

APRIL 4, 2023
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough
Mayor Pro Tem: Chad Warbington
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Jalen Johnson, and Demetrius Young
City Manager: Steven Carter
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 9:01 am, followed by attendance roll call.

AGENDA ADOPTION

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

Shawna Smith read a prepared statement (copy on file) regarding the burial site of her father, Kenneth E. Williams, who is interred at Riverside Cemetery. She listed her concerns: mismanagement at the City's cemetery, location of father's burial plot being too close to the road, space of plot too small for the headstone/ledger, which has been ordered/prepaid, size of plot much smaller than previous plots purchased by family, lack of space between adjacent plots. She asked that the matter be given immediate attention and a solution offered to rectify this issue.

Mayor Dorough apologized for not meeting her expectations, and particularly if the City has not fulfilled its responsibilities; Commissioners expressed similar sentiments.

Commissioner Young mentioned software purchased to track burial plots, asking how the situation was created. Mr. Carter explained that the 'road' in the photo is not actually a road, it can be closed at any time. Regarding the selected plot, City staff does not select the plots; they walk with the family and whatever plot is chosen is the one that is sold to them, the family chose and purchased that particular plot, adding that the City has reached out to the family to offer a resolution and agreed that the headstone that has been ordered is too large for the plot. He advised that the City has offered to let the family select a different location, and to have Mr. Williams relocated to a suitable site. Commissioner Young asked Ms. Smith if she is satisfied with the offer. Ms. Smith replied that she was, until receiving notice from Mr. Carter in which she learned that the cost will be passed down to the family. She said that when her brothers selected the plot, they were grieving and Mr. Wilson, who showed them the plot, had knowledge of the cemetery that her brothers lacked. Had she been present, that plot would not have been selected; therefore, she is not satisfied with the offered solution.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Public Safety

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a. Motorola Software and Hosting

Corey Gamble, Buyer I, discussed information (copy on file) for the expense regarding APD's use of the program to film police interactions.

In reply to Commissioner Johnson, APD Chief Michael Persley explained that before switching to this software in 2020, APD used in-car cameras from Motorola, but had no body-worn cameras prior to then. The decision to change is based on an integration of in-car and body-worn cameras. He agreed with Commissioner Johnson that this is for storage, adding that the price is locked in for five years, with the caveat that the only change will be purchasing more cameras, which is predicated on becoming fully staffed.

Commissioner Young expressed support for the expense. He asked if there is a body-cam policy. Chief Persley advised that he will send it to Mr. Davis, who can share it with the Commission.

2. Planning/Engineering

a. Commemorative Signage re: 500 block of Corn Ave.

Angel Gray, Deputy Director Planning & Development Services reviewed information (copy on file), briefly highlighted contributions of "Mama Ruth" and the desire to recognize her with commemorative signage, proposed language and the location of the signs. She advised that Corn Avenue is not being renamed, this action honors Ruth "Mama Ruth" Hall Anderson.

Commissioner Johnson clarified that the group which presented the request, wanted to change the name of Corn Avenue, but an ordinance prohibits this within city limits, Ms. Gray agreed.

Commissioner Young stated that the request has caused confusion and mentioned Johnny Williams Street, which was renamed in the city and was not a commemorative name. The group will be glad of the commemorative signage, but the request was to rename the street and asked Mr. Davis to provide some history on that. Mr. Davis advised that while changing the name of streets is prohibited, the ordinance provides for signs to be erected at the beginning/end of the street.

Mayor Dorough interjected that the ordinance was enacted in 2009, which was subsequent to the last instance in which a city street was renamed. Commissioner Young suggested reviewing the ordinance as renaming a street in honor of an extraordinary person is a step above the commemorative signage.

Mayor Dorough agreed, adding that he feels it is unduly restrictive. He mentioned the pros/cons of renaming streets and suggested talking to the family to ascertain if they are satisfied with the commemorative signs.

b. Vacant Property Registration Ordinance

Ms. Gray reviewed information (copy on file) regarding the ordinance for Vacant Property Registration (VPR)

Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Davis the effect this will have on out-of-state property owners and in rem property. Mr. Davis stated that he is unsure how much staff will be needed as this requires a lot of enforcement, but it provides the City with greater control. He noted that the real estate industry is powerful and there could be pushback from that group. In reply to Commissioner Howard, Ms. Gray explained that this is a mock ordinance from GMA, which most cities have adopted, adding that she will provide and that the City has the flexibility to draft it to fit our needs.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington asked the meaning of the highlighted areas. Ms. Gray explained that yellow highlights indicate staff's recommendations; the blue applies to the City Attorney and provides an appeal process. Commissioner Warbington asked about 'agent' (pg. 31), regular inspections by Code Enforcement (pg. 32), using a company to maintain watch on property becoming vacant, which Ms. Gray explained.

Commissioner Young explained his objection and concerns 1) to charge property owners \$100. 2) is unsure if this policy will address blight/dilapidated property, 3) feels that the policy is a disservice to property owners and not in their best interest, and 4) affecting mainly local property owners, with the City able to establish a registry.

Mayor Dorough referred to page 36 regarding Magistrate Court being able to reduce the fine, which he feels should be the Municipal Court Judge. Ms. Gray agreed, adding that they constantly review for needed changes.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington asked if Planning recommended registration of multifamily residential with 40% or more vacancy (pg. 32); Ms. Gray agreed, adding apartment complexes and those type structures are also included. Mayor Pro Tem Warbington asked how they will verify the 40%. Ms. Gray explained that most have utility bills and if vacant 30 days and runs into 60 days, in order to get ahead of derelict property that may start to take over.

