

PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough
Mayor Pro Tem Matt Fuller (virtual)
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, BJ Fletcher Chad Warbington and Demetrius Young
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis
(Virtual participant: Bob Langstaff, Jr.)
Interim City Mgr.: Steven Carter

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING RE: ZONING MATTERS

Using a power point presentation (copy on file), Paul Forgey, Planning Director, discussed information regarding the City’s request to rezone properties, planning considerations, showed maps of the area, discussed future land use information and advised that the PC recommended approval.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, regarding the multiple properties, Mr. Forgey explained the rezoning process, what is/is not allowed, etc.

Commissioner Warbington thanked staff for bringing this forward and having these properties properly zoned, adding that whenever the City becomes aware of other properties like this, he encouraged Commissioners to continue this course to ensure compliance and to protect citizens/properties.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Forgey stated that notices were sent to all those owning properties, it was advertised in the paper, etc., as it pertains to required postings, adding that some mail was returned.

Pattie Pierce who lives in the area thanked the Commission for considering this rezoning.

1. Zoning Case # 21- 028 - City of Albany/Applicant; requests to rezone multiple properties within the Wildcross & Florary Subdivisions from C-R to R-2. (PC Approved 6-0) Ward 4.

Mr. Forgey used power point presentation to discuss the following (copy on file), showing maps of the area, discussed planning considerations, future land use, and advised that the PC recommended approval.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Forgey advised that the applicant is on the call to answer questions.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Fuller, Mr. Forgey advised that the owner/applicant’s intent is to build a commercial retail strip center.

Commissioner Warbington questioned the transportation system, due to the street being one-way, with Mr. Forgey advising that trip generations are taken into consideration. Commissioner Warbington commented on C-2 vs. C-R which has multiple listing, adding that his concern is the multiple uses (drive thru, veterinarian clinic, mobile homes sales, etc.). In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Forgey advised that the Commission can condition approval on C-2 retail/strip center only.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Forgey commented on the community residential zoning, which is multi-family residential, with this area being high residential. Mayor Dorough noted that currently, he could only put duplexes/apartments there, but wants the rezoning in order to have a commercial use or sell it; Mr. Forgey agreed.

Commissioner Howard stated that it is a two-way street and traffic will be challenging due to the businesses in the immediate area.

Calvin Beckham, owner/applicant clarified that it is not a one-way street and, in reply to Commissioner Howard stated that a site plan will be provided, adding that they want to develop a small plaza, about five units, with apparel/clothing/beauty salon being the target.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Beckham stated that he recently purchased the property and is the owner. Commissioner Warbington asked if a condition can be placed that it will be retail only with Mr. Beckham stating that a take-out may be in the area which will not be a drive thru. Discussion followed with Commissioner Warbington stating that staff will evaluate if there is a request for the drive-thru, etc., that needs to be considered.

Commissioner Fletcher asked that a drive-thru be considered since this is the way of the future and asked that this application not be restricted.

2. Zoning Case # 21- 029 - Calvin Beckham/Owner/Applicant; requests to rezone property located at 203 Old Cordele Rd. from C-R to C-2. PC approved 6-0 - Ward 1

Hearing no additional comments, Mayor Dorough adjourned the public hearing.

SPEAKER APPEARANCES:

1. Adam Inyang introduced his partner, Camilla Giddens, and advised that they represent Amethyst and Moonstone. He requested to be able to use a small fraction of the federal funds coming to the City to build a self-sustaining community garden. Using a power point presentation (copy on file), he discussed their mission/purpose, the issues regarding the fight against food insecurity/food deserts, how this impacts the community and their four goals, Ms. Givens discussed education and how food insecurity affects students in school. Additional information was discussed regarding budgetary items in the American Rescue Plan and a request to develop their plan before money is spent.

Commissioner Howard thanked Mr. Inyang for his presentation and commented on the food insecurities that we have within the City of Albany, specifically in the south and east side of town.

Commissioner Fletcher thanked Mr. Inyang for his presentation and said she has information that can be shared with them regarding this matter.

Commissioner Warbington asked that the Clerk share the power point with everyone, and Mr. Inyang explained the process to include land and water conservations, having workshops, etc., to keep funds low to assist those in need. Ms. Giddens commented on the need to have community buy-in with encouraging people to take ownership of the gardens and working with local pastors/churches, adding that many have already expressed interest and have vacant lots available. She stated that more information can be shared regarding the CSA model, which is purchasing a share of the farm per month, with the funds going back to the urban agriculture, as well as grants and other models they are exploring through the USDA.

Commissioner Young thanked Mr. Inyang for sharing the information and his innovative ideas, adding that he feels this is worthy of funding and support by the City of Albany.

Mayor Dorough mentioned the buy-out program whereby property can be used for community gardens with the community accepting responsibility of the upkeep, involving the school system, adding that funding can be looked at possibly as a one-time expenditure and not something that is ongoing.

Commissioner Young advised that the school system has partnered with another group and is involved in community gardens. The focus here is residential, teaching how to become growers in their communities with the group's intent to bring adults and seniors to the table to cultivate gardens in their neighborhoods. Mr. Inyang advised that they have a model of the growth solution specifically for schools, with a curriculum/lesson plans that can be applied to any school.

