

MINUTES

The City of Blountstown, County of Calhoun, State of Florida, met in Regular Session Tuesday, February 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 Clifford Jackson and Councilwoman Sheila Blackburn.

Also present were: City Manager Traci S. 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: April Bailey, Titus Overhault, Curt Battles, Captain Dence, Tony Arrant, and Colton Purvis.

Mayor Tony Shoemake called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. Mayor Shoemake led the Invocation. Councilman Jackson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Manager Traci Hall presented to the Council the Add-on bills and Change Order on the Splash Pad Project. Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to adopt the Agenda with the Add-ons. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next was the approval of the January 10, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes. Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to approve the January 10, 2023, minutes. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The Monthly Bills were presented for action. Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to pay the monthly bills with the Add on Bills. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next was Proclamations and Awards. Mrs. Hall congratulated the City of Blountstown for receiving a Building Strong Communities Award from FMEA in recognition of the outstanding programs and services provided to our community and their advancement of goals and ideals of public power.

The first item in Old Business was Capital Solutions Report. Mr. Patrick Bell was unable to attend the Council Meeting and provided Council with a written report.

Next in Old Business was Engineer's Report. Mr. Colton Purvis provided Council an update regarding the WWTF Effluent Reuse System. Mr. Purvis stated the land clearing was on schedule. Mr. Purvis stated the Wastewater Treatment Facility design is underway and on schedule.

Mr. Purvis provided Council with an update regarding the Blountstown Inflow and Infiltration Improvements and the Splash Pad Project. Mr. Purvis stated they are reviewing plans and compiling bid documents on the Blountstown Inflow and Infiltration Improvements. Mr. Purvis stated the Splash Pad Project is close to completion.

Mr. Purvis updated Council about the City Street Paving project is completed for both N. Pear Street and Gadsden Street.

Mr. Purvis provided the Council with an update regarding FEMA Fencing & Roofing. Mr. Purvis stated the FEMA Roofing is in process and close to completion.

Mr. Purvis provided Council an update regarding the Blountstown Beautification Grant. Mr. Purvis stated plans are on pause and waiting on desired property as discussed in the last meeting.

Mr. Purvis provided Council an update regarding FDOT RAISE Program. Mr. Purvis asked for suggestions for any streets that needed striping and/or new signs? Mr. Purvis stated once he gathers the streets and locations, he will complete the application.

Mr. Purvis provided Council a suggestion regarding the RIF Program. Mr. Purvis stated the RIF Program is a rural infrastructure fund to assist disadvantaged communities for building and growing communities. Mr. Purvis suggested Mimosa Street community for renewing infrastructure, and it will be a great program to use there because the project will help with new growth and expansion in that area. Mr. Purvis stated March 13, 2023, is the deadline. Council discussed the use of the RIF Program and where it can be used in the Mimosa community.

Next in Old Business was Mr. Titus Overhaul - Wheeler Emergency Services Update. Mr. Overhaul stated on the generator project, that documentation is submitted and waiting on approval for a bid. Mr. Overhaul stated a meeting with DEO is next week and it should be approved. Mr. Overhaul stated we are waiting on an environmental exemption for our CDBG Effluent Project and it will also be addressed in the next meeting.

Mr. Overhaul stated FEMA Roofing Project is 80% complete and the project should be complete within two weeks. Mr. Overhaul stated documentation and pictures have been prepared to submit with reimbursement once the work is completed.

Mr. Overhaul stated time extensions for Hurricane Michael's remaining projects are in process. Mayor Shoemake asked if the trail is on the time extension? Mr. Overhaul answered yes.

Next in Old Business was – New City Hall Update. Mrs. Hall stated to Council she spoke with Mr. Doug Shuler and there are no updates until plans are complete around mid-March and we need to set a date for the meeting. Council decided to have 100% plan meeting on March 21, 2023, at 2 P.M.

First in New Business was Mr. Curt Battles – request approval for the Black History Parade. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve for the Black History parade on February 18, 2023, at 10:00 A.M. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Captain Dence – Liberty County High School ROTC – Permission for a 5K run in May. Mr. Dence requests permission to do a 5K run on Blountstown Greenway Trail on May 13, 2023, or May 20, 2023, this date has not been determined yet. Police Chief Mallory asked if any flaggers would be needed? Mr. Dence stated no assistance from the Police Department is needed. Chief Mallory stated that would be fine as long as nothing was needed from the department since they are short-staffed. Councilman Jackson made a motion to approve the Liberty High School ROTC 5K run in May. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was City Manager Traci Hall – Approval of Wheeler FEMA Consultant Extension. Mrs. Hall stated that this is the second contract extension of the Wheeler FEMA Consultant contract, the first extension expired in January. The City Attorney has viewed it as well. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to accept Addition Number Two for approval of Wheeler FEMA Consultant Extension Number Two for approval. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Approval of Wheeler Debris Monitoring Contract Extension. Mrs. Hall stated this is a second extension and the city only uses these services in a disaster where debris must be picked up. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve the second Wheeler Debris Monitoring Contract Extension. Councilman Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was approval of Resolution 2023-01– M-SCOP Application. Mrs. Hall stated as we do every year, when an M-SCOP application is submitted to FDOT, a resolution must be approved by the City to authorize the application submittal. This application is for the for resurfacing of Gaskin St. Councilman Gaskin asked if there are any reasons it was not accepted in past request. Mrs. Hall replied that the application is scored, and it did not score high enough to get funded. Mr. Purvis stated the scoring is based on different alternative factors such as location and population. Mr. Purvis also stated applications that were not funded in previous years, that apply again, are likely to get funded the following year. Attorney Jeff Carter read the Resolution by title only. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-01- M-SCOP Project for resurfacing Gaskin Street. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Resolution 2023-02– RAISE Application. Mrs. Hall stated as previously mentioned, applying for RAISE funding through FDOT requires a Resolution as well. Attorney Jeff Carter read the Resolution by title only. Councilman Gaskin made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-02 – RAISE Project for striping and marking of streets for visibility improvements. Councilman Jackson second the motion. Motion passed. After discussion a prioritized list of streets requiring striping will need to be complete by next week to meet the deadline of March 13, 2023.

Next in New Business was Approval and Authorization to Execute Hurricane Ian Subgrant Agreement. Mrs. Hall stated police department provided mutual aid after Hurricane Ian and to be reimbursed, we must enter into a subgrant agreement with the State and with the third party being FDEM. Mrs. Hall stated the attorney has reviewed it as well. Councilwoman Stephens made a motion to approve the Hurricane Ian Subgrant Agreement. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Approval to Advertise for Grant Administration and Professional Services for our CDBG- MT Grants. Councilman Jackson made at motion to authorize staff to advertise for grant administration and professional service for these Grants. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was request of approval for Mr. Mike Ward Pay Increase. Mrs. Hall stated last month Mr. Mike Ward passed his Class B wastewater license test and received his License and with that should come a pay increase. Mrs. Hall requested a \$2 dollar an hour pay increase, which will be \$4,160.00 per year. Mrs. Hall stated per the city's FDEP permit we are required to have a Class B licensee to be there a minimum of 32 hours per week. Mrs. Hall stated once Jim Castle left, services were contracted out to meet the FDEP's requirements. Mrs. Hall stated once Chance is certified that we will have to utilize just 2 days a week for a Class C but will be cheaper. Councilman Jackson made a motion to approve Mr. Ward's pay increase. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Next in New Business was Houses at the New City Hall Site. Mrs. Hall stated we are about 100% in our plans for the New City Hall and need to consider what plans are to be made for the three houses on the property. Mrs. Hall stated she reached out to Joe Wood and his quotes remain the same price for demolition as he'd provided a year ago. But we will have to advertise because this is over the procurement threshold. Fire Chief Ben requested that the buildings be utilized for training purposes. Mayor Shoemaker stated this could be a second step, but the first step is to see if people are interested in items in the houses. After the discussion, the Council decided to remove items that could be utilized and allow employees that were interested in any interior items to let us know prior to advertising for demolition of the houses.

Next in New Business was Tony Arrant – Draft of Future Land Use Element Changes Regarding Fill in a Flood Zone for Review and Comments. Mr. Arrant stated to stay within the policies and goals of the comprehensive plan, minimum language was changed where there is no fill allowed, to allow for fill if it meets the environmental policy in the plan. Mr. Arrant stated there are several other plans he would like to update at the same time, so when or if it's decided to transmit this amendment, it's not the only thing they are considering. Mr. Arrant stated this proposal is straightforward and the process is yet to be proposed on a large-scale amendment. It will be transmitted to DEO, and to thirteen other advisory agencies. Then after two months for comments, it will usually take 30-45 days for them to respond, and then another public hearing will be held and afterwards can be adopted. After discussion, Mr. Arrant asked Council if this draft was approved or if Council wanted to wait for other changes to be completed as well and then come back with the proposed changes? Mayor Shoemaker stated to wait for other changes to be made and expects a draft within two months.

Next in New Business was Mr. Tony Arrant – Draft of Changes to Article II of Land Development Regulations Regarding Home Based Businesses for Review and Comments. After discussion Mayor Shoemaker will provide Mr. Arrant with copies of Home-Based Business regulations from other cities and counties to assist.

Next in New Business was Add-On Item- Change Order for Splash Pad Project – Mrs. Hall stated a decrease in the contract price on the Splash Pad project of \$1,825.00 is due to reduction of concrete needed, and renovation of restroom performed by staff.

Councilman Gaskin made a motion to accept the change order for the Splash Pad Project. Councilwoman Stephens seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mayor Shoemake Opened Public Comments.

There was no Public Comment.

Mayor Shoemake Closed Public Comments.

