

MINUTES

The City of Blountstown, County of Calhoun, State of Florida, met in Regular Session Tuesday, November 14, 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, Chris Johnson, Kurt Battles, Carrie Baker, Colton Purvis, Chris Adkin, Patrica Simmons, Debbie Hammond, Csrarsisius Puling, and Cara Goodman.

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

Next Mayor Shoemake presented to the Council the Additions and Add-on Bills. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to adopt the Agenda with the Add-ons. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next was the approval of October 2, 2023 Final Budget Hearing, October 2, 2023 Special Meeting, and October 10, 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting. Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 2, 2023 Special Meeting, October 2, 2023 Final Budget Hearing, and October 10, 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 and Add-ons. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next was Proclamations and Awards.

There were no Proclamation and Awards.

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 may have to leave him a message due to all the meetings.

Next in Old Business was Engineer's Report. Mr. Colton Purvis stated the WWTF Effluent Reuse System nearing 90% plans and hope to be finalized after Thanksgiving. He stated there is another environmental permit that will have to be done for the whole project and not sure what the turnaround time will be.

Next Mr. Purvis updated the Council about the Inflow and Infiltration Improvements. He stated the contractor has completed the video and lined 3,385 linear feet of the sewer lines. Mr. Purvis stated they have reviewed some more of the lines and made sure there were no more defects. They located a few defects, but will be minimum to do, and they are going through the process to see what is most feasible to carry on with and the most efficient with the money.

Councilwoman Blackburn asked if the lines were in better shape than what was thought? Mr. Purvis stated there are some, but there are other areas that are cracked and seepage coming in, but it is not where they have to dig down to make repairs.

Next Mr. Purvis updated the Council about the Beautification Grant. He stated they did not receive any bids and are readvertising again.

Next Mr. Purvis discussed the FDEP Sand and Grit Grant. He spoke with the contractor with Hydro International and they plan to begin work around January.

Councilwoman Blackburn asked how much time do we have on the Beautification Grant? Mr. Hall stated April 30th and then another extension will be due.

Next in Old Business was Wheeler Emergency Services. Mr. Titus Overholt stated the M0077 HMGP Generator Project was not bid on when advertised the first time and then someone came in and bid twice the amount on the 2nd round. He is going to ask for additional funds. Mr. Overholt stated he will submit that Thursday or Friday.

Mr. Overholt stated M115 Waste Water Treatment Plant environmental application has been completed and will be submitted this week.

Mr. Overholt stated the 428 Project with the Police Department and the red barn, that they were going to use that as leverage to find out about the time extensions. Mrs. Hall stated the 428 Project is FEMA money for the PD and the red barn that is being moved over to City Hall. Mr. Overholt stated maybe they can send an email back to see if we can get a time frame on the time extensions or maybe approve one that is not within a couple months of it going out. He stated hopefully he will come back next meeting with information on the extensions.

Next Mrs. Hall updated the Council about City Hall and reviewed the sequence of emails concerning FEMA extension. She stated FEMA in Atlanta had approved the first extension request on City Hall 428 Project, that extension request expired October 1st and the letter is dated October 10th, so 9 days after the expiration date they approved it. She informed the Council how she has made several attempts to contact FEMA staff with no replies, except an auto reply of being out of office. She stated the 2nd extension request has been submitted.

First in New Business was Blountstown High School Jingle Bell Fun Run. Ms. Cara Goodman, requested approval for the Jingle Bell Fun Run on behalf of Melissa O'Bryan Scholarship on December 2, at 4:30 P.M prior to the Annual Christmas Parade. Councilman Jackson made the motion to approve the Jingle Bell Fun Run. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was St. Francis of Assisi - Our Lady of Guadalupe March Request. Father Csrarsisius Puling with St. Francis of Assisi is requesting approval for the Our Lady of Guadalupe March that will start at the Mexican restaurant following the trail over to Charlie John St. and down to state road 20 at the new light and then back to the church on Gaskin St. It will be held on Sunday, December 10th at 1:00 P.M. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve St. Francis of Assisi - Our Lady of Guadalupe March. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