Commissioner Warbington stated that this may be something that the City Manager should be involved in as it pertains to the American Rescue Plan and what fits in that plan, i.e., having something in place to address items of this nature. Mayor Dorough stated that food insecurity is part of the Plan with Commissioner Warbington asking to have clarification moving forward. Commissioner Young interjected that funding from the American Rescue Plan is discretionary, adding that this is a non-profit group which is allowed by the Plan.

2. James Pratt, Jr. commented on racism and racial issues regarding the Remedy and Reckoning with White Fragility, including justice for African Americans. He explained the concept of white fragility, a dangerous concept and how this factors in with race relations as it pertains to Dr. King's comments regarding 'white backlash' (a step backward). He mentioned the Mayor and two Commissioners he asked to be impeached, suggesting that they have each demonstrated a refusal to reckon in various ways and gave examples of what was said in the media that was offensive, etc., and factored in how this displays white fragility, the ways racism impacts us today due to skin color and, moving away from having valuable conversations to create a new community/system to deal with racism.

Commissioner Young thanked Dr. Pratt for his presentation. Dr. Pratt stated that he has solutions to his comments should anyone want the information.

3. Ronnie Pettiford stated that he is present to express concerns of firefighters who have not agreed to any plan as noted in past meetings. Specifically, he addressed pay scales to improve inequities, subordinate vs. supervisor pay, education of supervisors, subordinates having less education and still being paid more than supervisors, adding that they have over half in the union (75 members). He mentioned information (pay scale) sent from Henry County which addresses pay inequity in Albany and the pay scale Albany firefighters created, using Henry County's as a model, with both sent to Commissioners for consideration. He mentioned the pay increase that was given to the police department last year vs. issues the fire department continues to face and asked that firefighters be involved in the solution to the problems.

Commissioner Howard thanked Mr. Pettiford for the presentation and suggested that the Commission will look at the inequities, which is long overdue.

Commissioner Warbington asked if the collective group does not want the 2.5% but rather wants to find a better solution, with Mr. Pettiford agreeing and stating that they are confident in their solution. Commissioner Warbington stated that this means some will not get a raise to which Mr. Pettiford stated that they feel confident in their decision to address the pay inequities. Commissioner Warbington stated that the Commission is offering a solution by giving the 2.5%, adding that he feels money is in the budget to solve the problems, or at least make a dent in it as noted, even though it may take a few years to get things to where they need to be.

Commissioner Young asked Mr. Pettiford about the conversation he and the City Manager had, with Mr. Pettiford explaining that some supervisor/subordinate pay issues will be fixed. In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Carter explained that he met with the firefighter officers, however, he has not gone back to them to describe in detail what would be done, adding that he would advocate to fix the problems and they agreed to stand by this decision. He said that everything cannot be fixed at the same time and had asked them to prioritize one thing that they are advocating for. Commissioner Young suggested that the solution they offered will fix all the issues and asked if this was looked at. Mr. Carter stated it is a multi-part solution and having to deal with the budget we have in place, it is not something that can be done at one time with the group agreeing with how he wants to go through the process. Commissioner Young clarified that they would forgo the pay increase to do what they are asking for with Mr. Pettiford agreeing and saying he will get back with the figures that will fix the problems. Additional discussion followed with Commissioner Young and Mr. Pettiford clarifying what needs to be done, negotiations, etc.

Mayor Dorough clarified information that he mentioned, adding that his comments were on decisions made over the course of past years, adding that the Commission is not trying to neglect the fire department, but are correcting a situation that comes from prior years. He commented on the pay study and said the problem will be addressed, adding that the primary concern has been identified and will be addressed.

MEETING DATE CHANGE

Mayor Dorough suggested that the following items be moved to the July 6th meeting: 1) Presentation from GDS re: MEAG, 2) Mask Mandate and 3) Small Business Capacity Building

Program. He also suggested having the CSO discussion during the budget presentation later in the meeting.

Following discussion, the Commissioners agreed with Mayor Dorough's suggestions as noted.

In reply to Commissioner Young's concern regarding the CSO project and small business presentation not being heard. Mayor Dorough stated that it was his understanding that the Small Business Capacity-building Program was completed, and the funds awarded; Mr. Carter agreed and explained that the CSO presentation includes how the \$10.0 million will be allocated. Mayor Dorough stated that this item will be moved to the budget presentation and that budget discussions will begin at this time.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Carter stated that the order as listed on the agenda (copy on file) will be followed:

1. Public Works presentation: Director Stacy Rowe discussed the proposed budget for Public Works (\$35.0 million). Discussion followed on how the department is listed in the budget book (sections 32-34) and all that falls under Public Works.

Commissioner Howard questioned how Concrete Enterprise affects the budget with Mr. Rowe advising that there will be no interruption in services with Public Works being the point of contact for any issues. Commissioner Howard questioned vacancies with Mr. Rowe advising that no one will lose their job and explained the process of moving people to other places and filling current vacancies (street division or sewer). In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Davis discussed the contract and automatic renewals, etc., and explained the process of contract renewals and voting at the meeting next week. Commissioner Howard expressed his dissatisfaction with the contract, which was flawed from the beginning.

