 was discussed. The \$8,361,000 loan with an interest rate that dropped from 1.9% to 0.91% for Water Treatment Plant upgrades, must first be approved by the Thomson-McDuffie Water and Sewer Commission before coming to the Council for approval.
- e. Temporary appointment of the Historic Preservation Board members, consisting of Stephanie Ivery, Juanita Wheeler, Lee Anne Cowart, Tommy Goodyear, Anne Knox and Charlotte Derry, was discussed. A motion to appoint them all until a permanent board can be nominated and voted on was made by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Elaine Johnson. A vote of 4-0 to approve was taken.
- f. The Historic Preservation Board passed a recommendation to approve a garage structure at 524 Lumpkin Street, the home of Jared Wetzel, if their changes are applied to the siding, doors and roof pitch. The motion was made to approve the recommendation with the same stipulations by Councilmember John Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Alton Belton. A vote passed the motion 3-0. Councilmember Scott Whittle abstained as Mr. Wetzel had approached him previously about the project.
- g. The Thomson Police Department is in need of replacement vehicles. Their current budget has \$68,000 for this purpose. A fully outfitted police vehicle will run approximately \$48,000. After contacting several financial institutions, Regions Bank came in with the lowest interest, and if a loan not to exceed \$190,000 was taken for 36 months, the City could buy four cars and have them paid for in three years for the same budgeted amount each year. A motion to approve that loan of not more than \$190,000 for a term of three years was made by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember Elaine Johnson. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion.
- h. Development Authority member Bud Lunceford has reached the end of his term. A motion was made to replace him with Ron Shipman by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. An approval vote of 4-0 was recorded.

- i. For information only, the Thomson Police Department Chief's job description has been posted and advertised. Applications will be accepted until March 15, 2021.
- j. The Natural Gas Department has a budget of \$90,000 for a backhoe. A State Contract price of \$84,373 is available. The order will take two to three months to fill. A motion to place the order at the quoted price was made by Councilmember Scott Whittle and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. A vote of 4-0 to approve was taken.
- k. The City's policy of providing up to ten paid days of leave to employees who have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus is set to expire February 15, 2021. On the recommendation of ICA Waller, Mayor Usry asked that the Council extend this benefit one last time to April, 31, 2021. The City's list of essential workers who want the COVID vaccine is complete and the McDuffie County Health Department will administer the shots to the City and County workers together as soon as the next level of eligibility opens. A motion to extend the designated paid sick leave was made by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. A vote approved the motion 4-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Council Report: Councilmember Smalley reported that the burned out house on Walnut Street is finally being worked on. Councilmember Belton asked about any progress on hiring a Code Enforcement Officer.

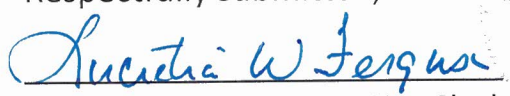
City Administrator Report: ICA Waller has been out meeting with each Department Head and visiting with City Workers. He has 40% of the workforce left to see. He invited the Council to meet with him next week at their convenience and presented a print out of work principles and expectations that were previously shared at the Department Head meeting on February 5th.

Mayor Report: The twenty-six streets on the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) list were presented to the Council. There is only \$125,000-\$130,000 allocated for paving in 2021. The Mayor and Administrator will work to shorten the list so that the most needy streets in all parts of the city can be bid on in June or July. The remainder of the list will carry over to 2022. Councilmember Belton requested that Kennedy Circle be looked at for the next list. Department of Community Affairs has not yet approved the Consolidated Comprehensive Plan, and all three governments must approve it before February 28th. As soon as we receive notification of their approval there will be a called Council meeting to do so. GDOT representative Corbitt Reynolds has informed the City that the Highway 17 project has been released. This is roadwork on Main Street at the football stadium. Reeves Construction Company was awarded the bid.

Executive Session: None

Having no other business to come before the Council, Mayor Usry invited all to a reception for Mary Beth and John Waller to be held outside the chamber doors. A motion to adjourn was tendered by Councilmember Elaine Johnson and seconded by Councilmember Alton Belton. A vote of 4-0 ended the meeting at 6:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk


Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor