

SEPTEMBER 7, 2021
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

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

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

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

1. Pastor Michael White distributed information (copy on file) regarding issues (crime/gang activities, lack of community police, etc.), in the areas that he identified (Gillespie, Highland, Whitney, Edgerly Avenues and Magnolia St.) and made recommendations as noted in his handout.

Commissioner Howard stated that the concerns are shared, adding that the issues are nationwide. He mentioned slumlords, long/timely process of court cases regarding dilapidated properties, etc., which does not help the situation.

Commissioner Fletcher echoed the comments of Commissioner Howard and stated that the area noted is mostly renters, the roads require speed bumps, lights are out in alleys, people have moved and bills for many lights were being paid by those who moved, etc.

Pastor White suggested that speed bumps are needed in the Broad Ave., area as well, with Commissioner Fletcher agreeing and providing information regarding the process.

Commissioner Warbington thanked Pastor White for speaking to this matter and elaborated on the housing issues in the areas and bringing housing up to current standards.

Commissioner Young thanked Pastor White for his comments and mentioned pastors meeting in the areas to discuss housing, with Pastor White acknowledging discussions. Commissioner Young commented on deteriorating housing and the increase in crime with resources being focused in those areas.

Mayor Dorough commented on LED streetlights which should not be a concern, demolition of dilapidated homes, empty lots, etc., and said he would be interested in attending an association meeting to discuss further with the ministers. He commented on the parks in the area and the program the Sheriff's Department has which engages at-risk youths, adding that this takes time.

2. Keon Nealy – was not present.

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TRAVEL

Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve the following travel, seconded by Commissioner Howard and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

1. Mayor K. Dorough; 2021 GMA Annual Conference; Savannah, GA; Aug. 5-10, 2021; \$3,075.72
2. Commissioner J. Howard; 2021 GMA Annual Conference; Savannah, GA; Aug. 6-10, 2021; \$2,199.38
3. Commissioner C. Warbington; 2021 GMA Annual Conference; Savannah, GA; Aug. 6-10, 2021; \$2,421.50
4. Commissioner D. Young; 2021 GMA Annual Conference; Savannah, GA; Aug. 6-10, 2021; \$2,349.36
5. S. Carter, Interim City Manager; Annual Chamber Meeting w/ Federal Delegation; Sept. 20-23, 2021; \$2,131.76

GDOT ROADWAY LIGHTING AGREEMENT

Bruce Maples, Director of Engineering, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the request to approve and execute a GDOT Lighting Agreement pertaining to LED lights in the area as noted. Mr. Davis commented on the costs, adding that the City is responsible for maintenance and upkeep.

Commissioner Howard asked that E. Oglethorpe and Hwy 19 be fitted with LED lights due to the increase in traffic at the Love's Truck Stop. Mr. Maples commented on the process which includes sending information to GDOT to look at this area.

The consensus was to put this item on the consent agenda.

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

LIPPITT DRIVE SPEED TABLES

Mr. Maples discussed information (copy on file) regarding the request to add additional speed tables for Lippitt Drive (six at a cost of approx. \$40,800), adding that this is a request from Commissioner Fletcher. In reply to Mayor Dorough, he advised that funding was originally taken from TSPLOST, with \$100,000 allocated each year; however, they have been informed that funds for 2022 are already allocated or expended

Derrick Brown, Finance Director, stated that \$0.5 million was allocated on the referendum and advised that as long as that amount is not exceeded, the City has \$11/12.0 million allocated in TSPLOST this fiscal year for projects. He agreed with Mr. Maples that the City has been allocating \$100,000 per year for speed tables.

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Commissioner Fletcher briefly discussed speeders coming off Newton Road onto Slappey at approximately 50 mph. in front of Monroe HS. She referred to resolution 20-R187 authorizing additional speed bumps, adding that a letter was received from the school system and residents in that area.

Mayor Dorough stated that his concern is installing speed bumps without conducting a speed study first (which may/may not give accurate results). Mr. Maples stated that staff can conduct a speed study prior to the installation of the additional speed tables.

Commissioner Young questioned following procedures and prohibiting a ‘jumping in line’/moving ahead of prior requests, adding that he wants to be able to justify this to constituents who made a request, since the speed studies conducted for his ward are still waiting in line. Mayor Dorough stated that this is similar to his concerns; once the speed bumps are in place the chance to get accurate readings are lost. He asked Mr. Carter to look at this matter, with Mr. Carter stating that the tables have not been installed and there is time to do a study before installation.

Commissioner Howard commented on the 2600-2700 block of Yorktown and many not signing the petition to get speed bumps; however, he asked if speed tables can be put in this area. Replying affirmatively, Mr. Maples explained the process, adding that it is up to the City Commission to make this determination. Mayor Dorough asked the Clerk to ensure that this item is on the next agenda.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that she appreciates the explanation that a speed study has been conducted/completed, which is how she knew how fast cars were going. She said she does not want anyone thinking she jumped in front of the line and mentioned the concerns of the High School/school board, which is the reason for rushing to get the speed tables installed.

A brief discussion followed with Commissioner Warbington commenting that speed studies are not being conducted on the areas as noted and suggesting conducting a speed study on the 700/900 and 1000 blocks. Mayor Dorough suggested conducting a study only on the 900 block with Commissioner Warbington agreeing to not override the resolution and to ask for a study.

Commissioners Langstaff and Young agreed with the comments of Commissioner Warbington.

Commissioner Young briefly discussed the process including the study, the policy, being guided by the situation and being a public safety issue (regarding the speed study). Mayor Dorough stated that residents should be taken into consideration as well with Commissioner Young stating that there are requests from citizens as it pertains to having signatures and that this is in line for speed tables to be installed. He commented on issues that have prevented the process to proceed (speed studies backed up due to lack of necessary equipment, etc.), and said he wants to be able to explain to his constituents the reason for the delay, while others are being expedited.

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Mr. Maples mentioned having to contend with vandalism and explained that when speed counters are put in place, equipment is crushed/destroyed, which hinders the process, adding that this prevents them from catching up with requests and expediting speed studies.

Mayor Dorough asked for consensus of the 900 block of Lippitt speed study and if the results justify the installation of additional speed tables, the proposed speed tables from the 700 block to the 1000 block of Lippitt (segment from Slappey Drive to Newton Road) will be installed.

Commissioner Warbington suggested tabling this until the information is received with Mr. Carter agreeing that this item will not be brought back until we have the additional information.

Commissioner Young asked for a list of where we are with the studies, with Mr. Maples stating that he will provide this information.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

PURCHASES:

Kimberly Allen, Buyer, discussed the following (copy on file):

1. Fleet Vehicle Maintenance Facility Site Work; Zane Grace Construction,
Leesburg, GA.
Estimated total exp. \$271,390.00

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Peter Bednar stated that they moved in 2018 and discussed the condition of the parking lot. In reply to Commissioner Howard regarding unsightly, inoperable vehicles on site, Mr. Bednar stated that some vehicles are down for repairs, but they are expediting the surplus process.

Mayor Pro Tem Fuller asked if the City is happy with Zane Grace Construction, with Don Gray, Facilities Director, stating that staff is satisfied.

Commissioner Warbington asked if this item is in the budget; Mr. Carter replied affirmatively, adding that it is a line item in the fleet capital budget. Regarding the paving, Mr. Bednar provided information regarding the need to pave (rainy season, vehicles getting stuck and/or damaged, etc.).

Mayor Dorough commented on the pros and cons and asked the number of mechanics, Mr. Bednar stated 12, with 15 being allocated.

Commissioner Howard commented on paving on E. Broad Ave., and, being behind on the project with Mr. Gray deferring to Mr. Maples. The consensus was to put this item on the consent agenda.

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Ms. Allen discussed the following (copy on file):

2. Beattie Woods Drainage Improvements; POPCO, Inc., Sylvester, GA.
Estimated total exp. \$497,736.00

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Jeff Hughes, Senior Wastewater Supt., explained that the project regarding Beattie Woods Drainage Improvements, will keep water from getting underneath homes by placing a force main and pump station there and gave the location of the pond off Beattie Woods.

In reply to Commissioner Howard regarding 259 Mitchell Street, Mr. Hughes stated that the work is at the pond on the corner of Mitchell and Crawford. Ken Stock, Asst. City Manager, stated that they will send a map regarding 259 Mitchell Street.

Commissioner Warbington clarified that the City has all the property it needs on Bellingham with there being no need to acquire additional property for the pumping station. Mr. Hughes agreed.

Mayor Dorough commented on increased maintenance cost due to the expansion of the system throughout the city, scheduled street sweeps, etc., with Mr. Carter stating that this will go before the Utility Board. Mayor Dorough reiterated the increased costs for the City, with Mr. Carter agreeing that maintenance cost will go up.

The consensus was to put this on the consent agenda.

Christina Strassenberg, Buyer. discussed the following (copy on file):

3. Ford F550 Bucket Truck; Altec Industries, Inc., Birmingham, AL.
Total cost \$121,386.00

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Bednar commented on the condition of current trucks, having to use rental trucks (\$2,640 per month), etc., and advised that the life cycle is approximately five years with this one being 11 years old.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Fuller, Mr. Bednar agreed that it could be February before the equipment is delivered.

Commissioner Fletcher asked the life cycle of the trucks with Mr. Bednar explaining the high maintenance of the equipment (three-year-36,000 warranty). A brief discussion ensued regarding purchasing vs. leasing.

Mayor Dorough commented on rolling stock discussions at the Utility Board and there not being inventory to meet demand in the coming months with the costs and wait time increasing. Mr. Bednar agreed. The consensus was to put this item on the consent agenda.

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APPROVAL OF 2022 EMPLOYEE GROUP BENEFITS PLAN

Patrick Pendleton, HR Director, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the request to approve the 2022 Benefits Plan and introduced Tammi Starkey, Sr. VP NFP/ShawHankins, to discuss the power point.

Ms. Starkey provided an overview regarding renewal of the plan: 1) History of claims (2011-2021) and especially the impact of high-cost claims; 2) paid COVID-19 claims; 3) projected \$600,000 savings on paid claims, as well as \$600,000 in rebates coming back to the plan based on reduction/rebates in prescription drug costs; 4) post-65 retirees medical renewal reduction; 5) Ancillary renewals and, 6) open enrollment originally planned for early November has been pushed up to October 25 – November 5. She advised that virtual education meetings will be held to help employees understand benefits/options, ask questions, with online enrollment and one-on-one site enrollment counseling assistance being available.

In reply to Mayor Dorough regarding past trends of increasing health care cost, Ms. Starkey gave statistics and explained that the proactive measures taken by the City has helped it to beat national averages by managing the cost of the plan and health of the population. The consensus was to add this to the consent agenda.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Mr. Carter reminded Commissioners of the retreat this weekend, advising that 61 people are involved in COVID protocol; he mentioned that there are no employees in the hospital and emails he sent last week regarding new benefits for City employees should support efforts with recruiting and retaining for vital departments with vacancies.

Mayor Dorough asked if there is a schedule for picking up trash in the downtown area with Mr. Carter agreeing to provide the schedule.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Howard commented on pictures in the East Lake apartments that he received this weekend regarding apartments being flooded asking if Code can check on this for violations.

Commissioner Warbington commented on the upcoming retreat and safety concerns due to COVID, i.e., identifying the number of those who will be attending, and being tested for COVID before the retreat, minimizing public inter-action. He suggested that anyone outside of the City attending the retreat be in a separate area with closed circuit TV available to listen and watch.

Commissioner Young asked Mr. Carter to have a report on stormwater assets, maintenance/holding ponds/equipment on hand, i.e., what is being done for maintenance and

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schedules as it pertains to flooding issues. He mentioned that Valdosta has its own stormwater department and what was reported was impressive and he would like to look at implementing something similar.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Carter stated that the status of the CSO will be discussed at the retreat, including funding and information that was discussed at the last retreat.

Discussion followed regarding retreat suggestions made earlier by Commissioner Warbington, with Mayor Dorough clarifying that suggestions are welcomed and then noting that at the retreat, the Commissioners/presenters will meet in one room, while visitors can watch in an adjacent room via TV; those who attend should refrain from socializing outside the area/not going to restaurants (with Commissioner Warbington agreeing). Those going home should have no inter-action outside of immediate family and, regarding testing, Mr. Carter stated that Phoebe will test and that One Source can Rapid test for \$75.00. Discussion followed regarding rapid testing vs. PCR and asking Albany Internal if they can provide testing. Mayor Dorough asked that this protocol be followed. The Clerk advised that Southern Pine on Stuart Ave., is providing free tests as well.

Commissioner Howard asked to have air circulating in the room with Mayor Dorough asking to check on Echo, which is a filter and ascertain if the resort has this.

Mayor Pro Tem Fuller, Commissioners Fletcher and Langstaff stated that they are in favor.

Commissioner Young expressed concern of adding protocol to the retreat this time, i.e., not congregating with people after the retreat, etc., adding that it is baffling that these extreme measures are being discussed four days before the retreat. In reply to Mayor Dorough, he stated that he is opposed to everything except testing.

Mayor Dorough reviewed protocol as follows: testing of all, no socializing with others outside the room, if driving back home, limiting access to immediate family only.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Mayor Dorough asked for an update on Driskell Park.

The Clerk advised that only two of the items noted as ‘consent agenda items’ will be reflected on the regular meeting agenda (Fleet Vehicle Maintenance Facility and Ford F550 Bucket Truck); the other items will be listed as resolutions.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (re: Potential Litigation)

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At 10:25 a.m., Commissioner Warbington moved to enter executive session (re: potential litigation), seconded by Commissioner Howard and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	yes
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

At 10:50 a.m., Commissioner Howard moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher and, following a roll call vote, the motion carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	yes
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	absent
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

Mayor Dorough advised that pending litigation was discussed during executive session with no action taken.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

SONJA TOLBERT, CMC
CITY CLERK