Mayor Pro Tem Fuller asked the comments/feedback from citizens, with Mr. Rowe stating that he has only received a few complaints; most comments are favorable.

Commissioner Fletcher commented on the vacancies and using employees so that they will not lose their job to fill positions. She mentioned the stormwater fee with Mr. Rowe explaining the purpose, which addresses maintenance, i.e., streets/gutters/clearing ditches and canals, etc.

Commissioner Warbington asked for a list of capital assets being considered for purchase, commented on right-of-way maintenance, and asked if it includes tractors, etc. Mr. Rowe agreed that this is part of clearing canals. Commissioner Warbington commented on the \$27.3 million collected fees, with Robert Griffin, Asst. Engineering Director, explaining the use of the \$27 million collected since 2014. He stated that the money has been used for maintenance to meet EPD's regulations, i.e., maintaining the systems, inspections, etc. Discussion followed with Commissioner Warbington clarifying areas of monies and expenditures, what customers pay (residents vs. businesses).

Commissioner Young stated that information is available on the website that outlines stormwater and explains the process. Discussion followed on use of monies from enterprise funds; with it being two separate projects, the sewer piece funded through the sewer fund and not stormwater fund. Regarding EPD mandates, use of monies from American Rescue Plan, etc., Commissioner Young asked how much money has been collected since the stormwater fee was implemented in 2014, which is \$27.0 million; MEAG funding which is in the bank and possible confusion. Mr. Carter clarified stormwater vs sewer monies with allocations to stormwater. In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Carter advised that decisions are made by policy, staff and the Commission, adding that enterprise monies are used for stormwater with different line items for sewer projects. Commissioner Young asked if the \$27 million will go to inspections and analysis; what is the amount spent for that? Mr. Carter interjected that funds allocated for stormwater and calling it ‘sewer’ slightly conflates the issues. He explained that the policy decision was made to allocate stormwater funds for projects specifically referencing stormwater, explaining enterprise funds being used to fund their own operations. The utility bill has one line for stormwater and one for sewer; the fees collected for stormwater goes toward stormwater. Commissioner Young asked if the \$27.0 million could have been used to start on the CSO project, if the Commission had decided to do that. Mr. Carter replied that was not the decision that was made. Mr. Rowe explained that maintenance, etc., are through stormwater funds and noted cost center (43-46). Discussion followed on funding projects, issues of the CSO, EPD requirements (knowing how to separate when the permit was issued), etc., that was discovered in 2018, other funding identified to correct CSO included rate increases and debt funding or grants. Ken Stock, Asst. City Manager, showed a slide (copy on file) explaining funding for 8th Ave Basin, options, etc. Commissioner Young commented on the American Rescue Plan and having monies for Covid relief, other options for infrastructure funding (grants, etc.), all of which are decisions of the Commission. He cannot support using funds meant to help those impacted by COVID on a project having other options and not prioritizing projects.

Mayor Dorough commented on localized flooding problems, i.e., Holloway Basin with SPLOST monies being spent on other projects instead of infrastructure, etc. He referred to solid waste, asking Mr. Rowe if it is another \$1.5 million; Mr. Rowe agreed. Mayor Dorough advised that this is perplexing as he felt that there would be a savings in monies due to contracting out collection on the east side of Slappey. Mr. Rowe explained that came from rate adjustments, which will be taking place and includes customer audits. Mayor Dorough asked if there will be a corresponding increase in revenue with the increased expense; Mr. Rowe agreed. Discussion followed regarding Special Services.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Derrick Brown, Finance Director, commented on the contract with Concrete Enterprise and the increase of \$2.69 per household; the franchise fee with Mitchell EMC and increase to customers with implementation in July. Commissioner Young interjected that he received a letter advising that there are approximately 1200 customers. In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Brown stated that it is a legal question if customers will have to pay in arrears. In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Rowe stated that they continue to use temporary laborers for commercial customers and litter crews, although the number has been reduced.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Fuller, Mr. Stock stated that \$15.0 million was borrowed from GEFA for the East/West Interceptor project. Regarding funding, Mayor Pro Tem Fuller commented on

the American Relief funds and additional funding from the Biden Administration for infrastructure and reallocation of funds for other projects.

Commissioner Young commented on Mitchell EMC and collection of monies to do business in Albany; a letter was sent to customers from Mitchell EMC stating that the City instructed them to collect the money; he needs to know why it was phrased that way. Mr. Brown explained that they (Mitchell EMC) were informed that they owe 4% of their gross for franchise fees. They were advised that how they decided to collect the fee is up to them, advising that the City had no input/suggestions regarding the wording of the letter. Commissioner Young suggested that the City make a statement to clarify this issue as misinformation was sent and Mitchell EMC should retract the incorrect information that they put out. He asked if the 4% is applied to only Albany customers and are they doing this in other cities; some customers only have to pay a \$1.00 franchise fee on their bill Mr. Brown stated that he is not sure, adding that it also applies to Georgia Power customers; we receive a franchise fee from them every year.

Mayor Dorough asked Mr. Davis to provide a summary of the law on this item since this appears to be a misrepresentation on their part, adding that he will draft a letter to Mitchell EMC. Mr. Davis agreed that that Mitchell EMC is operating in protected territory and explained ‘rebates’ to customers; Albany being a customer is entitled to its share of those funds. He agreed that the letter was outrageous. Mayor Dorough stated that the letter should note that the letter Mitchell EMC sent is misleading, if not actually incorrect. Regarding the \$20.0 million in MEAG credit, he stated that the prior Commission decided to use the money for the Job Investment Fund which promotes economic development in Albany and is prudent use of the funds. He mentioned that a bond will be paid off in July 2021 with the City able to secure funds for the separation project through that.

2. Municipal Court: Barry Brooks, Asst. to the City Manager and Karen McWhite, Court Administrator, presented information regarding the \$930,048 budget. Ms. McWhite discussed line items, staffing, grant funds, Community Court, etc.

Commissioner Howard asked for information regarding the Community Court Case Manager that is being advertised and what this job entails with Ms. McWhite explaining. Commissioner Howard commented on 800 block of W. Gordon Ave. and asked for the process of renovating dilapidated houses and why lengthy extensions are given, with Ms. McWhite explaining that rights are not infringed upon and people are given opportunities to correct situations. Commissioner Howard also addressed property in E. Albany with Ms. McWhite deferring to Mr. Davis regarding court extensions. Commissioner Howard commented on other cases as it pertains to poverty, mental illnesses, and substance abuse, adding that courts cannot resolve all issues.

Mr. Brooks advised that Judge Weaver can come back to share more information regarding the report, agreeing that the courts are not equipped to handle many of the issues that come before the court including providing information on, i.e., obtaining their GED, etc. Regarding code enforcement issues, he advised that there was a unified effort with the court and code to ensure citizens understand the process.

Commissioner Fletcher commented on a case whereby the courts worked with a citizen to get their neighborhood corrected and asked for a summary of what is being done to assist citizens. Mr.

Brooks advised that Judge Weaver took recommendations from the task force to heart, i.e., miscommunications between departments, etc., regarding the disconnect and commented on having a virtual court, etc., to be more proactive in resolving cases quicker.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington regarding staffing, Ms. McWhite and Mr. Brooks explained temporary positions that are now permitted to be full-time and moving forward with this. Commissioner Warbington asked the result of having the courthouse shut down and if there were expenses to move to the civic center. Mr. Brooks stated that costs were minimal, and that additional information can be brought back regarding lease agreements, reimbursements, etc. In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Brooks explained benefits of a virtual court (reduction in rental costs, etc.), adding that security is being provided by APD at the civic center.

In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Brooks explained that task force recommendations were used, and they are looking for best practices to bring back to the Commission to review. They are working with the consultants, including APD, the City Attorney, et al on recommendations and/or whether the ordinance must be modified. Commissioner Young commented on expectations, the judge rendering judgements and identifying a structure so that expectations are united and the judge adhering to adopted ordinances. Regarding the report, Mr. Brooks advised that they are approximately half-way through with the initial expectation being four months, however the end of August is when a draft is expected that will allow recommendations to be made. He mentioned focused items, i.e., virtual court and the schedule being moved to accommodate the renovations at the courthouse, etc. He said they will be in town and that they can be brought back to have discussion with the Commission to update them.

Mayor Dorough stated that we are paying rent and asked to be refunded for the time the court was not being held at the courthouse. In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Brown stated that the revenue from Municipal Court is part of general fund revenues.

3. Engineering: Director Bruce Maples discussed the budget, including number of employees, adding that the budget is \$3.7 million.

Commissioner Howard asked the number of registered engineers; Mr. Maples replied that including himself there are three. In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Maples discussed the CSO project and gave a brief history dating back to 1978, adding that we are at deadline at this point to address the issues. A brief discussion followed with Mr. Maples explaining that COVID affected deadlines, obtaining permits, and waiting on decisions from agencies to respond to requests, adding that construction costs are escalating, and that the City will have to request an extension in 2024. Commissioner Howard asked what happens if an EPD does not grant an extension; Mr. Maples replied that the City will face fines up to \$50,000/day.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Fuller regarding Commissioners writing letters, visiting specific departments of the state to help, Mr. Maples mentioned putting together an RFQ, adding that they must know if the City will be using federal funds because even the engagement of any consultant hired to help the City reach the 2025 goal is dictated by the funding source.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Maples advised that in addition to Engineering, he has Utility Engineering, Planning & Development, and the stormwater utility engineering group is housed in his department. Commissioner Warbington referenced the LED lights, asking if the City is seeing any savings or if there have been many claims, noting that if lights go out, someone else replaces them. Mr. Maples agreed, stating that MetroPower makes repairs at no cost. A brief discussion ensued regarding traffic studies, speed tables, purchasing additional radar devices, being backlogged due to the contractor having difficulty hiring workers. Another RFQ was released with the aim of getting more interest, but the same contractor was again the sole bidder.

In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Maples explained that the chart provided by Mr. Stock today shows funding, expectations, and time limit on spending. Discussion followed on setting aside monies (first \$10.0 million) to see if funding will come from the Biden Administration and how this affects the timeline. Mr. Maples expressed concern on possible/probable delays and being able to meet the deadline and commented on how long it takes to get projects moving, issues with Historical Preservation Commissioner Young asked if the first \$10.0 million is set aside for six months to see if the infrastructure funds come by October, how does that affect the timeline. Mr. Maples replied that he is already anxious as they have already lost from October to June of this year, with *every delay* jeopardizing meeting the deadline. He mentioned the lengthy, drawn-out discussions with property owners just trying to get easements for a sidewalk; they think that they are going to get big payouts, extending the time to begin a project.

Mayor Dorough asked that when we are questioned about the project, we say we will do everything possible to get projects completed, adding that this is a priority and asked to get HPC ready, consolidate sidewalk construction with road surfacing, etc., getting quarterly progress reports, etc. A brief discussion followed on Mr. Maples asking for additional employees, the Constantine report not prepared with EPD mandates, and the Threadcraft report based on EPD's requirement of meeting the 85% separation, etc.

Mayor Dorough recognized William Wright to speak, who discussed information (copy on file) regarding the budget, the survey of 25 cities by the Wall Street Journal, which are losing population, with Albany being 75th in the nation. The budget should be reduced because of population loss; a loss he blames on local government leaders. He mentioned Ms. Brown's report regarding capacity building, stating that Framtech helped 2500 businesses with PPP loans in the amount of \$10.0 million. He stated that all they received from the City was a hard time.

Commissioner Howard clarified that the 2500 who benefited from monies will be provided at his next presentation. Mr. Wright agreed and briefly discussed SBA loans.

Commissioner Young clarified that Mr. Wright did not get money from the City for the work he has done to help businesses asking where his money comes from. Mr. Wright explained the requirements of SBA loans, in which the facilitator gets 25% or approximately \$5,000 to navigate red tape; however, he did not receive any funds, adding that his daughter and others assist with funding, adding that he works for the Atlanta Federal Reserve Bank, the third largest bank in the world. In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Wright stated the economic impact of his assistance with the businesses amounts to approximately \$40.0 million, reiterating that no City funds were involved or were receive. Commissioner Young asked his take on why the City budget continues

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to grow in spite of losing population. Mr. Wright mentioned that City department heads do not reduce their budgets, as well as 30% waste in governments/welfare organizations.

Mayor Dorough mentioned Eagles of America and told Mr. Wright that \$12.5 million came from the Cares Act, adding that he is being critical of the City, but is not acknowledging the fact that it was an allocation and it was a priority to draw the \$12.5 million.

Mayor Dorough recognized City staff to speak on proposed Pension contribution increases and asked that this option not be imposed. Speaking were pension board members: Shanan Heppard, APD Asst Chief Derrell Smith and Mary Singleton. Dept. Directors included: Jimmy Norman, Stacy Rowe, and Mary Ann Petty.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Chief Smith gave comments regarding the impact the increase will have on public safety officers.

Mayor Pro Tem Fuller commented on prior decisions that were made by Pension Board members and elected officials that are now up for discussion. In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Fuller, Mr. Brown stated that the actuary is not recommending an increase at this time.

Commissioner Fletcher thanked the group for its input and made comments regarding the concerns staff has with the proposed increase and suggested looking at future costs and decisions to take care of City employees.

Commissioner Warbington thanked the group for sharing the information and for representing City employees.

Commissioner Young thanked the group for coming and mentioned that this is something being felt throughout the nation and commented on minimum wage and how many employees fall into this category, etc.

Mayor Dorough said that he appreciates employees and what they do and commented on the fund being underfunded at this time even though the actuary stated that an increase is not needed at this time. He stated that the stock market is volatile, and he is concerned about the future and not having enough money to fund the pension. He commented on the proposal to give a 2% COLA instead, he amended that to 2.5% with 0.5% being contributed by non-public safety into the fund. He mentioned Commissioner Young's criticism of past Commissions not having the foresight to address the CSO issue; the City has an obligation to ensure that the Pension fund is adequately financed; however, it is not. At the spring retreat, the Commission learned that it is at 60%, while it should be at 80%.

Commissioner Howard thanked Ms. Petty for her 40+ years of service to the City of Albany.

Following a brief recess, Mayor Dorough reconvened the meeting.

Special Funds (SPLOST/TSPLOST/HOTEL/MOTEL TAX)

Mr. Brown stated that Mayor Pro Tem Fuller brought up these specific funds for discussion. He referred to the SPLOST tab and discussed information, followed by a brief overview of special funds and expenses covered by them.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Brown stated that he is unsure if the Civil Rights Museum has reopened yet. Commissioner Howard noted that they are allocated \$100,000; Mr. Brown agreed.

Commissioner Warbington asked for the spreadsheet showing SPLOST funding vs. what has been spent. Mr. Brown stated that it will be sent.

Mayor Dorough noted spending \$2.0 million this fiscal year on storm water, but nothing was allocated out of SPLOST for next year. Mr. Brown said that it should be \$2.0 million as it will not be spent this year and should be moved over to the current fiscal year. Additional discussion included recreation; Fire Station #2; Barkley Extension; road resurfacing; the Transportation Center, Airport improvements, First Tee; and railroad crossing improvements.

Mr. Brown stated that he was just advised that the Civil Rights Museum is currently still closed, but plans are to reopen soon, but no specific date has been set. Commissioner Howard asked if they need the funds since they are not open. Mr. Brown stated that is something he cannot answer. Commissioner Howard asked that an answer is forthcoming before the budget is adopted. Mr. Brown stated that he will follow-up on getting a specific date.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Brown stated that SPLOST VII ends next year, with SPLOST VIII being voted on next November and collections beginning typically in April.

5. Salary & Pay Options

Mr. Carter stated that the proposal is the 2.5% and to address the supervisor/subordinate issue across the City; they need input from Commissioners on how they want to address the pay disparity. Mayor Dorough noted that the proposal from staff is a 2.5% across the board raise for all employees, in addition to addressing the issue of subordinate/superior conflict across the City; Mr. Carter agreed, adding that that the proposal did not incorporate a .05% increase for Pension.

Commissioner Howard supported the 2.5% raise for all employees.

Commissioner Fletcher agreed with Commissioner Howard but urged that the future of the Pension fund be addressed.

Commissioner Warbington also supported the raise, but also supports an additional 2% for public safety.

Commissioner Langstaff agreed with Commissioner Warbington.

Commissioners Fletcher and Young asked to get the numbers for the additional 2% for public safety. In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Carter advised that the Fire Department heard staff's proposal, but is not willing to modify the pay scale with a week left to present a budget to Commissioners. He added that Mr. Brown advised that Commissioner Warbington's proposal would be an additional \$550,000 over what has been proposed today.

Mayor Dorough referred to the letter he sent stating his position: 2.5% raise across the board for all employees, with 0.5% of that being contributed to the Pension fund; employees making over \$90,000 getting a 1% raise. He reiterated that the Pension fund being at 60% is a grave concern. He mentioned the pay study for the Fire Department, which will require amending the budget and the need to look at the additional 2% for public safety, adding that the Police Department received 6% last year. He said that a look is necessary at linemen, in order to avert a crisis; Mr. Carter agreed.

Commissioners Howard and Fletcher supported the 2.5% across the board and not singling out public safety for an additional 2%.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Brown stated that he believes we will close this fiscal year in good shape, adding that he will be disappointed if we do not have a surplus in the general fund of approximately \$3-4.0 million. Mr. Carter advised that the additional 2% Commissioner Warbington proposed will need a harder look as the funds would strictly come from the general fund, while the rest fits into multiple funds.

Commissioner Young stated that he could support Commissioner Warbington's proposal based on the surplus Mr. Brown just mentioned.

Mayor Dorough mentioned that the \$500,000 could be used for Carver Gym and expanding youth programs. He mentioned the 4% regarding Mitchell EMC, asking Mr. Brown if it was considered in the budget; Mr. Brown explained that the information just came to staff's attention last week and has not been factored in. In reply to Mayor Dorough, he said that it is something that should have been paid since 1995.

6. Pension Funding/Employee contributions

Mr. Brown stated that the Actuary from Cavanaugh McDonald advised that the national average for pensions being funded is 75%. He said that based on the most current report from the Actuary, he feels that an increase is not warranted at this time.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Brown stated that if contributions were increased 0.5%, it would not move the needle very much to reach the 85%. Commissioner Warbington mentioned a one-time contribution to the Pension fund using the surplus. Mr. Brown compared a one-time contribution vs. plan changes, increased contributions, and lowering our assumption.

7. Use of \$20 million re: ARA 2021

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Mr. Brown briefly discussed the funds, projects/loans, federal funds for infrastructure, fee/rate increases, stating that unless somethings changes, the recommendation would be to apply for a \$53.0 million GEFA loan next spring.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Brown discussed GEFA loans and when funds from the American Rescue Act are expected. Commissioner Howard mentioned Mayor Dorough's letter, stating that he is uncomfortable with putting the entire \$20.0 million of the ARA toward infrastructure, even though he is well aware of the issue of the CSO, he supports following guidelines and rebuilding the community.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that she is comfortable allocating the entire \$20.0 million to infrastructure, which benefits the entire community.

Commissioner Warbington asked if the Commission decides to use the entire \$20.0 million today, does it bind the Commission or could changes be made down the road. Mr. Brown explained that just like amending the budget, if the Commission decides to do something today, at the next meeting the decision could be to do something different. Commissioner Warbington mentioned the presentations today, asking if the City could decide to allocate funding for the community garden. Mr. Brown stated that the guidelines are intentionally broad and flexible; he feels that the gardens would be an acceptable use of the funds; however, the City will be responsible to ensure that any subrecipient also follow the guidelines and must provide an accounting of the funds for seven years. Commissioner Warbington discussed the possibility of funding being jeopardized by either a City department/employee or private citizen; at this point, he supports earmarking the \$20.0 million for infrastructure.

