

MINUTES

The City of Blountstown, County of Calhoun, State of Florida, met in Regular Session Tuesday, December 12, 2023, at 5:00 P.M. The following members of the City Council present were: Mayor Tony Shoemake, Councilman Bill Gaskin, Councilwoman Mert Stephens, Councilman Jackson, and Councilwoman Sheila Blackburn.

Also present were: City Manager Traci Hall, City Attorney Jeff Carter, Police Chief Mark Mallory, Public Works Director Phillip Griffin, Fire Chief Ben Hall, and Council Secretary Joni Lambeth.

Also present were: Titus Overholt, Colton Purvis, Tony Arrant, Chris Adkins, Albert Yon, and Marilyn Yon.

Mayor Tony Shoemake called the meeting to order at 5:01 P.M. Councilman Jackson led the Invocation. Councilman Gaskin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Hall presented to Council the Add-on bills. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to adopt the Agenda with the additions. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next was the approval of the November 14, 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting minutes. Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The Monthly Bills were presented for action. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve the Monthly Bill with the add-ons. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next was Proclamations and Awards. There were no Proclamation and Awards. It was requested to change the order of the agenda to allow the first item of New Business with Mr. Albert Yon to go first, which was approved by Mayor Shoemake. Mr. Yon requested permission for the annual Martin Luther King Day March on Monday, January 15th beginning at 9:00 A.M. Mr. Yon also informed the Council about a Community Clothing Drive the Saturday prior to the Monday March. He stated if anyone has any donations, they can call him, and he will pick them up on Wednesdays and Sundays. Councilman Gaskin also offered to pick up donations and deliver to them.

The first item in Old Business was Capital Solutions Report. Mrs. Hall stated Mr. Patrick Bell is absent, but if the Council has any questions, that she will try to answer them or they can contact Mr. Bell, but they may have to leave him a message due to meetings.

Next in Old Business was Engineer's Report. Mr. Colton Purvis stated the WWTF Effluent Reuse System plans are at 90% and nearing 100%. He stated the expected bid out date is the end of January, that is the goal. Mr. Purvis stated they have applied for SRF funding and it has been accepted. Next, they have to apply for the loan application. He stated this will cover additional material and equipment costs.

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Next Mr. Purvis updated the Council about the Inflow and Infiltration Improvements. He stated they have identified the issues that were videoed and are working with the contractor to find the best solutions to get the most out of the grant money.

Next Mr. Purvis updated the Council about the Beautification Grant. He stated they advertise tomorrow. Mrs. Hall stated it was advertised last week and they got nothing, so this will be the 3rd time.

Councilman Blackburn asked what the bid included? Mr. Purvis stated it will be the landscaping. Mrs. Hall stated purchasing of the plants, and maintenance for one year. Councilman Blackburn asked how many entrances, 5? Mr. Purvis stated there are only 3, there were 2 that were not able to be done. Councilwoman Blackburn asked if we were going to reuse signs? Mr. Purvis and Mrs. Hall stated the grant does not pay for signs, so we will reuse signs.

Next Mr. Purvis stated the FDEP Sand and Grit Grant, they plan to start work in January.

Next in Old Business was Wheeler Emergency Services. Mr. Titus Overholt updated the Council about the M0077 HMGP Generator Project draft for additional funds and is waiting on response. He also got two additional estimates on this project to justify the price.

Mr. Overholt stated the Monthly Reports are done, and working on the Quarterly Reports this week.

M0115 Waste Water Treatment Plant environmental application has been completed and will be submitted this week.

Mr. Overholt stated the 428 Project time extension requests have been sent out. Moving back into New Business, the next item was Bad Debts. Mrs. Hall stated the City's bad debt for the period 10/01/22-06/30/23 totals \$11,221.44. She assured Council that staff will continue the same protocols of requiring an outstanding utility bill be paid before having utility service again and these bad debts will be turned over to the Credit Bureau for collections. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to approve the write off of these bad debts. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was CD Rates. Mrs. Hall reviewed the interest rates quotes between People South Bank, Ameris Bank, Regions, and Centennial Bank. After discussion the Council decided to stay with Ameris Bank. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to stay with Ameris Bank for 6 months at 5.14% and then re-evaluate after the 6 month period. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mayor Shoemake Opened Public Comments. No Public Comments.

Mayor Shoemake Closed Public Comments.

Mayor Shoemake opened the meeting for City Staff Reports.

Next City Attorney Jeff Carter.

Councilwoman Blackburn asked Mr. Carter if anyone had addressed him about the boat on the Neese's property? He stated they had reached out to him wanting to know where all their stuff was.

Mr. Carter stated Mayor Shoemake gave him a task last month, and he is waiting to hear back about the mobile home language. He stated he and Mr. Tony Arrant had gotten some land development regulations and some other information that Mayor Shoemake provided. He stated they will bring back more information next meeting.

Next Police Chief Mark Mallory stated that Blountstown High School had to cancel the Jingle Bell Run prior to the parade due to weather. He stated they asked if they could re-do something that did not require a permit. Chief Mallory suggested using the Greenway for a walk to Ridge Avenue and back, and they could charge what they charge to raise money for the scholarship. They do not have a date, but wanted to do it before Christmas. He stated if the Council was okay with that, he would work with them to find a suitable time. The Council all agreed it was fine with them.

Next Fire Chief Ben Hall thanked the Council for allowing him to go to the Fire Fighter Conference and stated that was the single best one he had ever went to.

Chief Hall updated the Council about engine #1 went down yesterday, but is up and running. He stated RevTech did a fantastic job with getting it up and going quickly.

Chief Hall invited the Council to countrywide Fire Fighter Association meeting Monday, January 15th at 6:00 P.M. at the Fire Department. Blountstown Fire Department is hosting.

Chief Hall updated the Council about the Code Enforcement Hearing today. He stated Mr. Chad Gunner with the Car Wash showed up to hearing. He stated that the ruling for today, Mr. Gunner has 90 days, March 12, 2024 at 3:30 P. M. to either give an approved development order and architectural plans of placing a new car wash or a picture of a completely raised property. Chief Hall stated if it is not completed, he will file the judgment that day at the court house which would total \$423,500.

Chief Hall stated they need to do something about the J.B. Porter property. Mr. Carter suggested to Clean and Lien it and go through the process as they did with the Neese's property and foreclose on it, but they will not be able to get away from the Region's mortgage on it. After discussion, the Council decided to clean and lien the property. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to clean property, leave the structure there untouched, and file a lien. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next Public Works Director Mr. Phillip Griffin stated they have started work on the parking lot at Halley's. He said sometime after the first of the year it will be finished. He is going to put up some signs and place some parking curbs.

Mayor Shoemake appreciated the work the department did on the parade float and stated they did a great job on the parade float.

Next City Manager Mrs. Traci Hall reviewed the list of City Properties list available for sales. She explained there are only 7 out of the 171 city own properties that are vacant without a current planned use, were non- FEMA acquired, and that meet the

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Councilwoman Stephens asked if they could use the Jeppson property for something like an RV park? Mrs. Hall stated that is FEMA acquired and they are unable to sale it. Mr. Arrant stated he does not believe that it would be an issue to place a publicly owned RV park there. He stated the harder questions would be, is there requirements for the water/sewage hook up there, especially due to the flood plain. After discussion, the Council wants to research this further and gather more information about placing a RV park at the Jeppson property.

Mrs. Hall stated the Public Service Commission started today for their annual inspection of Natural Gas system.

Mrs. Hall reminded the Council that the City Employee Christmas party is Wednesday, December 20th at the Civic Center at noon.

Mrs. Hall reviewed dates to remember. She stated the City will observe Christmas holidays on Monday, December 25 and Tuesday, December 26th and News Years Day on Monday, January 1st. She stated she will be out for vacation starting Friday, December 22nd till Tuesday, January 2nd. She stated she will have her cell if the Council needs anything.

Mrs. Hall reminded Council about the annual Ethics Training that must be completed by December 31st.

Mrs. Hall stated since the last two torrential rains, due to the excessive I&I, there were several manholes that overflowed and had to be reported to the State Watch Office and are considered an unpermitted spill. She received a notice from DEP. They are requesting additional information and are investigating the situation.

Mayor Shoemake closed City Staff Reports

Mayor Shoemake opened for Council comments.

Next Councilwoman Stephens stated the crossings at the traffic light is not counting down anymore.

Next Councilman Gaskin stated concern about jake-breaks being used in town. Chief Mallory stated it would be impossible to enforce.

Councilman Gaskin asked Chief Hall what was going to be done with Mallory's old bus stop building? Chief Hall stated to leave the pole barn like it is and continue to let Red (Rodrique Monlyn) use the building to wash cars there. He stated as it is, it's really not out of compliance.

Councilman Gaskin stated there is a fundraiser Thursday, December 14th for Shane Abbot at Robert Trammel's barn on SR 69 at 6:00 P.M.

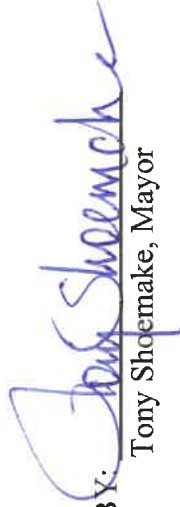
Next Councilman Jackson had no comments.

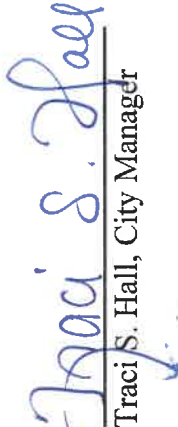
Next Councilwoman Blackburn asked if any part of the Beautification Grant can be used for other parts beside those 3 flowerbeds? Mr. Purvis stated the grant has to be used by April 2024, and that would require it going back to DOT for approval, and potentially drag it out.

Councilwoman Blackburn asked about Adam's Gas property and if anything can be done about it? It just looks like a mess. Chief Hall stated he spoke with the owners and they are supposed to be working on it.

Next Mayor Shoemake asked if the Jamaican Food place opened yet? Mrs. Hall stated it is not open that she knows of. Mayor Shoemake stated that the ice-cream place is going on its 3rd name change now. Mrs. Hall stated she needs to get a new business license if she is getting a new business name change.

There being no further business Councilman Gaskin made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mayor Shoemake adjourned the meeting at 6:21 P.M.

BY: 
Tony Shoemake, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Traci S. Hall, City Manager