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Next in New Business was Annual Black History Parade Request. Mr. Curt Battles requested approval for the Annual Black History Parade on Saturday, February 17th at 10:00 A.M. He stated line up is at 9:00 A.M. and the route will be the same as prior years. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to approve the Black History Parade. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was City's Annual Financial Audit. Mr. Chris Johnson with Grimsley & Associates presented the City's Annual Financial Audit for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022. He stated the City was within budget in the general funds, the other funds were within budget. He stated no finding, which is rare. He stated the City met the threshold for single audit this year, which means you have \$750,000 or more in Federal or State grant expenditures they identify and review certain grants, which was the Hurricane Michael Upgrade grant to renovate the new Police Department and there was no finding on that. He stated everything looks to be in a good healthy financial condition.

Next in New Business was the 2nd and Final reading of Ordinance 2023-10 Electric Rates Ordinance Amendment. Mr. Carter read Ordinance by title only. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to approve the 2nd reading of Ordinance 2023-10 regarding Electric rate increase. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the 2nd and final Reading of Ordinance 2023-11 Gas Rate Mark Up Increase. Mr. Carter read Ordinance by title only. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve the 2nd and final reading of Ordinance 2023-11. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the 2nd and final reading of Ordinance 2023-012 Garbage Rates Ordinance Amendment. Mr. Carter read Ordinance by title only. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to approve the 2nd and final reading of Ordinance 2023-12. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Wheeler Emergency Services Task Order Approval. Mrs. Hall reviewed the attached task orders for October, November, and December. The hours and amounts listed are the maximums they believe they would work on the City's projects each month once FEMA approves our time extensions. She is requesting the Council to approve the task orders and authorize staff to execute them. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve the task orders and authorize staff to execute them. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the Approval of Dewberry Continuing Services Contract Extension. Mrs. Hall stated this is the 3rd and final extension of our current engineering continuing services contract with Dewberry. The extension period is from November 2023- November 2024. Mrs. Hall is requesting the Council to approve and authorize staff to execute the 3rd and final extension of the Dewberry Contract. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve and authorize staff to execute the 3rd and

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final extension of the Dewberry Contract. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion.

Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Fiscal Year 22/23 Budget Amendments. Mrs. Hall stated November of every year within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year, if there are any unbudgeted items, she has to make budget amendments for those. She reviewed the attachment of each fund that had a budget increase or decrease and what they were for. She stated general fund, water and sewer all saw a budget amendment and the overall increase is \$603,356 to our overall budget. She's requesting the Council accept the budget amendments to our 2022/2023 budget. Councilman Gaskin made a motion accept the budget amendments for fiscal year 2022/2023 budget. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Approval to Advertise for Request for Proposals for Disaster Debris Removal, Disposal, Monitoring, and Financial Recovery Services. Mrs. Hall stated after Hurricane Michael the City had a couple emergency contracts in place but had to go out for RFP's for debris removal, disposal services, debris monitoring services, and disaster financial recovery services which contracts expire in January 2024. Mrs. Hall is requesting permission from the Council to advertise for RFP's for these services again. She stated we do not pay unless we use them, but it is a safety net to have on file. Councilwoman Stephens made the motion to approve permission to advertise for RFP's for Disaster Debris Removal and Disposal Services, Disaster Debris Monitoring Services, and Disaster Financial Management Services. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mayor Shoemake Opened Public Comments.

Mayor Shoemake Closed Public Comments.

Mayor Shoemake opened the meeting for City Staff Reports.

Next City Attorney Jeff Carter had no comment.