Commissioner Young stated that the City has tools on the book to hold citizens responsible, this ordinance will not do any more than what has already been done. He discussed the City's responsibilities to its citizens and referred to a movement to disconnect people from property ownership. He stated that evidence shows that bulldozing, imminent domain, etc. does not help the community.

Mayor Dorough questioned the evidence mentioned by Commissioner Young, adding that other cities are taking action such as this as a tool to fight blighted property. He recalled representatives from the Tax Office coming before the Commission years ago to explain that before property was to be sold on the courthouse steps, the County Attorney had to declare that someone was going to bid on the property, with property often not being offered for a tax sale for 5, 10, 15 years, with the property becoming cost prohibitive to renovate. This resulted in the City bearing the cost of demolition because of the County's inaction. He briefly discussed the advantage of this program.

3. Public Administration/Finance
 - a. Firefighting Turnout Gear – \$98,575.00

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Josh Williams, Buyer II, discussed information as noted (copy on file).

Mayor Dorough asked how long the City has been purchasing from the Innotex brand with AFD Chief Cedric Scott advising that it has been for a few years. He briefly discussed the replacement schedule for the department's gear.

b. Generator Maintenance Contract Renewal – \$46,630.00

Corey Gamble, Buyer I, discussed information (copy on file), stating that approval is being requested to renew the contract with W.W. Williams, Co.

Mayor Dorough asked the frequency of W.W. Williams inspections. Facilities Management Superintendent Chad Arnold reported that it is yearly service, as well as a load bank test to test voltage, adding that they also provide maintenance.

c. John Deere 5065E Utility Tractor – \$45,597.64

Mr. Gamble discussed information (copy on file) for the tractor for use at the Flint River Municipal Golf Course and requested approval for the purchase.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Fleet Director Peter Bednar, advised that there were two Flint dealers with the one on Blaylock, which sells heavy duty equipment, was sold, with Flint Ag on Hwy 82 still in operation.

d. Facilities Management Gator and Sprayer – \$53,218.92

Mr. Gamble reviewed information (copy on file), reporting that staff recommends approval of the purchases.

Mayor Dorough asked why Flint Equipment will not be servicing this piece of equipment. Mr. Bednar explained that Flint Ag can maintain the Gator, but not the sprayer.

MEMBER COMMENTS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Howard asked to resume meeting monthly with public safety, which is a separate meeting of three Commissioners. He noted the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington clarified that Dougherty County wants to put TSPLOST on the ballot in November; Mr. Carter agreed. Mayor Pro Tem Warbington stated that he does not want to wait until the last minute and asked to put it on an agenda. He asked if we will keep the same split or attempt something different, adding that the City needs to start working on its projects. Mr. Carter advised that he received an email from the County Administrator as a reminder that it is time to start the process, adding that he would like to put that on the first work session in May and that staff will be submitting a

project list to initiate the process. Mayor Pro Tem Warbington stated that his primary concern is the percentage split of funds. He mentioned Mr. Carter's email regarding Dougherty County's tennis MOU which he does not support as expressed in his email. Mr. Carter stated that this will be a big discussion and suggested waiting until after discussions to put it on an agenda. Regarding the budget, he stated that presentations will begin in May. He referred to the properties discussed in Hugh Morris' presentation, reporting that he drove to all of them which are in deplorable condition with 603 N. Jefferson being the worst. He would like an agenda item regarding that property so that Mr. Davis can recommend a means to accelerate/act on this. Mr. Davis stated that once he has a report from Code Enforcement, he will file for an abatement in Municipal Court. Mayor Pro Tem Warbington asked for regular updates.

Commissioner Young mentioned appointing/hiring for Municipal Court and the need to address this, especially since the budget will be discussed soon.

Mayor Dorough recommended holding off on discussions regarding TSPLOST until after the budget is adopted. He feels that Mr. Carter should get with Mr. McCoy to ascertain the County's thoughts on changing/retaining the percentage, with the current split being most favorable to the City. If there is a consensus to maintain it, it will avoid a repeat of last year's negotiations. He requested everyone look at the Tennis Center info, asking for a version of what the City wants. He mentioned the \$2.0 million in ARPA funding for housing and recommended moving forward now as construction prices will most likely continue to increase. He referred to ARPA funds that were received for the Airport and Transit and asked for a report to remind Commissioners of the provisions of the program and an explanation of adjustments that are needed since these funds have expired.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Carter stated that there is talk that Dougherty County intends to add a judge to one of its court, but he has not received official information on this. The issue is that the Municipal Court courtroom will become the location for the new judge; therefore, Municipal Court needs to relocate and funds will be needed for this, which is anticipated to happen before the end of the year.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington asked if the City has a lease with the County for the space that Municipal Court currently occupies. Mr. Carter replied that he will have to check, but he has not heard anything yet from Dougherty County.

Mr. Carter mentioned that Government 101 was held last night in the new Transportation Center (Transit, Airport, Municipal Court made presentations). Next Monday, presenters will be the Downtown Manager's Office and Recreation. He congratulated Lequrica Gaskins and staff in the Downtown Manager's Office for achieving the Mainstreet America accredited level for 2023.

Commissioner Howard asked that Mr. Carter contact our lobbyist for a list of Bills that the governor will sign.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:25 a.m., Commissioner Howard moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Warbington and, following a roll call vote the motion unanimously carried as follows:

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

At 10:36 a.m., Mayor Pro Tem Warbington moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Johnson; following a roll call vote, the motion unanimously carried as follows:

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

Reconvening the meeting, Mayor Dorrough advised that in executive session a personnel matter was discussed with no action taken.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

SISSY KELLY
ASST. CITY CLERK