

JUNE 13, 2017

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

PRESENT: Mayor Dorothy Hubbard
Mayor Pro Tem Roger Marietta
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Bobby Coleman, BJ Fletcher, Bob Langstaff,
Jr, and Tommie Postell
City Manager: Sharon D. Subadan
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 10:51 a.m. and instructed the audience on the procedure to address the Commission regarding an item on today's agenda.

The Pledge of Allegiance followed a moment of silence.

Commissioner Postell moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Closing of Lowe Road

Mr. Davis explained the closing of the old Lowe Road and the relocation of the new Lowe Road as it pertains to Albany Technical College. Bruce Maples, Director of Engineering explained that this dates back to 2006-07 when the request was made by Albany Tech to make changes as they extended their campus and the old Lowe Road was taken out of service at that time. While constructing the pedestrian bridge, it came to light that old Lowe Road was not officially closed, which is where we are today. Nothing is being changed with this action; it merely codifies and provides a paper trail of action that has taken place.

Discussion followed with Commissioner Howard asking if a power point was available to show the location of the old/new Lowe Road. Mr. Maples advised that he did not have one to show today; however, he discussed the location of both. Ms. Subadan advised that this all happened ten years ago and that the closing of the old Lowe Road completes the process.

Mayor Hubbard advised that Wendy Laramore signed up to speak, but was not present.

2. FY 2017-18 Budget

1. Haryl Dabney (111 Inverness) stated that he has a few questions 1) why recreation was cut by \$150,000 and where are the funds being reallocated. Mayor Hubbard stated that someone will get back with him on this information. 2) How will the budget be balanced without MEAG credits with Ms. Subadan advising that the MEAG funds were not used to balance the budget and a transfer is made from utilities to support the general fund; this was put in place upon the merger of (the former WG&L) utilities with the general fund. The general fund does not rely on MEAG after the merger/restructuring of utilities. 3) Capital outlay as it pertains to infrastructure. Ms. Subadan discussed fleet and infrastructure that was evaluated and it was determined that now is the time to invest in both. Mr. Dabney stated that he feels a rate increase should not be used in support of capital outlay projects. He then questioned 4) budget increase in the Planning Department and asked if this was for salaries. Ms. Subadan explained that this includes the Fight the Blight initiative and that \$50,000 was put in for the newly established Land Bank. Mr. Dabney questioned why the public does not know the workings of government and what monies are being spent, etc., with Ms. Subadan suggesting that citizens can attend meetings, read the newspaper and watch the news. Mr. Dabney said that he subscribes to the Albany Herald and reads the minutes. Commissioner Coleman told Mr. Dabney that the Fight the Blight Initiative began in E. Albany in his Ward and gave times/location of meetings. Mr. Dabney questioned 5) utility reserves and asked if they are depleted. Ms. Subadan replied in the negative and explained that reserves are used for emergencies, i.e., January storms recovery. Mr. Dabney asked if reserves were used for the purchase of the Pine Ave., building and for furnishings with Ms. Subadan stating no. Commissioner Coleman said volunteers are needed to help with the Fight the Blight and that they meet at 2nd Mt. Olive Church. He gave names of contact people if there are questions.

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2. Chad Warbington stated that his concern is that the public hearing was advertised for 9:00 am and suggested that the public hearing should have been held at the night meeting. He said he live streams on social media and commented on the concern of sharing information with the public, i.e., meetings being televised. Regarding the City transfer, he stated that for the last 50 years it was 6-7% but today is it at 11%, which he suggested happened when departments merged. He stated that 98-99% of customers are citizens of Albany and, regarding the power point presented by Commissioner Langstaff, he said his brother lives in Lawrenceville and mentioned their utilities and other things that should be considered when making comparisons. Regarding the MEAG Trust Credits, he asked what is being done with the \$90 million. He said that the Job Investment Fund, is the only portion of the credits with any accountability because a committee, chaired by Commissioner Postell, has oversight of those funds received \$20 million and suggested that there should be \$38 million left. He asked if this can be used for infrastructure/capital outlay projects instead of increasing utility rates. He mentioned concerns he has regarding the Civic Center and the \$2.3 million that is lost with no plan in place, adding that he feels it provides little service to citizens and asked if a contract was signed for it to be managed by the Albany Development Partners (ADP).