Next Police Chief Mark Mallory stated he had no Police Department matters but will cover Code Enforcement with Fire Chief Ben Hall. Chief Mallory stated there are 5 boats on the Neese's property. Chief Hall stated none sea worthy. Chief Mallory stated this is listed property or title property, where there is an owner to that boat, so they can not destroy it or dispose of it. He stated the vehicles were towed off. He stated that we can get the tow company and guarantee them to recoup their cost. Chief Mallory informed the Council of the choices and procedure to have the smaller boats and the larger boat removed from the property. After discussion, the Council decided to have the four smaller boats removed for \$500 each and a minimum of \$2,000 for the larger boat. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to allow up to the amount of \$5,000 to hire someone to remove those items and file the legal papers to destroy them. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Councilwoman Blackburn asked is there anything else on the land that has to be disposed of? Chief Mallory stated water tanks. Chief Hall stated he will talk about that as soon as he gets up there.

Next Fire Chief Ben Hall stated he spoke with Mr. Joe Wood about this and Mr. Wood had stopped where it was agreed at financially. Chief Hall stated there are still some trailers, big white polly tank, and trees down. He stated if they are wanting this presentable and sellable, he is asking Mr. Wood for a quote to make it all ready to go. He stated Mr. Wood quoted it at \$3,700 to finish cleaning it up. Councilwoman Blackburn stated the trailers are not titled, are they? Chief Hall stated no. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to proceed with arranging for Mr. Wood to do a final clean up based on a quote for \$3,700 for the job. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Councilman Gaskin asked if Mr. Wood had to wait for these boats to be moved out of the way? Chief Hall stated Mr. Wood can work around them.

Chief Hall updated the Council about the Car wash. He stated owner has 10 days from today, then that timeline expires for complete and utter demolition. He stated raising the property was the order from the hearing officer, and if not completed by then there will be a \$400,000 fine. Chief Hall stated the Council will have to look to see if they are wanting that property or not. The Council will discuss this further in next meeting.

Chief Hall updated the Council about issues with the buzzards opening dumpster lids and causing garbage to be strode everywhere. Chief Hall wanted to inform the Council of this problem and see what can be done in the future to prevent this. The Council will discuss more in next meetings.

Chief Hall updated the Council about the Catfish Crawl. He stated 177 participants and 153 in the 5K. He stated they will have enough to make a scholarship, thanks to good sponsorships.

Chief Hall stated they were awarded a Forestry Title IV Grant again. It is for all new large amplifier hose and the grant is for about \$36,000 with a 100% reimbursement. Councilwoman Blackburn asked if this would replace all of it? Chief Hall stated we would not have an old stick of hose on the firetruck when this is done. Chief Hall stated he is requesting approval for this Title IV Grant for \$36,000 pending the official award that should come end of November, first of December and review by the City Attorney. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to proceed with the Grant for replacement of the hoses when the grant come in. Councilman Jackson second the motion. Motion passed

Next Public Works Director Mr. Phillip Griffin provided the Council with an update at Magnolia Square. He stated David Simpson is doing the cameras there and is going to need a pole put in and all they have are power poles. Mr. Griffin asked the Council if that was okay or do we want to look at something else? After discussion, Mr. Griffin will check into different choices, and come back to next meeting.

Mr. Griffin discussed Mike Halley's parking lot, he has figured a way to get about 12/13 parking spots, but his concern is the concrete that is there. He stated there is 6 to 8 inches of concrete that needs to be removed in order for them to make it a parking lot. Councilwoman Blackburn asked if the Halley's are okay with us removing it? Mr. Griffin stated he would make sure. Mayor Shoemake asked if we could use crossties instead of concrete bumpers? Mr. Griffin stated we may can, but he thinks the concrete would be

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better. After discussion the Council decided to remove the concrete in the next 2-3 months. Mayor Shoemake state as long as Mr. Halley agrees that it is okay.

Next City Manager Mrs. Traci Hall stated she spoke with Mr. Frank Snowden and explained to him what the City would like to do to the corner lot by City Hall as well as Juniper Ave. property. Mr. Snowden has surveyed both parcels or has access to both surveys and once he pulls those surveys he will get with Mr. Hall and see what options they have for leaving enough space for City Hall on the corner lot and splitting the lot on Juniper Ave.

Mrs. Hall stated last month we spoke about the Community Action issue and she was glad to say that Community Action has done well trying to resolve that. She stated it was originally about \$20,000 of revoked payments. They went back and had the applicants reapply, there are a few they are unable to get up with. There are a couple that have disconnected services and a couple that have already moved out of town. Mrs. Hall has informed the Supervisor out of Tallahassee, that they will be receiving a bill. She stated we are down to \$4,100.

Mrs. Hall stated she wanted to remind everyone about there Ethics Training and it must be completed by December 31st.

Mrs. Hall informed the Council she is working on the City Property list. There are 171 properties and she will provide a list to the Council once completed.

Mrs. Hall reminded the Council of dates to remember. She stated the Christmas Parade is Saturday, December 2nd at 5 P.M. and line up will be behind the gym by 4:45 P.M.

Mayor Shoemake closed City Staff Reports

Mayor Shoemake opened for Council comments.

Next Councilwoman Stephens asked if they could take the Jepson property and make it where RV's can park and charge them? Councilwoman Blackburn asked what can we use that property for? Mrs. Hall asked who is going to monitor, collect the money, who would be contacted if there are problems, who is going to schedule all of that? She stated City Hall cannot take on something like that. Councilwoman Blackburn stated she just came from a town that had a city park with a marina, store, RV park, and the city owned all of it, but it generated enough revenue to do that. After discussion, the Council thought it was a good idea and may look further into this later down the road.

Next Councilman Gaskin stated that Juniper Avenue sign needs to be replaced with the correct street sign, it has Juniper Street instead of Avenue.

Councilman Gaskin asked if they had an active task with road department or anybody to go along and clean our street signs? Mrs. Hall stated yes, they did that last year actually or maybe the year before last. Councilman Gaskin stated he saw some signs that did not even reflect light any more or could not read. Mr. Griffin will work on getting these cleaned up.

Councilman Gaskin asked do we have utilities running along the north side of Highway 71 South from Gaskin Street down to the new Credit Union? Mr. Griffin stated

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gas, electric, and sewer, is on his side. Councilman Gaskin stated he was talking with the engineers working on the new hospital and they were talking about tearing up his yard due to utilities. Mr. Griffin stated there is a sewer main coming from Altha that goes on his side of the road.

Councilman Gaskin stated that Morning Side Circle is looking a lot better.

Next Councilman Jackson had no comments.

Next Councilwoman Blackburn had no comments.

Next Mayor Shoemake stated they are trying to look at bringing more income into Blountstown through our utilities. He asked what would it take to bring other people onto the sewer line, between Blountstown and Altha? Mayor Shoemake asked what it would take to get people on to the City sewer, and have potential customers on the sides streets. After discussion, the Council will look into this more.

Mayor Shoemake stated he has been approached about Mobile homes again. He stated Panama City dealt with these the last two years and had an Ordinance where Panama City did not allow mobile homes and then Florida Manufacture Housing Association said that they could not do that, that is discriminatory, plus it was against Florida Statue and said they would help them sit down and write an Ordinance. He stated he spoke with Mr. Carter and he is going to look into it and bring it back to the Council.

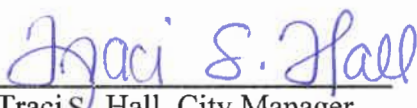
Councilman Gaskin stated at the County Commissioner meetings there have been a number of homes that were damaged and replaced with mobile homes. He asked does the Council have any control of what the County does within the City limits?

Councilwoman Blackburn stated the Council does not have any say so in what the County does (with the homes that were damaged and replaced with mobile homes due to Hurricane Michael) within the City limits. Councilman Gaskin stated there are a few more (trailers) that have not been taken care of, such as being a year old and are destroyed.

There being no further business Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mayor Shoemake adjourned the meeting at 6:26 P.M.

BY: 
Tony Shoemake, Mayor

ATTEST:


Traci S. Hall, City Manager