Mayor Shoemake opened the meeting for City Staff Reports.

City Attorney Jeff Carter provided Council with Ordinance NO: 2023-01 concerning code of businesses; providing for regulation of and reporting requirements for Pawn Brokers and secondhand dealers; providing for a statement of the proposed amendment; providing for severability; and providing effective date. After discussion, Mr. Carter will revise Ordinance NO: 2023-01 and have it for the next meeting.

Mr. Carter provided Council with Ordinance No: 2023-02. Mr. Carter stated the second ordinance is regarding false alarms and creating violations due to people creating too many false alarms. These issues cause unnecessary costs and take prioritization of importance away from other important issues. By enforcing violators with fines this should slow the process of false alarms. After discussion, this version will be revised, corrected, and discussed in the next meeting.

Police Chief Mark Mallory provided Council an update. Chief Mallory stated that the department is low on staff by four positions and working on having them filled. Gilda Goodman will be covering for the School Resource Officer that is out. Chief Mallory stated the new Splash Pad may be an area for contraband and an upgraded camera system in the Depot area would help monitor for prevention measurements. Chief Mallory requested more lights and cameras in that area and the request for more expandible camera with a budget of \$3,000. Councilwoman Blackburn request for more designated parking spots to be created for the area of the Depot Park and Splash Pad. Councilman Gaskin made a motion for a budget of \$3,000.00 for expandible cameras. Councilman Jackson second the motion. Motion approved.

Fire Chief Ben Hall provided the Council with update on the Fire Department earning Fire Fighter OSHA Certification through the State of Florida. Chief Hall stated that the Fire Department received a \$50,000 grant for SCBA and air packs. This is the second year receiving this grant, and the department will have completed replacement of all air packs. Chief Hall stated that we have surplus air packs and would like to request 8 of the 10 to be donated to Nettle Ridge Fire Department. Council Jackson made a motion to approve the request to donate eight surplus air packs to Nettle Ridge Fire Department. Councilman Gaskin seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Chief Hall also informed Council about the New 2023 Chevy Tahoe that will replace the 2003 Chevy Trailblazer and requested that the 2003 Chevy Trailblazer be donated to the Mossy Pond Fire Department for use of EMS calls. Councilman Gaskin made the motion to donate the 2003 Trailblazer to Mossy Pond Fire Department once we receive our 2023 Chevy Tahoe. Councilman Jackson second the motion. Motion passed.

Chief Hall provided Council with an update regarding the Neese Property hearing that took place with Mr. Carter and new Hearing Officer Matt Fuqua. Chief Hall stated there are forced fines up to \$175,000 price range and will be going forward to propose a form of order.

Public Works Director, Phillip Griffin, provided Council with an update. Mr. Griffin stated the crosswalk on North Main has been cleaned out. The Depot's restrooms have been painted and the bad siding was replaced. Next month he will be bringing a new garbage truck lease for approval. Mr. Griffin asked if anything else was needed. Mayor Shoemake stated the area between Highway 71 and 69 is backed up due to a bever dam and requested it be taken care of. Mrs. Hall stated that sod will be put down in March or April around the Splash Pad. It will be closed till sod is laid. Councilwoman Stephens asked about the pile around Highway 69 and Pear Street and is there anything we can do to clean that up?

Mrs. Hall provided Council with update. Mrs. Hall stated Jim Dean, the Marianna City Manager, sent sample letters asking local rural cities to send to Tallahassee, requesting DEO grants be on Cash Advance basis instead of reimbursement basis. Also, a letter requesting funding assistance be given to local police departments for officer salaries. Mrs. Hall went over the dates to remember and stated she has updated signature cards from the Bank and needs signatures.

Mayor Shoemake closed City Staff Reports

Mayor Shoemake opened for Council comments.

Councilwoman Stephen stated concerns about the crematory issue. Chief Mallory stated he met with individuals and asked them to be more conscientious, and still sees incidents of this happening. Chief Hall stated the Department will follow up on this issue.

Councilman Gaskin had no comment.

Councilwoman Blackburn had no comment.

Councilman Jackson had no comment.

Mayor Shoemake requested to designate new parking spaces on the east side of North Pear Street for vehicles with trailers. Mr. Shoemake requested to update with new paint for original parking spaces around the Depot and Mexican Restaurant. Mayor Shoemake stated the Health Department has a water fountain to donate to Depot Park and a second water fountain may be placed somewhere at Magnolia Square. Mayor Shoemake stated he received a request from the Ag Teacher at the high school, he was needing old poles for fencing at the High School and asked Mr. Griffin if we had any we could deliver to the school? Mr. Griffin stated they can be delivered. Mayor Shoemake requested milling at the park area on River Street that the city mows where cement tables are.

There being no further business Councilman Gaskin made a motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Blackburn seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mayor Shoemake adjourned the meeting at 7:48 P.M.

BY: 
Tony Shoemake, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Traci S. Hall, City Manager