Commissioner Young stated that while the funds are discretionary, they are not without accountability and briefly discussed non-profits/Community & Economic Development and being able to address crime, blight, poverty, youth violence, etc. He disagrees with the mindset that the CSO must be done now, even though he realizes the City cannot continue to kick it down the road and advocated negotiating how the funds are used. Reiterating that these funds are discretionary, the infrastructure funds are not, and he does not want to miss the opportunity to help this community heal; doing otherwise is contrary to the intention of these funds.

Mayor Dorough stated that we are not committing \$20.0 million, but rather \$10.0 million at this time and if the infrastructure bill is passed and money is available, the next \$10.0 million can be used for food insecurity, which concerns him, too. If the City takes on a GEFA loan or issues a bond, they must be paid back, which will be repaid through rate increases and negatively impacts those at/below the poverty level even more.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the use of the \$20 million. Mayor Dorough stated that \$10 million is all that is on the table this year with an additional \$10 million for discussion next year. He stated that Commissioner Howard wants to be able to allocate funds to other projects; Commissioner Fletcher, like himself, feels it should all go to the separation project. Commissioner Warbington supported the entire \$20.0 million for the CSO. Mayor Dorough advised that staff is only looking for direction at this time. The consensus was for Mr. Carter to poll the Commissioners since all are not available at this time to give their final input.

Commissioner Young stated that he is not onboard with the entire \$20.0 million being used for the CSO and referred to the Mayor's letter to allocate the full amount to that project. He expressed concern that we have no guarantee that if infrastructure money comes, it will be the will of the Commission anyway. The money that is coming is for COVID relief and he cannot support acting in opposition to President Biden's instructions.

Regarding the pay increase, Mr. Carter asked for direction. Mayor Dorough said he will not commit at this time with Mr. Carter stating that the 2.5% plus the additional 2% is \$5.5 million. Mayor Dorough stated that 2.5% is not what he proposed, but he can accept it. However, the issue is 2.5% for all employees and an additional 2% for public safety.

Commissioner Warbington stated that since Mayor Pro Tem Fuller and Commissioner Langstaff are not on the call (at this time), Mr. Carter can poll and provide information. Discussion followed on whether to have a meeting on Friday to finalize the questions.

Mr. Carter mentioned the request by Economic Development Commission to increase payment by an additional \$100,000 over what we traditionally pay. Commissioner Warbington stated that this is a benefit to the City and County by not having a third party and being able to rotate the Chairman's position instead of having the same person serve continuously, etc., as well as other reasons why this is a good idea.

Commissioner Howard said that he does not support the \$100,000 increase. Commissioners Fletcher, Warbington and Langstaff and Mayor Dorough expressed support, Commissioner Young did not support this expense and gave reasons (no City support of the CED department). Mayor Dorough asked that Ms. Brown provide a proposal regarding the City supplementing that department.

Regarding the pension increase, Mayor Dorough stated that no one was in favor of an increase.

Mayor Dorough clarified that Commissioners Howard, Fletcher, and himself are 2.5% across the board, with Commissioners Langstaff, Warbington and Young supporting the 2.5% across the board with additional 2% for public safety.

APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Dorough noted the lack of applications and asked City Clerk Sonja Tolbert the reason. Ms. Tolbert advised that in her 20 years with the City, having served with Joann Pope in the 1980's, applications were never instituted; the process is advertising appointments and soliciting letters of interest and resumes.

Discussion followed as noted:

1. Power Supply Committee (Utility Board)

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Commissioner Langstaff nominated Commissioner Warbington to serve.

2. Albany Housing Authority

Mayor Dorough said he will reappoint Kelly Jenkins.

3. Animal Control Board - One Appointment

The consensus was to reappoint Dr. Steve Whatley

4. Aviation Commission - One Appointment

The consensus was to reappoint Chandu Kuntawala

5. Chehaw Park Authority - Two Appointments

Mayor Dorough noted that Nathan Borer and Rachelle Bitterman asked to be reappointed, and Mary Ligon's six-year term limit expires next month. The Clerk advised that there is no application process, however, an email was received from an interested person who did not have correct information to submit at this time. Mayor Dorough suggested to continue advertising.

6. Community Development Council - Annual Appointments

Ms. Tolbert stated that eight asked to be reappointed and three asked not to be reappointed.

The consensus was to reappoint the eight desiring to be reappointed (Tracey Taylor, Marian Fredrick, John Hawthorne, Alma Noble, Clara Knight, Carol Turner, Sherell Byrd and Timothy Sweet-Holp) and to continue advertising to fill vacancies.

Commissioner Young asked that a letter be sent to the Board requesting to amend their by-laws and decreasing the number based on the vacancies that continue year in and year out.

Ms. Tolbert interjected that she is unsure if HUD sanctioned the Board amending its by-laws, which they did two years ago; Ms. Brown knows the process.

7. Downtown Development Authority - Four Appointments

The consensus was to reappoint Thelma Johnson, Omar Salaam and Stanley Logue and to continue advertising the vacancy left by Carl White.

ESG CONTRACT ADJUSTMENTS

Jeff Hughes, Senior Sewer Superintendent, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the modification to the contract (eliminate automatic renewals provision after five years, which ESG agreed to) and to purchase a crane.

