

MAY 7, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Vilnis Gaines, Chad Warbington
Jalen Johnson, and Demetrius Young
Interim City Mgr. Derrick Brown
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m., followed by attendance roll call.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Commissioner Howard moved to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Johnson; the roll call vote unanimously carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Speaker Appearance: Calvin Hill discussed his concerns about his case from two years ago when he ran through a puddle of water on Slapey and Highland, which damaged his vehicle’s exhaust system. He said he spoke with Commissioners and to the City Attorney, adding that he spent \$263. He provided additional information regarding his request for repayment of the money but was told it was an act of God. He said there were no cones in place and asked that this be re-evaluated so that his money can be reimbursed (\$370.00 including court costs).

Mayor Dorough thanked Mr. Hill for his comments.

REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK

1. City of Ethics Resolution Designation re: GMA’s Recertification

Mayor Dorough asked for a history of ethics for new Commissioners to have the background of this program. The Clerk said information will be distributed via email.

REPORT OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

1. Tennis Center

Michael Custer, Asst. City Attorney, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the changes to the terms of the MOU (changing to Pickle Ball, planning and design, recreation dept responsible for maintenance and operation, City to discuss plans with 3rd party, and an MOU in place with the 3rd party, which may not include the County).

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Ms. Custer mentioned a meeting this week to verify a site, with the agreement from the County detailing spending their \$1.7 million SPLOST funds.

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In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Brown confirmed the receipt of County funds via invoices up to \$1.7 million with the first round of funds coming from the County.

Mayor Dorough mentioned the obstacle of an unknown third party, and not knowing what the proposal will be. Discussion continued regarding the history of the project, SPLOST monies, and the \$3.0 million project. Regarding asking the County for two years, Mayor Dorough said he would like to put one year in the MOU to get the project completed. Ms. Custer noted the reason for the two years, explaining that the County does not want to be involved if there is a third party. She advised that the County wants to send a check in the full amount that they have obligated themselves to, adding that additional language can be discussed later to include whether the County will provide monies for maintenance. Additional discussion regarding the maintenance continued with Mayor Dorough stating that he felt it would be a City facility, operated by the City. Commissioner Warbington advised that the third party is Albany State, which will most likely cut grass, empty the trash, etc., with the County completely out of the mix once the facility is complete. Ms. Custer discussed additional details regarding maintenance, which ASU will undertake for a number of years; however, this site could be included in the SDS, with the City receiving additional funds for anything needing to be done to the facility, including potential resurfacing, suggesting that this makes Dougherty County a partner in maintaining the site.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Other Entities (CVB Update)

Rachelle Minix, CVB Director discussed information (copy on file), regarding the board of directors, rebranding efforts including the theme, 'Visit Albany, Feel the Movement' activities, winning the international Davey Award, earning the Award of Excellence for the new visitor's guide, 2023 performance report, including Digital Marketing, hotel/motel, economic impact (2023 events), and the Welcome Center.

Comments included this being a successful rebranding, promoting Albany and its history, adding a recreation piece to include games hosted in Albany.

Mayor Dorough asked if the RFP was put out for this, with Ms. Minix explaining the process which included the RFP. Mayor Dorough mentioned comments at the retreat, including the budget and monies to other entities, with a recommendation for the City to allocate monies to entities rather than CVB. He suggested that rather than the Mayor making appointments, the Commission should make appointments and control who is on the board, which allows the City to be more involved. He suggested that changes should be looked at, adding that the Hotel/Motel Tax needs another look.

In reply to Commissioner Howard regarding the Quail Hunt, Ms. Minix mentioned the Chamber of Commerce sponsored Georgia Inaugural Quail Hunt and the Quail Forever invitational hunt, which has numerous sponsors, with both hunts held in Albany. Commissioner Howard asked if participants can be asked to contribute to Albany State with Ms. Minix explaining that this is out of her realm.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, sponsors of the Quail Hunt were discussed along with information of who sponsors are.

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Discussion continued regarding having foundations contributing to ASU.

Commissioner Young mentioned advertisements with Ms. Minix advising that they are looking at designing billboards, etc. Cross-marketing was discussed, including negative comments and distributing information via a newsletter. Commissioner Young asked how the Commission can have an effect with Ms. Minix asking that everyone stay engaged and bring back information, ideas, suggestions.

A. Public Safety (New Alcohol Licenses)

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

1. AB Food and Drink; 2005 E. Broad Ave., L. Davis/Agent; Beer/Wine/Package; WARD 1

Questions regarding the location of the establishment and other similar establishments in the area were discussed.

Mr. Donaldson discussed the following information (copy on file):

2. EZ Food and Drink; 2444 Rosebrier Ave., L Davis/Agent; Beer/Wine Package; WARD 1

Commissioner Howard expressed concerns regarding the location of the establishment and being proximity to a group home, other establishments, the school, etc. Commissioner Young mentioned foot traffic, conditions of the neighborhoods, distance between the two alcohol licensed establishments with one on E. Broad and the other on Rosebrier.

Mayor Dorough asked for the maps which were created to indicate areas with the highest incidences of crime to ascertain if one or both of these establishments are within one of the districts regarding proximity. Deputy Donaldson stated that he will provide the HEAT map.

3. Albany-Dougherty Special Investigative Unit Update

Chief Persley distributed information (copy on file) and Major Victor Camp discussed information regarding monthly activity reports, investigative charges, traffic, searches, seized drugs/expenses, networking with other agencies (neighboring counties/states), cross training all officers and revamping the department and creating a unified unit.

