

MINUTES

The City of Blountstown, County of Calhoun, State of Florida, met in Regular Session Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 5:00 P.M. The following members of the City Council present were: Mayor Tony Shoemake, Councilman Bill Gaskin, Councilwoman Mert Stephens, 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, James Grant, Scott Monlyn, and Tony Arrant.

Absent was: Councilman Jackson.

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

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

Next was the approval of August 29, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes, August 29, 2023 Budget Workshop, September 5, 2023 Budget Workshop, September 12, 2023 Regular Meeting, September 18, 2023 Tentative Budget Hearing, and September 18, 2023 Special Meeting. Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 29, 2023 Special Meeting, August 29, 2023 Budget Workshop, September 5, 2023 Budget Workshop, September 12, 2023 Regular Meeting, September 18, 2023 Tentative Budget Hearing, and September 18, 2023 Special Meeting. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The Monthly Bills were presented for action. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve the Monthly Bills. Councilwoman Stephens 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 out of town, but if the Council has any questions, that she will try to answer them or she will give his number. She stated he is working on getting a new traffic study in regards to Trammell Bridge. Mayor Shoemake stated Mr. Bell informed him that in regards to the prison, they we're good for another year.

Next in Old Business was Engineer's Report. Mr. Colton Purvis was not able to attend, but his report was included. Mrs. Traci Hall and Mr. Philip Griffin would be able to answer any questions.

Next in Old Business was Wheeler Emergency Services. Mr. Titus Overholt stated the M0115 monthly report is complete and will be sending Mrs. Hall the monthly report. He stated he will contact the Grants Manager about the M0077 HMGF Generator Project. Mrs. Hall stated they got the bids back and they are double what we have, so Mr.

Overholt is going to contact the Grants manager and see if we can reduce the scope instead of doing two generators, do one, or increase the budget. He stated the quarterly report has been completed except for the Waste Water.

First in New Business was Blountstown Main Street Annual Christmas Parade. Ms. Megan Hoff, requested approval for the Annual Christmas Parade on December 2, at 5:00 P.M. with line up beginning at 4:00 P.M. The theme this year is "A Verry Groovy Christmas". Councilwoman Stephens made the motion to approve the Christmas Parade. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mrs. Hall asked Ms. Hoff if Main Street was going to have a Christmas Decorating Contest this year. Ms. Hoff stated yes, there will be a Christmas Decoration Contest this year. Councilwoman Blackburn asked if the prizes would be 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place as credits on their utility bill? Mayor Shoemake stated it will be \$300, \$200, and \$100 for the winning places. After discussion Councilwoman Stephens made the motion to sponsor the Christmas Decoration Contest. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Ms. Wendy Eubanks with Blountstown Public Library Lawncare Assistance Request. Ms. Eubanks is requesting assistance with the lawn care. It would only be grass cutting and weed eating. She stated it would save her about \$6000 a year. Mr. Philip Griffin stated that we could do it every other week. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve that the City will assist with lawncare for the Blountstown Public Library. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Attorney Jeff Carter stated that he would like a hold harmless agreement from the Public Library. Ms. Eubanks stated of course.

Next in New Business was the reading of Resolution 2023-06 Adoption of Cafeteria Plan for the Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Mr. Carter read Resolution by title only. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-06. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the 1st reading of Ordinance 2023-10 Electric Rates Ordinance Amendment. Mrs. Hall stated for the fiscal year 2023-2024, the City has budgeted a 7% increase for electric rates beginning with the bills received December 1st. She stated it will be for 10 months in this fiscal year. Mr. Carter read Ordinance by title only. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance 2023-10 regarding Electric rate increase. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2023-11 Gas Rate Mark Up Increase. Mrs. Hall stated the last time it was increased was about year 2015/2016 and was increased by \$0.05. Mr. Carter read Ordinance by title only. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance 2023-11. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the 1st reading of Ordinance 2023-012 Garbage Rates Ordinance Amendment. Mrs. Hall stated the City has budgeted for a 10% commercial

garbage rate increase which applies to carts and dumpsters. She also stated that the City will include information about these increases in the bills that are sent at the beginning of November notifying customers the increase will begin with the bills received December 1st. Mr. Carter read Ordinance by title only. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to approve Ordinance 2023-12. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the Sand and Grit Removal Contractor Bid Award. Mrs. Hall stated the City was awarded a Sand and Grit Removal Grant from FDEP. She stated that FDEP wanted a contractor procured before they issued the grant agreements. So, the City went out for Bid and we received one response from Hydro International bid amount of \$28,515. Mrs. Hall stated she is requesting the Council award the bid to Hydro International in the amount of \$28,515 and authorize staff to execute the Notice of Award. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to accept this bid from Hydro International in the amount of \$28,515 for sand and grit removal so we can proceed with the FDEP Grant. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was the reading of Resolution 2023-07 – Old Trammell Bridge. Mrs. Hall stated this is something that is being sent to DOT for when they remove the bridge requesting that they replace it. Mrs. Hall read Resolution by title only. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve the Resolution 2023-07 regarding Trammell Bridge. Councilwoman seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was BowStern Logo Update. Mrs. Hall stated that BowStern has sent over the updates of the logo. The updates made was changed green to a lighter version, leveled and changed the established date to 1903, and simplified version of the logo for embroidery. Councilman Gaskin made a motion approve the new logo for the City. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Councilman Gaskin stated he asked Ben to create a 3-minute count down timer to place on the screen during Public Comment and asked how the Council felt about this? Councilwoman Blackburn stated she thought it was a good idea, the meetings had gotten long and we have people that are driving to Panama and Tallahassee. She stated it not fair to the people waiting for their turns. Mayor Shoemake stated he feels like we should give people an option on giving some people extra time. He stated he is always going to stand for the person that comes to the meetings, he is going to listen to them, that's what he's here for. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to adopt using the clock during the Public Comments. Councilwoman Blackburn seconded the motion. Motion passed. Mayor Shoemake opposed.

Mayor Shoemake Opened Public Comments.

Mr. Scott Monlyn asked if the new Hospital will be hooked up to the City sewer. Councilwoman Blackburn stated yes. He stated ear gossip has informed him that there will be sewage holding bins on CR 69. Mayor Shoemake asked what were those tanks down on Hwy 71 South and Chipola Rd? Mr. Griffin stated that he believes it's an environmental clean-up. Councilwoman Blackburn stated they are on that private

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property that Roy Pickron owns. Mr. Monlyn asked where are they placing the new waste water treatment system on CR 69. The Council informed him and showed a map of location across from Fanning Pond, and the land across from the prison. Councilwoman Blackburn stated it will look like a glorified pond. The Council stated that this is treated water, not raw sewage water.

Mayor Shoemake Closed Public Comments.

Mayor Shoemake opened the meeting for City Staff Reports.

Next City Attorney Jeff Carter updated the Council about the Neese's Property.

Mr. Carter stated we should have the Certificate of Title in a couple days and it will belong to the City.

Next City Attorney Jeff Carter provided a draft Vacant Land Lease the Council requested between the City and The Halley's for extra parking across the street from the Splash Pad. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to approve the Vacant Land Lease with Michael and Lori Halley. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mayor Shoemake asked about the Porter house and buying the tax certificates? Mr. Carter stated he spoke with the gentlemen that he'd asked him to speak with and he asked if we could buy his tax certificates from him. He stated that would get him out of his investment but he would earn the interest on top of that but then the City steps in with issues and that 2-year period where the tax certificates could be redeemed, even after the City has purchased them, the risk is still there. Mr. Carter stated that the gentlemen informed him that he was interested in selling the tax certificates, which is not the property. Mayor Shoemake stated we are still at the same place as before. Mr. Carter stated yes.

Next Police Chief Mark Mallory asked when the logo is taking affect and when it does are we to rebrand? He said this is because he has a car out for striping. He stated it will cost him about \$500 per vehicle. He stated he can phase them out as he goes. Chief Mallory stated on the badge instead of the state of Florida seal we can put the new logo in place of it. Councilman Gaskin suggested a magnet or sticker to go on top of older existing logo on vehicles. Chief Mallory stated that should be much cheaper.

Chief Mallory stated that Halloween is still 5:00 P.M to 8:00 P.M. and the Turkey Shoot is Saturday November 11, 2023 and still no time as of yet.

Next Fire Chief Ben Hall stated this week is Fire Prevention Week and you will be seeing him at the schools. He stated the Catfish Crawl will be November 11, 2023 at 8 A. M. and to please come out and support. He anticipates more than 300 to 400 on the Greenway Trail that day. Chief Hall stated on Halloween the Fire Department will be in between Hentz and Marie Avenue if you want to hang out with them.

Chief Hall stated they were awarded today the State Fire Marshal Grant. He stated it is a 100% grant for the multi gas detector and they will be the only one in the County that has one.

Chief Hall updated the Council about the code enforcement hearing today regarding the car wash. The defendant/owner did not show. He stated he presented the

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case to Mr. Fuqua and he awarded us with a judgment of giving the property owner 45 days from today to clean, demolish, and raise the property or pay \$250 a day back to the first time he sent the owner a notice, which was July 23, 2019, and makes that fine \$385,000.

Next Public Works Director Mr. Phillip Griffin provided the Council with an update about the dressing room at Magnolia Square is completed. He stated that the City is going to put in new gas mains for the new Elementary School.

Next City Manager Mrs. Traci Hall stated she spoke with Danny Ryals after our last special meeting and asked him to look at the corner property there by City Hall and as well as the Juniper Avenue property to look at possibilities of splitting it and what his thoughts were on it. She said he stated that we will get more money if we split the Juniper Avenue and probably the City Hall corner lot property.

Mrs. Hall stated Community Action is an agency that through government funding programs can assist people with utility payments if they meet the criteria. She stated we get Promises to Pay, sometimes the customers have to pay a portion, but they issue a letter saying they have x number of dollars they are paying and the City renew that contract every year. Community Action is reprocessing Promises to Pay due to staff not processing applicants properly and trying to figure out who meets the criteria and revoking these letters we received. She stated Council will probably hear from some customer that are going to be upset because their bills are not getting paid.

Councilwoman Blackburn asked are they paying more than one month for a customer? Mrs. Hall stated yes, multiple months. She stated that we will work with those customers and set up payment arrangements.

Mrs. Hall stated we received a grant award from CDBG and it is for the project we applied for that will do some drainage work and paving. She stated the work to be done is behind Ms. Dawson's home on Ray Ave. over to Palm Ave.

Mrs. Hall informed the Council about the Resilient Calhoun County meeting the County is hosting on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 12:00 -1:30 P.M.

Mrs. Hall reminded the Council of dates to remember. She stated the Employee Christmas Party has been booked for Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at noon. She stated Travis and Drew will be cooking again for us this year.

Councilman Gaskin asked if she had any idea when we will have a status on the FRDAP for the Depot? Mrs. Hall stated she thinks we find out after the first of the year, but she will verify with Mr. Colton Purvis.

Mayor Shoemake closed City Staff Reports

Mayor Shoemake opened for Council comments.

Next Councilwoman Stephens had no comments.

Next Councilman Gaskin had no comments.

Next Councilwoman Blackburn had no comments.

Next Mayor Shoemake asked Mr. Tony Arrant bout fill in the flood plain and that we were the only City that could not do that. Mr. Arrant stated we are fixing to update the


land use map. He stated he is currently working with someone to redo the future land use map which needs updating and he's also going through our plan so we can make all those changes at the same time. He stated he will have something to bring to the Council after the first of the year. Mr. Arrant stated he has no problem trying to argue that for existing problems for re-development that they need to bring in fill. He stated he wanted to remind everyone the reason they have this in the plan is because the Council voted to do that in a legal agreement with the State and that was under the condition that they would allow the City to do other things that the City wanted to do.

Mayor Shoemake asked about annexation into the City, how would we do that process? Mr. Arrant said there were two forms of annexation, you can force an annexation and have to pay for everything. He stated the best way would be, is to voluntary annexation that is connected to your existing boundaries and all property owners sign a petition that ask for it to become part of the city. He stated this a pretty simple process and does not cost any money. Mayor Shoemake asked is a survey required to do this by the property owner? Mr. Arrant stated yes.

Mayor Shoemake asked if Mr. Grant has checked on the new Gym Life building balcony in the front of the building? He stated he has walked under that balcony and it is pretty rusty, has old iron, and the concrete deck they have already built on top of it. Mr. Grant stated the engineer that did the plans obviosity did not think it was a problem. Mr. Grant stated he has not done a full inspection yet. Mayor Shoemake stated he would hate for that to fall on anybody. Mr. Grant stated he will look at it very carefully

There being no further business Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mayor Shoemake adjourned the meeting at 6:29 P.M.

BY:


Tony Shoemake, Mayor

ATTEST:


Traci S. Hall, City Manager