

JANUARY 2, 2024
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, Vilnis Gaines and Demetrius Young
Asst. City Manager: Yvette Fields
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m., followed by attendance roll call.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Commissioner Howard moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Warbington, the roll call vote unanimously carried.

REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK

1. Staff Travel
 - S. Carter, City Manager; Albany/Dougherty Day; Atlanta, GA; Jan. 29-30, 2024; \$627.36

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington moved to approve the above noted travel, seconded by Commissioner Howard, the roll call motion unanimously carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Public Safety (New Alcohol Licenses)

Anthony Donaldson, Chief Deputy/License Inspector, discussed the following (copy on file):

1. 1216 Dawson Rd. Ste. 16 (Gifted Creations) 5 - 11 VMP Gifts LLC.; d/b/a Gifted Creations 2510 Dawson Rd. Ste.16; V. Patel/Agent; Liquor, Beer and Wine Package; WARD 5

The address error was duly noted and corrected per Commissioner Howard's comments. In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Warbington, Mr. Donaldson explained the reason this item is considered a package store and, in reply to Commissioner Young, regarding another type of classification for consideration, Mr. Donaldson explained why this is classified as a package store. Mayor Dorough confirmed that this is the first establishment using this prototype sales model, with Mr. Donaldson agreeing.

Commissioner Young questioned whether modifications/variance can be made, with Mr. Davis advising that this is a package/gift store with other items for sale; the City cannot prohibit the sale of the gift baskets.

B. Planning/Engineering

JANUARY 2, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

Robert Griffin, Interim Director of Engineering, discussed the following information (copy on file):

1. Gillionville Woods

Mr. Davis stated that the assessment agreement will be forthcoming and at completion of the street, portions will be deeded to the City with an easement in favor of the City having access to utilities.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Warbington, the temporary easement was discussed along with properties not being purchased. Mr. Carter commented on the easement and what portions belong to the City with Mr. Griffin concurring and discussing the process regarding the 29 properties. Bruce Maples, Asst. City Manager, explained the providing of drainage and acquiring the easements, adding that private property cannot be worked on; however, a temporary easement can be in place to assist with infrastructure. In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Warbington, Mr. Maples stated that once temporary easements are in place construction can begin with ownership of the right of way only, adding that bids will be let when specs are received. In reply to Mayor Dorrough, it was noted that this is six acres that will house 29 properties and, discussion continued regarding property owners.

B. Public Administration/Finance

Scott Tennison, Sales Tax Project Manager, and Don McCook, Deputy Utility Operations Director discussed the following (copy on file):

1. Acceptance of the GA Dept. of Transportation Local Maintenance Grant (LMIG)

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Warbington, Mr. McCook stated that this is an annual grant, explaining that TSPLOST projects will be forthcoming. Discussion continued regarding the amount of money to be received and the streets that are listed. In reply to Mayor Dorrough the Barkley Extension was discussed by Mr. Maples, who advised that they are awaiting additional information to bring the item forward, adding that an easement is also needed.

Ricky Gladney, Buyer, and Jeff Hughes, Sewer Maintenance Engineer, discussed the following (copy on file):

2. Lift Station 66 and 88 Rehabilitation; Popco, Inc., Sylvester, GA – Total exp. \$2,056,080.00

In reply to Commissioner Howard, the location of Lift Station 66 was clarified (N. Monroe) and Lift Station 88 being in the 8th Ave., area.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Warbington, Mr. Hughes stated that some pumps will be replaced with redoing the piping being a major part of the project, adding that the majority of the work is sanitary sewer and not part of the CSS separation project, i.e., normal maintenance. Discussion continued regarding this not being a complete rebuild of the stations, with Mr. Hughes explaining what will be changed during the process, including the time the rehab will last (approximately 30/40 years). The

JANUARY 2, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

number of bidders (one) was discussed with the approximate number to rehab the stations being approximately \$1.0 million with the number increasing to \$2.0 million as noted.

Corey Gamble, Buyer I, and Dale Henry, Fleet Asset Supervisor, discussed the following (copy on file):

3. Warehouse Forklift 26-28; G&W Equipment, Inc. – Total exp. \$41,642.80

There were no questions/comments on this item.

Mr. Gamble and Mr. Henry discussed the following (copy on file):

4. Engineering Truck; Wade Ford, Inc. – Total exp. \$61,496.00

Mr. Henry commented on the amount of the surplus and discussion continued regarding the cost post-COVID vs the current cost, with Peter Bednar, Director of Facilities, explaining.

Derrick Brown, CFO, used a power point presentation to discuss the following (copy on file)

5. Hotel/Motel Tax Presentation

Discussion included the history which goes back to 1978, including Georgia codes, tax rates from 1978 (3%), 1987 (5%), 2006 (7%) and 2012 (8%) were noted, OCGA Sec 48-13 was noted based on supporting the Civic Center with tourism and, project development are expenditure funds with tourism, conventions and trade shows being the principal part of collection distribution. In December 2017, a presentation was made by CVIOG which recommended separating the CVB from the Chamber with the Commission approving in January 2018, etc., and in January 2018, DCA reached out to the City Manager with concerns about the construction of the tax with the City Manager responding confidently that funds were spent correctly. In March 2018, DCA made a presentation regarding non-restricted and restricted funds being distributed with the City deciding to send the money directly to the CVB for convention, tourism, and trade shows. Referring to a 10-year summary, Mr. Brown reported that \$22.1 million was collected in Hotel/Motel taxes, adding that from 2020 to the present, the data showed how the funds were spent through the CVB for local agencies. He advised that the amount of funds and the percentages did not change, other than a reduction in the allocation for the Civic Center, adding that the City chose to take the action recommended by DCA. Discussion continued regarding the budget and options for FY 2024.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington asked if this is audited, with Mr. Brown explaining that it is coordinated through GMA to conduct an audit. Mayor Pro Tem Warbington suggested that abuse could be happening and suggested an audit/spot checks be done regularly, with Mr. Brown stating that documents are submitted monthly and said he will check with GMA. The process of monitoring was discussed along with whether there are hotels outside city limits. Budgeted collections and off-sets/transfers to the Civic Center was explained.

Mayor Dorough commented on how payments are distributed and the lack of contracts with entities, adding that the entities can be cut-off, with City areas being in disrepair and funding entities, suggesting

JANUARY 2, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

that the monies be sent to CVB and not sent to entities as no contracts are in place, i.e. RiverQuarium, Chehaw, etc. He asked to see an agenda item or if the City Manager made the decision during the budget process and asked that this be revisited and minutes be provided. He suggested that the commission have control of how monies are being spent through contracts with entities outside of the City, adding that this happened during 2018 (when this was discussed). Mr. Brown stated that he can send agenda items from 2020.

Commissioner Young expressed concern of not having appointments to the CVB Board (with the exception of the City Manager) with others who serve on those board, via their bylaws, receiving funds. Mr. Brown explained that the amount of monies has not changed, the only change was the way the funds are transferred, and the amount of the monies sent to entities is between the City and the entity. Discussion continued with the City not having board members on any of the entities, with the exception of CVB and Chehaw Park. Commissioner Young discussed the relationship with the CVB, especially regarding entertainment and local promoters suggesting that what the CVB promotes does not reflect the cultural demographics of Albany. He also suggested that the relationship with the CVB be more reflective of this community. Mr. Carter stated that the next budget is being planned and asked if this should be discussed at the retreat, with Mayor Dorough agreeing.

Rashelle Beasley Minnix, CVB Director, provided comments regarding appointments to the CVB Board (the City Manager and the Mayor's two appointments), whom she named. She advised that the County has two appointments and provides the building they work in.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington thanked Ms. Minnix for the work being done. Ms. Minnix stated that she has new software and receives monthly reports that she can share, adding that a new marketing rollout will be forthcoming in March. In reply to Commissioner Young regarding filming coming to Albany, Ms. Minnix explained the process of seeking/scouting locations.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington asked that staff be assigned to get contracts from entities to which money is given, including the need to have Commission seats on the boards.

MEMBER COMMENTS / ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Howard asked for updates on Lift Station 50 on Mobile Avenue and mentioned the upcoming swearing in and placing chairs in the foyer for an overflow.

Commissioner Gaines thanked Mr. Brown for the Hotel/Motel tax and thanked Men on a Mission, who donated over 250 bicycles and fed approximately 500 people over the holidays.

Mayor Pro Tem Warbington mentioned the criticism Albany receives because of water/sewer rates, adding that Valdosta conducted a water/sewer rate study, which revealed that Albany is at the bottom. He requested that Albany conduct a water/sewer rate study to compare other cities and that it be published. Discussion continued regarding having data available for citizens. He mentioned that the Bill Miller bid states that the building will be designed per staff's input, adding that the Commission should have input and suggested more information should be in the design. Mr. Carter explained that the bid is

JANUARY 2, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual and in-person Meeting)

based on a concept and having engineering input on a building is part of the bid. He stated that he will bring information to the Commission for consideration. Regarding Chehaw wanting old vehicles, Mayor Pro Tem Warbington suggested that this should come to the Commission for decision. The consensus was to have this as an agenda item. Mr. Bednar recommended putting everything on Gov Deals to alleviate concerns when giving away vehicles.

Commissioner Young mentioned long-time complaints regarding the sewer odor caused by lift stations near the GA Pacific Plant; Mr. Carter stated that he will research. Commissioner Young commented on meeting attendance and asked for clarification of the Georgia law limitations. Mr. Davis stated that it is in the ordinance and is State law per Ms. Custer, Asst. City Attorney. Discussion continued regarding use of 'ZOOM' or if it is a violation, with Ms. Custer adding that it is a violation to be on ZOOM more than two times per year, commenting on state law being lifted because of no need for COVID precautions, unless there is a doctor's note. Commissioner Young stated that he will lobby the state delegation to look into this matter due to virtual technology, adding that he feels it is an archaic requirement and should be an issue for the constituency of that particular elected official. He also asked that the owner come to the next work session regarding the alcohol license that was discussed earlier. He stated that he will have a reception next Monday after the swearing at the J Lane Theater and invited everyone to attend.

Mayor Dorough mentioned the memo from the City Attorney regarding state law and attending meetings remotely twice a year, adding that the charter gives more allowance for voting meetings. He also mentioned 2005-06 regarding images/drawings and concepts to renovate Pole Cat Park and asked for the designs to review. He asked if the property owners can be identified in the Frank Postell Lane area. John Hawthorne, EDCE Director, stated that the property was recently purchased by Mr. Rambo. Mayor Dorough mentioned the pension fund and having a policy whereby retired APD officers can work part-time to compensate for shortage.

Commissioner Howard asked if there is any information re: Municipal Court from GBI, with Mr. Carter stating that the GBI turned over information to the DA.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Carter stated that Angela Calhoun was named Asst. to the City Manager and that he will be giving a report to departments heads regarding the pay study results.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 10:14 am.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK