

SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF ALBANY,
GEORGIA
GOVT. CENTER – RM 100

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

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m., and the invocation given by Pastor Gary Sanders, Sr., First Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington regarding a point of order, it was noted that the auditorium is nearly full due to the presence of Boy Scout Troops 3 and 13 (who were recognized). He stated that Troop 13 is one of the few girl troops and that the troops are working on their badges for citizenship and communications. He then recognized Noah Daniel to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Dorough thanked the Scouts for coming tonight.

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

RECOGNITION/PRESENTATION

Mayor Dorough advised that Jelani Bryant will recognize Nathan Lee for his services working with youths during the summer on the LEGO Project at Robert Cross Middle Magnet School. Craig Potter, Interim Recreation Director, gave comments regarding Mr. Lee working with the youths and Mr. Bryant presented Mr. Lee with a plaque, and free passes to the LEGO Land Atlanta. Mayor Dorough thanked Mr. Lee for his contribution to the community and working with the younger students.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Zoning Matters - Special Approval Applications:

1. Special Approval Case #21-041 – Colonial Town Center, LLC/Owner; Concept Companies/Applicant; request special approval to construct a new Car Wash located at 2828 Nottingham Way

Paul Forgey, Planning Director, advised that the applicant asked to table this item until the December meeting. A brief discussion followed with Commissioner Fletcher moving to table, seconded by Commissioner Howard. Following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

1. Special Approval Case #21-044 – Jakendrus Harris and Lakeshia Harris/Owners; Jashoundrous Martin/Applicant; request special approval to operate a daycare for no more than 18 children at 2510 Hilltop Road.

Mr. Forgey briefly discussed the application and request for special approval to operate a daycare for no more than 18 children. Commissioner Warbington moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

Alcohol License Applications:

Marshal Walter Norman, Business License Director/Interim Code Enforcement Director, discussed the following alcohol license application.

1. Food for Less Albany, Inc., d/b/a Piggly Wiggly Food for Less; 1032 W. Gordon Ave., H. Ball/Agent; Beer and wine package

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Commissioner Warbington moved to approve the application, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher and, following a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-2 with Commissioners Howard and Young voting no.

Marshal Norman discussed the following alcohol license application.

2. Pitts Bros. Convenience Store, Inc., d/b/a Apple Express; 418 N. Slapppy Blvd., L. Pitts/agent; Beer package

Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve the application, seconded by Commissioner Warbington and, following a roll call vote, the motion carried 5-2 with Commissioners Howard and Young voting no.

Marshal Norman discussed the following alcohol license application.

3. Big Reds Eggs, LLC d/b/a Eggs Up Grill; 2818 Old Dawson Rd., Suite 12; M. McNeal/Agent; Wine consumption

Commissioner Warbington moved to approve the application, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher and, following a roll call vote, the motion carried 6-1 with Commissioner Howard voting no.

Marshal Norman discussed the following alcohol license application transfer of ownership:

4. The Rocket Burger Group, LLC; d/b/a La Luna; 1935 Dawson Rd., W. Henry/Agent; Liquor, beer and wine consumption

Commissioner Warbington moved to approve the application, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher and, following a roll call vote, the motion carried 6-1 with Commissioner Howard voting no.

5. Shahaj LLC, d/b/a HRH Mart; 1608 S. Jefferson St; N. Nichols/Agent; Beer and wine package

Commissioner Warbington moved to approve the application, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher and, following a roll call vote, the motion carried 6-1 with Commissioner Howard voting no.

APPOINTMENTS

1. Downtown Development Authority: One appointment to fill unexpired term ending April 2025

Commissioner Howard nominated Evelyn Ross and Commissioner Warbington nominated Tripp Morgan. Hearing no additional comments and following a roll call vote, Mayor Dorough declared Ms. Ross duly appointed by unanimous vote.

2. Albany/Dougherty County Land Bank Authority: Three appointments, two for term ending July 2023 and one to fill an unexpired term ending July 2022

Commissioner Howard moved to reappoint Patrick Bush, and to appoint Albert Ethridge, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher. Hearing no additional comments and following a roll call vote, Mayor Dorough declared Mr. Bush duly reappointed and Mr. Ethridge appointed by unanimous vote.

ORDINANCES

Paul Forgey, Planning Director, briefly discussed requested zoning changes as noted (copy on file) regarding the following rezoning.

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Commissioner Fletcher introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-125

Amending the Zoning Ordinance and Map of the City of Albany so as to change the status of property located at 1104 N. Slappey Blvd.

Commissioner Fletcher then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Howard. Following a roll call vote, the motion carried 6-0-1 with Mayor Dorough abstaining.

Detailed discussion followed regarding the following budget amendment ordinance with the decision to vote on each item separately and adopt ordinances for each item.

AN ORDINANCE NO.

Amending the City of Albany's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

1. COVID Duty Pay – Mr. Carter discussed information (copy on file) regarding three options that are for consideration, including the cost per option. Following comments from Mayor Dorough and each Commissioner, regarding which option they would support, Commissioner Warbington moved to approve [Option #3] Alternate #2 (\$1000 for all full-time employees and \$500 for part-time employees).

Commissioner Warbington introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-126

Amending the City of Albany's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget so as to provide Hero Pay

Commissioner Warbington then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

Additional discussion followed with Commissioner Warbington suggesting renaming the COVID duty pay to 'Hero's Pay' which is in line with what Dougherty County and Phoebe Putney put in place. Discussion also included whether retirees would get the pay and what is the determining date, i.e., (the last six months will be the start date and, if a retiree worked during the pandemic, they would receive the pay). A consensus was to have a start day for employees of March 30, 2021, when determining who will receive the pay with Mr. Carter advising that the pay will include all active employees. In reply to Commissioner Warbington, he also advised that this will be handled by a separate check.

2. Vaccination Incentive – Mr. Carter discussed information and the consensus was to agree on the proposal as presented. Commissioner Langstaff reminded the Commission that elected officials are not included in any of the proposals. Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve the proposed vaccination incentive.

Commissioner Fletcher introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-127

Amending the City of Albany's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget so as to provide a Vaccination Incentive

Commissioner Fletcher then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Howard. Following a roll call vote, the motion carried 6-0-1 with Mayor Dorough abstaining (see 'other business below').

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3. Education Incentive – Mr. Carter discussed information and advised that the cut-off date is July 1, 2016 (five years back). Additional discussion followed regarding the reimbursement process with Mr. Carter advising that he will be updating job descriptions to bring up to standards. Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve this item.

Commissioner Fletcher introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-128

Amending the City of Albany’s Fiscal Year 2022 Budget so as to provide an Incentive for Employees who continue their College Education

Commissioner Fletcher then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Warbington. Following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

4. Certification Incentive – Mr. Carter discussed the one-time incentive being offered and answered Mayor Dorough’s questions regarding those receiving multiple certifications, levels of certifications and time frame was also discussed. Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve the education incentive.

Commissioner Fletcher introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-129

Amending the City of Albany’s Fiscal Year 2022 Budget so as to provide an Incentive for Certifications

Commissioner Fletcher then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Warbington. Following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

5. Direct Pay Increase – Mr. Carter discussed the departments that this will address (Police, Fire, select Utility Operations i.e., linemen/technicians in Gas/Light Departments). Commissioner Howard questioned why all employees are not included and noted that it has been six years since the last pay study was conducted. Mr. Carter agreed, adding that Public Safety received a 6% raise last year in addition to the 2.5% COLA for all employees this year. He stated that he is looking at increasing the pay across the board, however, his intent is to address public safety first. Commissioner Howard commented on the firm that conducted the pay study for the Fire Department and said that the contract does not expire until November. He suggested that they look at all departments and conduct a City-wide survey.

Commissioner Fletcher asked the number of employees who will receive the increase (Police - 150, Fire - 140, Utility Operations - 25) and expressed concerns of losing employees to private companies. She asked the number of vacancies in Public Works with Mr. Carter stating that he will provide that information. In reply to Commissioner Fletcher regarding leaving other Public Work employees out of this round of pay increases, Mr. Carter assured her that he agrees with comments on how hard they work and stated that this is the first step in moving the entire process forward to include all City employees.

Commissioner Warbington commented on being in Atlanta this past weekend and that based on the ads/billboards he saw, the competition for police officers is aggressive; the salaries are higher with increases in the double digits. He suggested doing what is necessary to make sure salaries in Albany are competitive. Mr. Carter discussed the great demand for trained police officers nationwide; marketing an offer of benefit packages that are to be found nowhere else but here which he suggested will help us move toward our goals.

Mayor Dorough stated that he feels that what is being considered tonight is not being adequately addressed, i.e., impact of future budgets, etc., and suggested reviewing exit interviews when officers

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leave. He discussed having talked with some officers who have left Albany and salary was not their number one reason for leaving; work conditions and the way they are treated by citizens/the public, etc., are also reasons. He mentioned that the applicant pool is decreasing, while the demand is increasing. Regarding the American Rescue Fund, he suggested that municipalities are using this funding source to increase salaries, but when that is exhausted, they will have to continue the higher salaries, and noted the 6% increase given last year to the police department and the 2.5% COLA given to them this year. He agreed that something needs to be done, however, he stated that he feels voting on this tonight is premature as decisions on other resources should be discussed as well.

Commissioner Fletcher agreed with the Mayor's comments regarding money not being the number one reason that people leave their job and also recommended continued discussions. Commissioner Warbington moved to approve the pay increase.

Commissioner Warbington introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-130

Amending the City of Albany's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget so as to provide for Salary Adjustments for Applicable Public Safety and Utility Operations Employees

Commissioner Warbington then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Fuller. Following a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-3 with Mayor Dorough and Commissioners Howard and Fletcher voting no.

6. Longevity Pay – Mr. Carter discussed information and explained the proposed incentive to reward employees for their dedication and commitment and to offer a one-step increase along with their respective pay scale every five years of service. An alternate proposal is that employees with service between six and 15 years will receive a one-time payment of \$500 and employees with 16 years and above will receive a one-time payment of \$1,000, adding that it does not change implementing the longevity increase.

Commissioner Howard expressed concern of the sustainability of this initiative in future budgets. Mr. Carter agreed and advised that this is a recurring expense and the process was vetted. Commissioner Howard advised that critical thinking would help determine where the City is going, noting the high tax digest, stagnant growth, decreasing population and outside businesses looking at Albany and how employees are being treated. He stated that he wants all employees to be considered and not just certain departments. Mr. Carter stressed that this has the potential to touch all employees if, they remain active with the City, adding that no one will be excluded and that establishing a date to start is all that is needed.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that a few years ago the performance pay was moving forward but that it has stopped. Mr. Carter explained that there were internal problems with employees not being happy with the process due to the subjective nature of it, adding that it will not be retroactive due to costs.

Mayor Dorough noted that this is another item that has to be sustained and felt it is not being adequately discussed, suggesting that this will be in addition to COLA increases and other pay raises and expressing concern again of this item not being ready for a vote. He then asked if anyone wanted to motion to approve this item. Hearing no motion, Mayor Dorough stated that it appears the consensus is to table and bring it back at a later date.

7. Civil Rights Institute –Mr. Carter noted that this was a request of Mayor Dorough and discussed funding. Mayor Dorough gave a brief update of his request to fund due to rehabbing/renovations, etc. that are needed. In reply to Commissioner Howard, he advised that the Museum is not fully open at this time. In reply to Commissioner Warbington, he agreed that an RFP would be let on the project and that no funds are being dispersed regarding the study. Commissioner Warbington asked if there will be a contract between the City and the Civil Rights Institute. Mayor Dorough stated that the guidance from the City Attorney will be followed and that

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he will have discussions with them. Mr. Carter explained that the hotel/motel tax fund comes in to play and that this is not a city project, however, he said he will assist with the process. Discussion continued on preparing a Memorandum of Agreement and other steps to facilitate the request. Mayor Dorrough moved to approve this item.

Mayor Dorrough introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-131

Amending the City of Albany's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget so as to Assist the Civil Rights Institute in Procuring a Master Plan

Mayor Dorrough then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Howard. Following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, the next item was discussed (as noted in the email sent by Mr. Carter (copy on file):

8. Contingency – Mr. Carter stated that the numbers discussed are all estimated at this time and that the request is to have a contingency in the amount of \$250,000 included in the amendment. A brief discussion followed with Derrick Brown, Finance Director, agreeing that this is needed so that if there are minor changes, it can be handled administratively. He assured the Commission that the \$250,000 will only be spent on the items if needed and if not, it will not be touched.

Commissioner Warbington suggested that this item be revisited in December when the exact numbers are ready with Mr. Carter agreeing that a report can be brought.

Commissioner Warbington introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 21-132

Amending the City of Albany's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget so as to Provide for a Contingency as relates to Budget Amendments approved on September 28, 2021

Commissioner Warbington then offered the ordinance and asked for consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Carter thanked the Mayor and Commission for their support and for working with staff on these matters.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Davis and Bruce Maples, Director of Engineering, gave a brief summary of the request to authorize an agreement with the City of Albany and the Georgia Dept. Of Transportation regarding roadway lighting for Jefferson St. and Liberty Bypass.

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

A RESOLUTION NO. 21-R172

Authorizing Roadway Lighting Assistance Agreement between the City of Albany and the Georgia Department of Transportation re: roadway lighting for Jefferson St. and Liberty Expressway Interchange

Mr. Maples gave a brief history of the traffic calming process and funding. He added that a correction to the agenda item due to direction to conduct an additional study on Lippitt Drive to

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verify that speeding continued outside the 800 block. The study showed that 85 percentile was 41 mph, meeting the criteria for speeding; to complete Lippitt Drive and installing six additional speed tables for an additional \$40,800.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to adopt the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Warbington and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

A RESOLUTION NO. 21-R173

Approving installation of six additional Traffic Calming Measures between S. Slappey Blvd., and Newton Rd., for the remaining blocks outside the 800 block of Lippitt Dr.; Authorizing the use of TSPLOST for such measures

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

RESOLUTION NO. 21-R174

Approval of 2022 Employee Group Benefits Plan

RESOLUTION NO. 21-R175

Authorizing use of SPLOST VII Funds for Beattie Woods Drainage Improvements Project; Authorizing Execution of Agreement with POPCO, Inc.

RESOLUTION NO. 21-R176

Authorizing Acquisition of Real Property known as Lake Cornelia by Eminent Domain; Authorizing Asst. Solicitor Gary Lamar to assist the City Attorney in all proceedings necessary to carry out and complete the Acquisition

RESOLUTION NO. 21-R177

Authorizing Supplemental Agreement #2 between the City of Albany and the GA Dept. of Transportation re: Runway 16/34 Rehabilitation Project; Authorizing use of TSPLOST Funds

RESOLUTION NO. 21-R178

Amending the Albany Transit's Drug & Alcohol Policy

Regarding the following resolution, Mr. Maples discussed information (copy on file) regarding the request for traffic calming tables in the 2600 & 2700 blocks of Yorktown Ave. He commented on the speed study that was conducted and advised that the cost for six tables is \$40,800.

Discussion followed with Commission Howard commenting on the speed study, homeowners' participation in signing the petition, renters in the area not signing the petition and a minimum of stop signs in the area. Commissioner Fletcher commented on speed limits that are posted, people not stopping at stop signs and running red lights. Commissioner Warbington commented on the petition and asked how many signed with Mr. Maples deferring to Ken Breedlove, Traffic Engineering Manager, who advised that between 45-50% participated, the requirement is 80% signatures.

Commissioner Howard moved to adopt the following resolution, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

A RESOLUTION NO. 21-R179

Approving installation of Traffic Calming Measures in the 2600 and 2700 blocks of Yorktown Ave., authorizing use of TSPLOST for such measures

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Additional discussion followed with Mayor Dorough expressing concern regarding the number of speed tables being equally installed throughout the city and problems/concerns.

Hearing no additional comments, the motion carried 4-3 with Mayor Pro Tem Fuller and Commissioners Warbington and Langstaff voting no.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve #1-4, seconded by Commissioner Howard and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

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| 1. | Ford F550 Bucket Truck; Altec Industries, Inc.; Birmingham AL | |
| | Total cost | \$121,386.00 |
| 2. | Fleet Maintenance Site Work; Zane Grace Const; Leesburg, GA | |
| | Est. total exp. | \$271,390.00 |
| 3. | Lighted Runway Closure Markers; Hali-Brite, Inc.; Brainerd, MN | |
| | Total ex. | \$41,380.00 |
| 4. | Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus; Fireline, Inc., Winder GA | |
| | Total exp. | \$209,330.00 |

OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk advised that Mr. Carter will be attending a GMA Hub Cities meeting tomorrow in Columbus. Commissioner Fletcher moved to approve the travel, seconded by Commissioner Howard and, following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried.

Commissioner Howard asked Chief Persley if a PSA would be appropriate to alert people in East Albany that dirt bikes, scooters and golf carts are unlawful on roadways/highways. He fears that there will be a high number of fatalities if this continues.

Mayor Dorough advised that he needed to abstain from the zoning ordinance (the Clerk made the correction to reflect that the vote was not unanimous).

Mayor Dorough suggested having a special call meeting next Tuesday to vote on funding for projects to submit for the Governor's State Fiscal Recovery Funds as it relates to the coronavirus. He advised that the deadline has been extended to October 31 and suggested getting resolutions of support from Decatur, Baker and Mitchell counties to include interested organizations as well. He noted the organizations and amounts as follows: \$12 million for the separation project (water and sewer infrastructure), \$5 million for renovation of Henderson complex, \$2 million for the Ritz Theatre, and \$3 million for Broadband.

A brief discussion followed with Commissioner Warbington commenting on the Henderson project and asking if there are site plans of the proposal, drawings, etc., and engaging Mr. Huffman to advise of the specifics. He reported being told that this is being looked at regionally. He asked to get the information and numbers of who are asking for what, in terms of different committees.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

MAYOR

ATTEST

CITY CLERK