

**City of Locust Grove
 Council Workshop Meeting Minutes
 Public Safety Building – 3640 Highway 42 S.
 Locust Grove, GA 30248
 Tuesday, January 18, 2022
 6:00 PM**

Members Present:	Staff Present:
Robert Price – Mayor	Tim Young – City Manager
Willie Taylor – Councilman	Bert Foster – Assistant City Manager
Keith Boone – Councilman	Misty Spurling – City Clerk
Rudy Breedlove - Councilman	Jennifer Adkins – Assistant City Clerk
Vincent Williams - Councilman	Daunte’ Gibbs – Community Development Director
Carlos Greer – Councilman	Jack Rose – Public Works Director
Rod Shearouse – Councilman	Derrick Austin – Police Chief
	Colleen Watts – Main Street Program Manager
	Andy Welch – Attorney

Mayor Price called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Invocation given by Community Development Director Daunte’ Gibbs.

Councilman Boone led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA –

Mayor Price asked for a motion to amend the agenda. Councilman Boone made the motion approve the January 18, 2022 meeting agenda.

RESULT	APPROVED AGENDA
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN BOONE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

- **Introduction of new employees (Police Department) -Officer Reginald Holcomb**

Chief Austin introduced new employee Officer Reginald Holcomb to the Police Department. Mayor and Council welcomed Officer Holcomb. Nothing further.

Councilman Greer complimented Chief Austin on efforts in diversity amongst new hires and staff. Chief Austin said all the credit goes to the city (Mayor and Council) for the tools provided for the department to offer a quality package that assists in attracting quality employees. Nothing further.

- **Presentation by John Selfe, Henry County Tax Assessor Chief Appraiser, on Homestead Exemption** –

Attorney Andy Welch stepped forward to comment. Mr. Welch introduced Mr. John Selfe complimenting his role as Chief Appraiser with the Henry County Board of Assessors. Mr. Welch said Mr. Selfe serves as the head of a department that has the highest financial burden in the county

and said he does an outstanding job serving the county in the capacity as required. Mr. Welch welcomed Mr. Selfe and thanked him for coming to speak before Council.

Mr. John Selfe referenced slides on the overhead screen and reviewed each slide related to potential homestead exemption for the City of Locust Grove. Mr. Selfe made a comment this presentation is for informational purposes should the city have need to implement in the future. Mr. Selfe reviewed the 2021 data with only the allowed State exemptions for a net digest amount of \$442,109,104. Mr. Selfe also reviewed other options [\$35,000 Exemption, 50% Exemption, combinations of the \$35,000 or 50% Exemption with a full 100% Exemption for 65 and older, the then full 100% Exemption].

Attorney Andy Welch said \$442 million is the net Locust Grove taxable digest based upon most current information. Mr. Selfe said the qualifications for Homestead Exemption include an application and review process and would have to be an owner-occupied residence.

Mr. Young asked if we have any other individual exemptions (not locally mandated) and Mr. Welch said only those that apply to county tax in an amount of \$15,000 applied to County levy tax.

Councilman Greer asked if this presentation is for Council's consideration because he was not aware, and Mr. Welch replied this is specifically if the voters want or not. Mr. Welch said he specifically introduced [Homestead Exemption] at the last retreat held at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

Mr. Young said there are people moving to Locust Grove that are asking for improvements that the city is in no position to fund. This is to have something in place to protect Locust Grove residents should a property tax be set. We are trying to be proactive. The city does not rely on property tax, and property taxes are variable in terms of market.

Councilman Breedlove reviewed each scenario that Mr. Selfe provided and said the city wouldn't be affecting homeowners at all in the 100% scenario.

Attorney Andy Welch said this is an item for action; however, Council can postpone until next meeting for further review if needed.

Mayor Price made a comment he suggests not delaying and staying proactive. Nothing further.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS –

NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS –

- 1. Ordinance to approve the final plat for Flakes Mill subdivision, located on South Bethany Road (Parcel ID: 128-02018001) -**

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Williams made the motion to approve the request by approving ordinance # **22-01-010**.

RESULT	APPROVED ORDINANCE #22-01-010
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN SHEAROUSE
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

- 2. Resolution on Local Legislation to be introduced into the State Legislature on Homestead Ad Valorem Tax Exemption –**

Mayor Price asked for a motion. Councilman Breedlove made the motion to approve with one-hundred percent exemption and approving resolution #22-01-011.

RESULT	APPROVED RESOLUTION #22-01-011
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN BREEDLOVE
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN FAVOR

CITY OPERATION REPORTS / WORKSHOP DISCUSSION ITEMS -

MAIN STREET OPERATIONS – COLLEEN WATTS

Ms. Colleen Watts stepped forward and gave an update we are 97-percent occupied in our downtown businesses. We also sent the annual assessment for Georgia Main Street recertification. Nothing further.

PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS – CHIEF AUSTIN

Chief Austin reviewed the monthly report and gave an update total collected in December 2021 was \$62,736.00. The department completed 279 training hours in December.

PUBLIC WORKS – JACK ROSE

Public Works Director Jack Rose gave an update plant operation are good, continuing with general maintenance and repairs. Nothing further.

ADMINISTRATION – BERT FOSTER

Mr. Foster gave an update for the Peeksville Road extension (joining Highway 42 at Peeksville and Cleveland Street), Chase Maddox Park repairs and the additional lane on Highway 42 to Peeksville Road. Mr. Foster also gave an update on the Bill Gardner Parkway modifications, MMIP (commercial vehicle lanes), Traffic signal at Market Place and the Scatter Garden/Veteran’s Memorial. Further, Mr. Foster said we are moving forward with scoping process for the Downtown Corridor Study for potential work beginning next month. Staff met with the sign contractor for the lawn sign at City Hall and will be providing more information soon. Nothing further.

- Resolution to create a streetlight district in Cottage Grove subdivision, on Davis Lake Road –

Mr. Foster said this is a request on behalf of Cottage Grove because the HOA no longer exists. This is for 44 lots with an upgrade of ten (10) LED lights. This will be presented for action in February.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS – DAUNTÉ GIBBS

Mr. Gibbs gave an update his department has issued a total of 19 permits including 10 new house permits for 2022. We have issued 5 COs [all five residential] with 16 business licenses issued for 2022. Mr. Gibbs said there are several ongoing active developments (23 Residential, 5 Commercial, and 7 Industrial developments). Nothing further.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (ARB) – NONE

CITY MANAGER’S COMMENTS –

- **FY 2021 fourth quarter budget update –**

Mr. Young stepped forward to comment. Mr. Young said there is a 1% increase in the operating portion of the general fund. This includes unexpected revenues and some expenditures. We depleted prior year revenue and not using fund balance. The bulk of uses are coming from Public Safety. Nothing further.

- **Resolution for appointment of LGEC members –**

Mr. Young said there is a need for more members of the Locust Grove Events Committee, the cap is 15 people. Mayor Price said we will be removing Claire Brown, Sammy Brown, and Viann Doerr.

Councilman Greer made a recommendation, Shara Williams. Also, a member of public volunteered; Melinda English.

Councilman Greer and Councilman Breedlove also volunteered.

Mr. Young said a venue has been chosen for the retreat for February 27 – March 1 at James Madison Inn, located in Madison, GA. Councilman Breedlove made a comment he will be out of town. Mr. Young said we will review alternative dates and locations and give an update soon.

MAYOR’S COMMENTS –

EXECUTIVE SESSION – NONE

ADJOURNMENT-

Mayor Price asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Greer made the motion to adjourn.

RESULT	ADOPTED
MADE MOTION	COUNCILMAN GREER
2 ND MOTION	COUNCILMAN TAYLOR
VOTE	MOTION CARRIED - ALL IN-FAVOR MEETING ADJOURNED @ 7:47 PM.

Notes taken by:

Misty Spurling, City Clerk