Commissioner Fletcher stated the Commission is in talks with ADP and that the City Manager is working with them with no contract being approved at this time. Mr. Warbington asked that the City be transparent and communicate to citizens.

Commissioner Postell stated that the Civic Center was developed by former Mayor James Gray and commented on prior history of activities there adding that it is important to the public.

Commissioner Langstaff stated that every City Manager has addressed the Civic Center issue and tried to figure out a solution that included outsourcing or selling it. He agreed with Commissioner Fletcher that a contract was not signed with ADP and advised that they are to bring proposals, but no vote has been taken on any proposal to date. At this time, ADP is in the trenches trying to put together the best plan and he feels better about this issue than he has in 15 years.

Commissioner Coleman stated that the Civic Center was not designed to make money, but to generate indirect funds by drawing people to Albany, staying in hotels, buying gas and eating out. He said he does not know who projected the Civic Center to make \$2.0 million; if it pays its utilities and employees, it is doing what it was designed to do.

3. Henry Mathis – was not present to speak

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta stated that he has been in communication with Mr. Warbington through social media (FB) and he may have used some of the points Mr. Warbington made in his comments; he credited Mr. Warbington for some of the points that he made.

Commissioner Coleman agreed with Mr. Warbington that the Commission should tell citizens the truth.

Commissioner Howard advised that he has an eye doctor appt. at 11:40 and he will be leaving soon. He mentioned the new initiative in the budget regarding the purchase of motorcycles and asked Ms. Subadan to explain. Ms. Subadan stated that this came from the City providing escort services for funerals and the use of motorcycles should curb traffic violations. She added that every attempt is made to be transparent when the budget is presented; the budget brief clearly shows the amount of the transfer and lists initiatives. Commissioner Howard said that he appreciates the transparency, but he would rather see the motorcycles eliminated and positions filled at APD to address the 'hot spots' in Albany's more crime prone areas. (Commissioner Howard then left the meeting at 11:25 am).

Discussion followed with Commissioner Fletcher stating that people say they do not have time to attend/speak at public hearings. And, while the newspaper has the ability to report more, other media just has a 20-second snapshot of what was said that appear to misrepresent the facts, i.e.,

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the utility rate discussions, etc. She mentioned events at the Civic Center such as graduations, conventions, etc.; the facility is used more than the public realizes.

Mayor Hubbard stated that the information regarding the budget is posted on the website; Ms. Subadan agreed. Mayor Hubbard suggested citizens give input on how they would like to get information.

In reply to Mr. Warbington's comments regarding a plan for reserves, Commissioner Langstaff stated that the City Manager is working on it and policies are being drafted to include the reserve fund.

Commissioner Fletcher moved to delay the increase of utility rates until the first of the year. Mayor Hubbard reminded Commissioner Fletcher that this is only a public hearing, the budget vote will not be taken today; it will be on the next agenda for vote (June 28th).

Commissioner Postell commented on wasting time, prolonging the meeting, etc., with Mayor Hubbard stating that the Commission can address the length of meetings in the future.

Commissioner Fletcher clarified that her suggestion/motion is to delay the rate increase until January, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marietta, who clarified that the motion to give staff direction that will reflect the concept.

Commissioner Langstaff stated that the City Commission does not set utility rates and to delay the increase results in having it to go back to the utility board for their review. Ms. Subadan clarified that she can adjust the budget if this Board wants to delay the increase until January; the utility board does not have the authority to adjust the budget. A brief discussion ensued regarding the Utility Board setting rates.

Commissioner Coleman clarified that the rate increase will be postponed until January, when it will be revisited. ; Commissioner Fletcher stated that her motion is to postpone the rate increase until January 2018.

Discussion followed with Commissioner Langstaff again questioning whether the item should go back to the utility board for their review. Mayor Hubbard asked Mr. Davis for his opinion and said if the utility board had to revisit the item, she would call a special meeting. Mr. Davis said he will research and provide an opinion.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that it is a \$7.68 month increase if all five services are used; if this holds up approval of the budget, remove it until January 1.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta suggested that the Commission needs more input from citizens and asked to start the next meeting at 5:30 to give time for another public hearing.

Commissioner Langstaff clarified that the City Attorney can review the charter and if needed, Mayor Hubbard said she would call a special meeting of the utility board to receive the request to delay the increase until January. He explained that this Board does not have the ability to set rates; the Utility Board agreeing to rates is a safety mechanism. If they have already approved rates being increased July 1, they will have to modify that action to take place January 1.

After hearing discussions, Mayor Pro Tem Marietta said he will withdraw his second to the motion.

Ms. Subadan asked Mayor Hubbard if we are waiting on confirmation from the charter regarding utilities; Mayor Hubbard agreed. Ms. Subadan said that based on what is brought back, the meeting time will be changed, but there will be no public hearing on June 28th.

Mayor Hubbard closed the public hearing portion of the meeting.

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve the following Alcohol License Applications –
Transfer of Ownership, seconded by, Mayor Pro Tem Marietta; the motion unanimously carried.

1. Prayosha 101 LLC, d/b/a Exxon Food Mart; 1817 N. Slappey Blvd.; V. Patel/Agent; Beer Package; Transfer Ownership from N. Patel
2. One Pramukh LLC, d/b/a Shell Food Mart; 2824 Old Dawson Road; Beer Package and Wine Package; Transfer Ownership from N. Patel

Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve the following purchases, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

1. Asbestos Abatement - AHERA Response Services
Total amount \$70,000.00
2. Asbestos Abatement - American Logistics International, Inc.
Total amount \$70,000.00
3. Software Maintenance - Oracle USA Inc.
Total expenditure \$80,432.68
4. Methane Remediation - Advance One Development, LLC.
Total expenditure \$269,000.00

ORDINANCE

Commissioner Langstaff introduced

AN ORDINANCE NO. 17-106

Closing Lowe Road, more particularly described herein with certain reservations, authorizing execution of Quit Claim Deed

Commissioner Langstaff then offered the ordinance and asked for unanimous consent to dispense with the second reading and asked for its adoption, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

RESOLUTIONS

Commissioner Fletcher moved to adopt the following resolutions, seconded by Commissioner Coleman.

A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R128

Approving a Voting Delegate and Flag Bearer for the City of Albany to the Georgia Municipal Association's Annual Convention on June 24-26, 2017

A JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17-R129

Authorizing the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of Dougherty County and the Mayor of the City of Albany to execute forms provided by the Georgia Dept. of Community Affairs necessary to extending the existing Service Delivery Strategy through October 31, 2017

A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R130

Authorizing a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Albany, Georgia and the MCLB-Albany, Georgia for the purpose of securing the benefits of Canine Support and Explosive Detection Dogs

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A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R131

Authorizing a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Albany, Georgia and the MCLB-Albany, Georgia for the purpose of officer training

A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R132

Authorizing a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Albany, Georgia and the MCLB-Albany, Georgia for Rifle Range usage

A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R133

Approving Easement Agreement from Forest Park Subdivision

A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R134

Accepting Utility Easement from W. D. Wingate re: 132 5th Street, Leesburg, GA

A RESOLUTION 17-R135

Awarding CHDO Funds to new Visions Development Corporation

A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R136

Approving FY 2017 -2018 Annual Action Plan

A RESOLUTION NO. 17-R137

Approving proposed Substantial Amendments of FY 2014, 2015 and 2016 Action Plan

A brief discussion followed on adding Mayor Pro Tem Marietta as the voting delegate and flag bearer to Resolution #17-R-128 and making the correction on the location (from E. Albany to central Albany) of the CHDO as noted in Resolution #17-R135. Hearing no further comments, the motion unanimously carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

MAYOR

ATTEST

CITY CLERK