Commissioner Warbington stated that he is not in favor of modifying and gave reasons. Mr. Hughes noted the termination clause with 120 days-notice.

JUNE 15, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

MORATORIUM RE: ALCOHOL LICENSES (moved to July 20 work session)

GDS ASSOCIATES MEAG POWER ANALYSIS PROJECT REPORT (moved to the 7/6 work session)

MASK MANDATE (moved to the 7/6 work session)

PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATION

Marshal Walter Norman discussed the following application:

1. Brother's Pizza; 2820 Meredyth Dr. Suite 4 & 5; I. Vega/Agent; Beer & Wine Consumption - WARD 5

There were no questions/comments on this item.

Mayor Dorough advised that Commissioner Young left the meeting to take a call and that he will be virtual henceforth.

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATION - Transfer of Ownership

Marshal Norman discussed the following application:

1. Muskan Enterprise LLC; d/b/a Quick Shop; 814 N. Jefferson St. L. Smith/Agent; Beer & Wine Package - WARD 2

There were no questions/comments on this item.

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

NORFOLK SOUTHERN EASEMENTS

Mr. Maples discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding a request to approve temporary construction and permanent easements to Norfolk Southern at five railroad crossings re: Safety Improvements GDOT #P.I. 0011727.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Maples explained the displayed maps, which are permanent and/or temporary easements.

CSO SEPARATION PROJECT TIMELINE UPDATE

This item was discussed in conjunction with earlier budget discussions.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

(moved to the 7/6 work session)

UPDATE RE: SMALL BUSINESS CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

PURCHASES

Yvette Fields, Central Services Director, discussed the following information (copy on file):

1. Pace Building Roof Replacement – Richter Construction of Georgia, LLC
Estimated exp. \$209,000.00

Commissioner Howard asked that old buildings be looked at before spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to renovate.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Facilities Director Don Gray, agreed that the reason to replace the roof is due to the data center being moved to that building.

Ms. Fields discussed the following information (copy on file):

2. Temporary Labor Services Global SCR
Estimated exp. \$79,926.00

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Craig Potter, Interim Recreation Director, stated that he is not sure if both Boys/Girls Clubs have opened their pool but will provide the information.

Commissioner Fletcher mentioned summer programs, which are greatly needed for the youth in this community.

Mayor Dorough commented on Savannah and Athens having at-risk youth summer job programs and asked that this be looked at for next summer. Mr. Carter advised that money is in the budget to have a program of this nature with Mayor Dorough asking for more information.

Commissioner Warbington mentioned the Chamber having a small program this summer; Mr. Carter stated that he will reach out to the Chamber to suggest partnering with them.

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2021 LMIG GRANT RE: SAFETY ACTION PLAN FUNDING

Mr. Maples discussed information (copy on file) regarding approval to accept the 2021 LMIG Safety Action Plan grant in the amount of \$150,000.00.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Maples stated that there is a list of priorities submitted by GDOT, which they evaluated regarding safety issues and explained the process.

Mayor Dorough stated that we can complete all of our projects except for one with our match.

EPA BROWNFIELD ASSESSMENT GRANT

Paul Forgey, Planning Director, discussed information (copy on file) regarding approval to accept a \$300,000 Brownfield Assessment grant award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, advising that there is no City match.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Forgey explained that the grant was written to focus on downtown; the Theatre was specifically mentioned; however, a developer is needed first.

APD GRANT APPLICATION RE: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Albany Police Chief Michael Persley discussed information (copy on file) regarding the request to authorize a grant application re: Department of Justice/Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Community Policing Development (CPD) Microgrants Program.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Chief Persley advised that the youth program that was previously discussed could be inclusive of the grant.

Mayor Dorough noted that no ‘cons’ were listed in the grant proposal and, if the grant is not awarded, the effort involved in applying for the grant be listed. Chief Persley explained that really there were no cons and briefly discussed information to implement the grant.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Mr. Carter stated that he has a travel item that needs to be approved (copy on file). Mayor Dorough moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Warbington; the motion unanimously carried. Mr. Carter announced that there are big plans to celebrate the 4th of July this weekend and invited the public to attend.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA(S)

Commissioner Howard asked Chief Persley to check an area shooting firecrackers from 9 pm – 11 pm either in the Hidden Oaks or Shadow-wood area and suggested doing an announcement so that citizens are informed of the new rule.

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Commissioner Fletcher mentioned the Civil Rights Museum, which is a tourist attraction and asked to check on operations. Mayor Dorough stated that he will be meeting with members this week and will question what is going on.

Commissioner Warbington suggested having a discussion on the long meetings to be more standardized and efficient. Mayor Dorough stated that next year budget meetings can be scheduled separately from work sessions. Commissioner Warbington also questioned the way items are placed on the agenda, suggesting taking a straw vote to ascertain if this is something the majority is interested in, etc. A brief discussion followed on the pros/cons of having budget discussions included with work sessions, Commissioners having enough time, within reason, to speak, etc.

Commissioner Young announced that the School Board election is today and encouraged citizens to get out and vote.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK