

City of Locust Grove
Council Workshop Meeting Minutes
Public Safety Building – 3640 Highway 42 S.
Locust Grove, GA 30248
Monday, November 20, 2023
6:00 PM

Members Present:	Staff Present:
Keith Boone – Councilman/Pro Tem	Tim Young – City Manager
Carlos Greer – Councilman	Bert Foster – Assistant City Manager
Willie Taylor – Councilman	Misty Spurling – City Clerk
Rod Shearouse - Councilman	Jack Rose – Public Works Director
Rudy Breedlove - Councilman	Daunté Gibbs – Community Development Director
	Colleen Cook – Main Street Manager
Members not Present:	Derrick Austin – Police Chief
Robert Price – Mayor (Sick)	Andy Welch –Attorney
Members present via teleconference:	
Vincent Williams – Councilman	

Mayor Pro Tem Keith Boone called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Invocation given by Assistant City Manager Bert Foster

Councilman Shearouse led the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA –

Mayor Pro Tem Boone asked for a motion. Councilman Greer made the motion to approve the agenda.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Mr. Gofareo Griffin, of Griffin, GA stepped forward to comment. Mr. Griffin said he is interested in having a ministry in Locust Grove and he is searching for a small facility to have services. Mr. Griffin said he used the women’s center in Henry County at one time; but he couldn’t sustain the facility due to an injury.

Councilman Greer asked Mr. Griffin what he is here seeking tonight. Mr. Griffin said he would like to lease and use the women’s center for two hours on Sundays (weekly). Tim said the Women’s Club donated the center to the city; however, there is language in the agreement that the center’s use is for a women’s club only. Tim said the attorney would have to review and modify the agreement. Councilman Shearouse made a comment about the facility not having liability insurance. Mr. Griffin said he has no problem providing insurance for use of the facility. Pro Tem Boone said we need a representative from the women’s club and the city attorney to collaborate and review. Nothing further.

- **Presentation on Compensation Study – Condrey & Associates (via zoom teleconference)**

Tim said we did the salary study with Condrey & Associates, and they will be presenting the findings. Steve Condrey and Jan Hansford are present via [zoom teleconference].

Steve Condrey made a comment that Greg Reece is also present with him, and Jan. Steve said Greg is sharing the report on the overhead screen. Greg reminded everyone of the objectives of the study and said his team distributed questionnaires to all employees and his team conducted employee (phone) interviews. Steve and Jan reviewed the classification tables (Plan A and Plan B), and discussion took place. Plan A would be \$193,405 (4.15% of payroll) and Plan B (3.24% of payroll). Jan explained the “step process” for the pay grades based on years of service.

Tim said the 2024 budget is based on Plan B which is 100 percent of the market. The council expressed concern for our lower paid employees (Maintenance Worker) and said that position would see an increase to \$17.85/hr.

Andy asked Tim to explain how much is planned for the upcoming budget. Tim said \$151,305 is already included in the budget [Plan B] and we would like to make it effective in January 2024. Discussion took place about police officer salaries and senior level staff.

Councilman Breedlove asked if the increase of 4.15 percent is for each employee? Steve said the average increase would be 3.24 percent. Breedlove said it would be a 20 percent increase for the city manager; however, would not be a 20 percent increase for every employee. Breedlove said this isn't really providing the information we were expecting. Tim said they compared us to other cities as specified in the report. Andy said it would be helpful to have some information relative to the position, as opposed to the pay grade.

Councilman Breedlove said we initiated the idea of a salary study to focus on the lower-level positions and other specific positions that were discussed. Andy said this can be remedied if we can coincide these positions and review with Tim, Misty, and HR. Councilman Greer said he doesn't think Locust Grove should be compared to larger cities because we are trying to get lower paid positions to a competitive level. Steve Condrey said this builds a system that is fair with internal relationships and healthier for the organization.

Breedlove said the maintenance worker increase would be ten percent and the City Manager would increase 20 percent and said that is not fair across the board. Andy said they are giving a market base study and beyond that, the adjustments that occur may or may not be what the council desires. We need to review current positions to determine if the increase is appropriate. The idea is to compare cities in your geographic area not above that area.

Greer asked Tim how sustainable this increase is if implemented. Tim said he has incorporated the increase into the FY 2024 budget. We still have a tax included in, but the proposed ad valorem tax has been reduced back. Tim said some of the cities that are included in the study may be smaller or larger than Locust Grove; however, they are facing the same challenges that we are.

Breedlove said he would like data to include the cities of [Stockbridge, Hampton, Fayetteville, Covington, McDonough, and Henry County]. Tim asked Steve if he had any idea how this pay scale would compare to those cities. Mr. Condrey said there would not be much of a variation. Breedlove said he thinks population needs to be considered in the data. Jan Hansford said she could send the backup data on the salary study to staff in the morning. Tim said he would provide the population numbers as well.

Andy said three council members can meet with Tim and Misty at a time to avoid a quorum. Councilman Shearouse said part of the difficulty in tonight's discussion was the environment and asked why Condrey & Associates wasn't in person to present the findings. Tim said their staff works from various locations and could not coordinate schedules.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS –

1. Request to rezone property located at 4409 Highway 42 South (Parcel: 129-01070000) in LL 166 of the 2nd district from RA (residential agricultural) to OI (office institutional) for use as a chiropractor office -

Daunté said this request is supported by the FLUM and staff recommends approval with two conditions. Daunté read the conditions aloud.

Mayor Pro Tem Boone said this is a public hearing and asked the public for comments from anyone in favor of the request.

Dr. Bethany Hankinson stepped forward to comment. Bethany said she and her husband own the property and agree with the conditions attached.

Pro Tem Boone asked for comments from anyone opposed to the request and there were no comments.

Pro Tem Boone closed the public hearing and asked for comments from the Council.

Councilman Greer asked how many parking spaces are required for this use. Daunté said one handicap space and two spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. and said he would have to review the parking standards to confirm. Breedlove said the house is 2,376 sq. ft.

2. FY 2024 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget hearing (Second hearing) -

Tim said this is the second required hearing and reviewed the changes. The taxes increased \$600,000 and everything is stable except for miscellaneous revenue. We are using fund balance transfer mainly for ARPA funds towards right-of-way construction for the Peeksville Road Connector. Tim reviewed the proposed property tax revenue (\$749,540) which decreased from what was originally estimated. The total of revenue and expenditure is \$12.7 million dollars and Tim reviewed individual funds. We are using SPLOST V for the grounds at city hall and development impact fees will be used for major projects in the city and to Henry County for shared revenues.

Mayor Pro Tem Boone said this is a public hearing and asked for comments from anyone in favor of the request and there were no comments.

Mayor Price asked for comments from anyone opposed to the request and there were no comments.

Mayor Price closed the public hearing and asked for comments from the Council.

Breedlove asked if the audio/video for the court room is included in this budget. Tim said yes, we will be replacing the system.

OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS – NONE

NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS – NONE

CITY OPERATION REPORTS / WORKSHOP DISCUSSION ITEMS -

MAIN STREET OPERATIONS – COLLEEN COOK

Ms. Cook gave an update we have lots of events upcoming and Mainstreet, Inc. is finalizing preparations for Christmas in the Grove on December 2, 2023. Mainstreet, Inc. awarded a façade grant to Flourish Hair

Salon on November 19, 2023. HPC met and reviewed one COA. The lighting of the tree will be at 6:00pm Thanksgiving night and we need volunteers for our event on December 2. Nothing further.

PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS – CHIEF AUSTIN

Chief Austin reviewed the monthly report and gave an update total collected in October 2023 was \$75,674.00. The department completed 189 training hours in October, and we had 32 new cases for investigation of which 21 cases were cleared. Chief Austin reviewed the crime analysis report and said a male was shot after the [high school] football game in Bunn Farms subdivision. He is ok but we have no leads at the time. Further, Ford [F-250 and F-350] trucks are being stolen and unable to locate. Also, appliances from (houses under construction) are being stolen along with shoplifting still an ongoing issue.

Councilman Shearouse asked if the shooting was targeted or random? Chief Austin said the victim was followed into the subdivision, so it appeared to be targeted.

Boone asked if the flock camera at the new redlight should be operating. Chief Austin said it was removed during construction. Pro Tem Boone asked what the final count was for the 5K, and Chief said we raised over \$2,000 [with] all proceeds were presented to Hands of Hope.

PUBLIC WORKS – JACK ROSE

Mr. Rose gave an update, and said we are continuing with a regular schedule including cutting grass and normal maintenance. Our lab operator at the wastewater plant, Chris Thomson, has fallen ill and requesting you lift him up in prayers. We are finishing up the Christmas light installation and nothing further.

ADMINISTRATION – BERT FOSTER

Bert gave an update that the Bill Gardner Parkway project is nearing completion, and the contractor is working on the southbound access lane on I-75. The Scatter Garden/Veteran's Memorial bridge is complete, and the cannon has been relocated to the concrete pad. Bert gave an update on the Grove Road project and is in the process of reviewing proposals to upgrade the signal at MLK and Tanger Blvd. We received the proposal for the extra lane on Highway 42 [from Bill Gardner to Peeksville Road] and will present it at the December 4, 2023, meeting.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONS – DAUNTÉ GIBBS

Mr. Gibbs gave an update that the department has issued a total of 1,355 permits (including 184 new house permits) for 2023. We have issued 215 COs [149 residential, and 66 commercials] and 440 business licenses issued so far for 2023.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD (ARB) –

3. Resolution approving the architectural plans submitted for Delta Community Bank to be located at Marketplace Bld. And Highway 42 –

Daunté said this is a request from Tomco Construction, Inc. for a proposed Delta Community Bank. Daunté reviewed the request and said staff is recommending approval with minimum standards attached.

Councilman Shearouse asked if the standards (Section A) are part of our normal code. Daunté said we must look at the intent and meet the intent of the ordinance.

Michael Elliott, of Metro Engineering stepped forward to comment. Michael said he is representing Delta Community Bank and said this was rezoned four years ago. The exterior will be brick and stucco [EFIS], and this will be a high-quality development.

Councilman Greer asked how many entrances this will include. Daunté said there will be two entrances [Highway 42 and additional location at Marketplace].

CITY MANAGER’S COMMENTS –TIM YOUNG

4. Master Service Agreement – GMA H/M Tax Collection –

Tim said the city uses GMA to collect Hotel/Motel tax and GMA is changing the servicing agent from TRPG to HdL. We have received the Master Service Agreement from GMA that includes the transition to HdL and this will be reviewed by the city attorney. We will present for adoption on December 4, 2023, meeting. Pro Tem Boone asked how this will differ from the previous servicing agent. Tim said the process will remain the same.

Further, Tim said we are wrapping up the agreement with Henry County Water Authority in terms of base station readings. The water authority expressed interest in sharing meter basing to get better utilities throughout the system. We will only share the frequency with the county, and they will add language to maintain the individual responsibility.

City Hall repairs are almost complete as well as the Bill Gardner Parkway project. We will be putting together a video of progress for social media.

COUNCIL COMMENTS – NONE

MAYOR’S COMMENTS – NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION – POTENTIAL LITIGATION AND PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Motion to go into executive session to discuss potential litigation and property acquisition matters by Councilman Greer and seconded by Councilman Shearouse. Motion Carried All in favor 7:39 PM.

At 8:01 PM, motion to come back into regular session made by Councilman Breedlove and seconded by Councilman Shearouse.

ADJOURNMENT-

Mayor Pro Tem Boone 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 @ 8:01PM.

Notes taken by:

Misty Spurling, City Clerk