Commissioner Howard noted the number to anonymously call the Unit and posting the number on the access channel (and APD's Albany Knows). Discussion followed regarding having regular updates from Chief Persley with Mayor Dorough suggesting having quarterly reports instead. Chief Persley stated that he provides a monthly report to the City Manager, that can be provided to the Commission.

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Commissioner Warbington mentioned issues citizens have with neighbors smoking marijuana, which is a quality-of-life issue and is illegal; Major Camp said to call the unit to report issues.

Commissioner Gaines mentioned CBD oil, with Major Camp stating that this is something that is being looked at as to the legality to determine compliance with the law, adding that the crime lab is backed up, so it takes time.

In reply to Commissioner Johnson regarding the success of the SIU, Major Camp stated that it is successful in his opinion and briefly discussed the process, shortage of employees, training, etc.

Mayor Dorough mentioned information not being shared between enforcement agencies, with Major Camp discussing the process, including training. Discussion continued regarding a decrease in crack cocaine.

B. Public Administration/Finance

Chief Persley discussed the following information (copy on file):

1. Flock Safety Cameras; Flock Group, Inc. – Total exp. \$213,900.00

Mr. Brown advised that a budget amendment will be needed for this item. In reply to Mayor Dorough, Chief Persley discussed Red Camera ‘public safety initiatives’ regarding spending of those funds and advised that project funds must be used for a public safety initiative. Mayor Dorough asked that a memo be provided re: language of the law regarding Red Camera funds.

Chief Persley discussed the following information (copy on file):

2. Public Safety Cellphone and Data Plan; Verizon Wireless – Total exp. \$66,918.84

Corey Gamble, Buyer I, advised that this is a state contract. There were no questions/comments on this item.

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

3. 2024 Ford Mavericks Pickup Trucks; Wade Ford, Inc. – Total exp. \$125,852.60

Scott Tennison, Sales Tax Project Manager, discussed the following information (copy on file):

4. Acceptance of the GA Dept. of Transportation re: Local Road Assistance Administration funds (LRA) for \$1,185,548.84

Comments included: LRA vs. LMIG monies, timeframe for streets going out for bid.

Mr. Tennison discussed the following (copy on file):

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5. TSPLOST Phase C Street and Parking Resurfacing re: Change Order #1 to remove seven oak trees

There were no questions/comments on this item.

Ken Breedlove, Traffic Engineering Manager, discussed the following information (copy on file):

6. Traffic Signal Upgrades re: E Broad and Turner Field Rd; NGT Group LLC; Alpharetta, GA – Total exp. \$249,326.52

There were no questions or comments on this item.

David Hamilton, Transportation Director, and Harry Day, Global Spectrum/OVG360 were present to discuss the following (copy on file):

7. SWGA Regional Airport Marketing Agreement

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, TVs at the airport were discussed to include using existing equipment/signs.

Mayor Dorough mentioned paragraph 7 indemnification and concerns, rotating ads, naming rights, soft drinks, vending machines, the process of negotiating with businesses, etc.

Mr. Hawthorne discussed the following information (copy on file):

8. CHDO Award of Funds to New Visions CDC

Questions included this being a duplex rather than a single-family residence and the donated property being rehabbed to keep it affordable for a low-moderate income family.

Orson Burton, Public Service Manager, discussed information (copy on file):

9. Community Development Block Grant Awards

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Burton stated that none of the awardees have exceeded the five-year threshold; Open Arms has been a recipient three years in a row; this is the second year that New Visions CDC has received money and the first year for The Cutting-Edge Epic International Center, with eight applications received.

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Burton stated that this is a reimbursable grant, with a limit of receiving funds three times within a five-year cycle.

Commissioner Young asked if DCED has an arm that works with the non-profits, partners with the City, and maintains a roster of the non-profits. Mr. Burton explained the pilot program, DCED Certified, which

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is open to all non-profits to include training and strategic planning for them at no cost, with 301 registered this year for the workshops. He advised that this database collection is building a library of local, active, non-profit organizations.

MEMBER COMMENTS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Howard asked that Lequrica Gaskins, Downtown Manager, report on Juneteenth and asked to cancel the City Manager Search at the next meeting and to appoint Derrick Brown.

Commissioner Warbington mentioned 1) animal control's status regarding Albany Humane Society. Ms. Custer provided a brief update regarding the pickup of animals, etc. 2) update of retreat action items, with Mr. Brown stating that information is forthcoming. 3) liens on properties for demolition, with Mr. Davis stating that information is forthcoming. Discussion continued with Ms. Custer discussing the lien process and this being an agenda item.

Mayor Dorough mentioned 1) option B for Henderson Gym; 2) being understaffed in Animal Control and identifying the problem of retaining people; 3) look at other options regarding the shelter being owned by the County and leased to the Humane Society. Ms. Custer advised that the Humane Society has a lease with the County; 4) Municipal Court's report on their location.

Commissioner Howard mentioned Lily Pond Road and getting an update regarding water that can be utilized and acreage for a solar farm. Discussion continued regarding the water plant and having a presentation if water is drawn from wells at Lily Pond.

Commissioner Johnson asked for an update on Tift Park.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS/UPDATES

Mr. Brown discussed: 1) Operation Clean Sweep in Ward 4 for the next four weeks; 2) open house meeting for the new transmission line on Gillionville at the Gillionville Baptist Church from 6-8 pm; 3) passage of the FBO contract and a tour for the Commissioners before the grand opening at the airport; 4) feasibility study is forthcoming to the Utility Board, and 5) budget books being distributed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK