

MAY 9, 2017
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – 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 8:30 a.m., and reminded those in attendance of the process to address the Commission (Citizen Comments/Speaker Appearance Forms).

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

Roderick B. Jolivette said his non-profit's goal is to educate and develop youths. He distributed information (copy on file) stating that there are 40 youths they are helping and asked the City to invest in these young leaders. He commented on other non-profits and independent agencies the city funds, including the Boys Club, and asked that the City consider investing in this organization – Jolly Ministries.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that she appreciates those taking an interest in the youths and mentioned that it was her understanding that all Dougherty County School children have access to computers and/or have tablets. She asked Mr. Jolivette why he is in front of the Commissioners and taxpayers after having sued the City and County and why this should be considered under these circumstances. She said this falls in line as a donation, which she feels is not legal. Mr. Davis agreed that this appears to be a donation and, in spite of being a worthy cause, the Georgia Constitution does not allow for donations. Mr. Jolivette said he has a home and business in the community, and is a taxpayer, adding that they are a non-profit 501(3) (c) – a legitimate organization and this is not about what he did, but is an investment in the youths in an effort to deter crime. If nothing is done, he said they will be ok.

ALBANY HOUSING AUTHORITY PRESENTATION

Mayor Hubbard stated that the new director of Albany Housing is present. Roman Velasquez introduced himself and said he is here to present a check in lieu of taxes in the amount of \$104,897.82. He said he plans to meet with each of the Commissioners in the near future.

Mayor Hubbard thanked Mr. Velasquez and welcomed him to Albany.

APPOINTMENTS

1. One appointment to Board of Ethics to fill unexpired term ending Oct. 2017
2. One Commission appointment to EDC to fill unexpired term ending Dec. 2017
3. Ward I appointment to Tree Board to fill unexpired term ending Aug. 2018

Commissioner Howard commented on the filling of the vacancies with Mayor Hubbard advising that the vote will be taken at the next meet.

TRAVEL

1. S. Subadan, City Manager; Annual Chamber Mtg. w/Federal Delegation;
\$2,200.74

Commissioner Howard moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACT AGREEMENT – MOBILITIE, LLC

Mr. Davis discussed information pertaining to the agreement and said copies of the agreement were provided (copy on file). Bruce Maples, Director of Engineering, discussed information regarding right-of-way construction/improvements that pertain to this item.

Commissioner Postell asked if approval was received from the owners with Mr. Maples stating that this is the request since the property belongs to the City of Albany. He explained use of the pole, etc., with the request to use one pole on Westover and Meredyth with the eventual request for five additional poles.

Commissioner Langstaff asked if this will be utilized as cell towers with Mr. Maples stating that he cannot answer this. In reply to Commissioner Langstaff, he stated that he does not know whether other cities utilize this, with Mr. Davis stating that this is standard and he would think it is in other cities. In reply to Commissioner Langstaff, Mr. Maples stated the cons, which include the monitoring, asking them to re-locate at their own expense (per Mr. Davis), etc., with Mr. Davis advising that state law has to be followed; adding that they do not have to submit an application, but would have to follow state law. Commissioner Langstaff asked if it is similar to cell phone towers with Mr. Davis replying in the affirmative.

Detailed discussion ensued on the height of the pole (75'), the location of the pole, potential road hazard (Mayor Pro Tem Marietta), whether this will interfere with Verizon and Alltel, and the suggestion of tabling for more information (Commissioner Postell) and finding a better location to put the pole (Mayor Pro Tem Marietta). Mr. Maples stated that questions of this nature will be handled during the review process; however, the agreement is for use of the city right of way; every permit will be looked at before a determination is made.

Mayor Hubbard asked if the City decides the spots and if state law prohibits rejection. Mr. Davis agreed, adding that an application can be sent to the state and it would be a done deal without any City involvement. In reply to Commissioner Postell, he stated that this cannot be tabled due to time restraints.

Commissioner Langstaff asked the height of most utility poles with Jimmy Norman, Director of Utility Operations explaining that the typical pole is 40-45' with the tallest at 65'. Mr. Maples said the tallest are on Westover and are 75'. In reply to Commissioner Langstaff, Mr. Davis agreed that state law determines the height of poles. Commissioner Langstaff said that he does not feel

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the City has a choice; however, the way the resolution is crafted, the agreement grants the license, etc., as noted, which addresses this one pole.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta asked if state law prohibit brick mail boxes on right-of- ways and if a concrete foundation is in the right-of-way, does it makes us liable. Mr. Davis said the indemnity holds the City harmless from suits should there be an accident.

There were no additional comments on this item.

PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

ALBANY POLICE DEPT. UPDATE

Chief Persley discussed decrease in crime; stats; homicide cases; future plans to address crime trends; personnel matters including hiring, promotions, vacancies, and training. He asked the Gang unit to stand (seven stood) and discussed their law enforcement experience.

Commissioner Howard asked if 12 are required with Chief Persley saying that he currently has eight, but is authorized for 12; he discussed the filling of vacancies in the unit. In reply to Commissioner Howard he commented on the number of vacancies (18 entry levels and 12 supervisory, recruitment efforts etc. Commissioner Howard commented on his concerns, which is to have vacancies filled, adding that there are areas in the community that law enforcers are afraid to go into, suggesting that enforcement of saggy pants and curfew should be enforced. He asked Ms. Subadan to put officers on the streets out of this year's budget cycle.

Commissioner Coleman agreed with Commissioner Howard, adding that the Commissioners will also have to be actively involved to include economic development, the school system, etc., to have something for kids to do when school is out.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Marietta Chief Persley stated that Lt. Henry or Angela Price can be contacted regarding recruitment and qualifications.

Commissioner Postell asked the amount budgeted for the gang task force with Chief Persley stating \$869,279 for personnel. In reply to Commissioner Postell, he explained the promotion process and moving personnel from one department to another. Commissioner Postell commented on the saggy pants enforcement and asked that APD concentrate efforts on this as well and asked that a female be added to the gang task force. Chief Persley said that females have been in the gang unit in the past, but they have transferred, been promoted or resigned.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Chief Persley commented on the last homicide in the City of Albany, which was not last weekend. Commissioner Howard mentioned the area of Malone/Whiting/E. Broad, bike riders who are noisy and asked that this area is patrolled (1600 block of Whiting Ave).

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Mayor Pro Tem Marietta disagreed with the comments of Commissioner Howard of officers being afraid to go into areas of the city.

Chief Persley commented on vacancies and the hiring process, law enforcement, community effort that is required, officers being safe, enforcing ordinances on the book, Albany events, i.e., high school events with young folks coming from out of town, the national problem of saggy pants which is a fad, enforcement of curfew, holding parents/guardians responsible, etc.

Mayor Hubbard thanked Chief Persley for the update and what he does for the citizens of Albany.

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

TRANSFER OF OLD LOWE ROAD ROW TO STATE

Mr. Maples discussed information (copy on file) as it pertains to Lowe Rd., at Albany Tech Campus, including the process of closing the road and easements.

There were not comments on this item.

EROSION, SEDIMENTATION & POLLUTION CONTROL ORDINANCE

Mr. Maples discussed information (copy on file) as it pertains to errors, adding that the revisions are included in the draft ordinance.

Commissioner Postell commented on the old/new bus station and asked if it is pertinent to this item. Mr. Maples replied in the negative. Ms. Subadan explained that this does not apply to a study, but rather is an ordinance regarding erosion, sedimentation and pollution control that is dictated by the State and the ordinance is to comply with the state of Georgia.

There were no additional comments on this item.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

2016-2017 ESG AWARD MODIFICATION

Ciceli Brown, CD Manager, discussed information as noted (copy on file).

Commissioner Howard stated that the storms affected all people and not just those with low income with Ms. Brown stated that the agreement/award is for low-mod income people.

There were no comments on this item.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

FY 2018 PROPOSED BUDGET

Ms. Subadan gave comments regarding the proposed budget and preparation thereof as it pertains to the economy, utility fees, being good stewards and accountable, proposed utility rate increases, utility transfers to the general fund (27% of the general fund budget), \$1.1 million increase in supporting 911, annual monies going into the pension fund, new initiatives including Fight Albany Blight, compensation strategies to retain staff, outside agencies funding (EDC, CVB, RiverQuarium, Thronateeska, etc., agencies as listed), and the anticipated end of MEAG credits.

A power point presentation was presented at this time with Phil Roberson, Asst. City Manager, discussing slide 1, which is an organizational background, history, cost cutting measures, personnel reductions and positions.

At this time, a brief video was shown on what the City of Albany has done and accomplished over the last year.

Derrick Brown, Finance Director, continued with the power point presentation and commented on the budget process, and advised that the total expenditures are \$272 million as noted on slide 3. Slide 4 is a breakdown of the general fund budget (\$62,426,660). As noted on slide 5, he explained how consumer's dollars are spent, which includes police, fire, general government, planning/engineering and recreation/community. Slide 6 explains special revenue funds in the amount of \$26,572,402; Slide 7 shows supplemented enterprise funds - \$14,417,821; Slide 8 explains Utility Revenue/expenses, which do not have to be balanced; Slide 9 pertains to usage trends, which is on a downward spiral (light/sewer fund) over the last three years; Slide 10 is the light dept. budget \$103,303,242; Slide 11 pertains to the gas dept. - \$15,798,763; slide 12 lists the capital improvement program - \$17,058,218 and Slide 12 gives a summary of rate changes. He advised that if rates are not increased, all seven of the utility departments will lose money; the rate increase will balance the budget.

Discussion followed regarding losing money (Mayor Pro Tem Marietta) and the transfer of money to the general fund. He asked about the purchase power adjustment (PPA) made in March and the audit showing an increase in expenses. Mr. Brown explained that the PPA is included in the budget, which is a monthly number that is looked at. Regarding Slide 9, Mayor Pro Tem Marietta commented on LED lighting, which is cost efficient, and efficient air conditioning units that are being promoted. He said that citizens are telling him that if electric rates are increased people will turn off their air conditioner, which will inhibit sale of electricity. He asked Mr. Brown to explain the PPA rate with Mr. Brown explained that it went from .8 cents to 1.2 cents per kWh, adding that there are fluctuations from month to month. Mayor Pro Tem Marietta asked what the fixed cost is with Mr. Brown stating that this is payment to MEAG. Mayor Pro Tem Marietta asked for a list/history of fixed costs.

Commissioner Coleman commented on the general public not understanding and their concern of increasing rates. He suggested that another look be taken at the budget to not include a rate increase.

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Commissioner Howard asked the amount in reserves today with Mr. Brown stating \$9.7 million, which can be liquidated to cash in the general fund, adding that there are approximately 35,000 customers. Commissioner Howard asked if the rate increase could have been suppressed before coming to the Commission and suggested a budget committee being in place to give input and to review with departments. He agreed with Commissioner Coleman on not having an increase especially with senior citizens on fixed income, etc., and suggested that the budget be looked at to do better, adding that he cannot vote for the budget next month with the increase included or if a layoff is included.

Ms. Subadan stated that this is a proposed budget and said she welcomes Commission feedback. She commented on initiatives in the budget which includes additional line workers, funding of materials/capital expenditures, proposals on what to do with youths during summer months through the Dept. of Community Affairs, partnership with Albany Works pertaining to community service through the court system, police athletic league to get youths off the streets and implementation of SPLOST VII. She said meetings will be held with each of the Commissioners to get feedback.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta said he voted for the FFE for the new Utility building, but his constituents say this is too much money (\$400,000); he asked that this be reconsidered since a rate increase is now being recommended. He asked that the reserve fund be looked at since the audit showed \$20 million, etc., as it pertains to public perception; those recovering from the recent storms, reducing the amount that goes put into the reserve fund, no increase in utility rates and find a way to work with what we have, etc. Ms. Subadan commented on the Commission's policy of having 15% in reserves; the suggestion by American Power Association and a financial consultant to have 120-200 days of operating funding for the electric utilities, with the City having 60 days on-hand; the \$27.0 million in CAFRA, which shows as a fund balance is not all cash, etc. Regarding the new building, she advised that the expense is one time, whereas funding the pension plan and 911 are ongoing items to fund.

Commissioner Fletcher addressed Mayor Pro Tem Marietta's comment, which she said sounds as though he intends to rescind his vote on the FFE at the new building, etc. She commented on having speed humps, etc., and making comments without having facts. In rebuttal, Mayor Pro Tem Marietta said he is expressing what he hears citizens say, adding that he voted for the FFE because he understood what he was told at that time, but was not aware of the rate increase.

Mayor Hubbard asked the process of meeting individually with Commissioners with Ms. Subadan stating that meetings have been scheduled.

Rev. Heard said he is representing his church congregation, senior citizens, retirees, and children in the community as it pertains to utility rate increases. He mentioned the new building, saving money by renovating the old building, seniors calling the church asking for help with medicines and utility bills and asked that the poor be considered. He commented on the cost of purchasing Christmas lights, new buses, etc., asked that citizens be considered, especially those who cannot afford the cost to live and asked that the Commission be compassionate.

Commissioner Postell asked Rev. Heard the source of his stats, with Rev. Heard stating that he got this off the WALB website.

Commissioner Fletcher said she believes there are a percentage of people who can and a percentage of those who cannot afford the increase. She mentioned having a pledge of people, businesses and churches who are doing well to go an extra mile.... Rev. Heard said his church is not getting a discount and agreed that people who have been blessed can be asked to help. Commissioner Fletcher asked Rev. Heard if he will support asking those who do well to make a pledge to assist those less fortunate. Rev. Heard mentioned the storm water, fee which was added some years ago and citizens were challenged by the fee; Mt. Olive and Mt. Olive Outreach ended up with a \$4,000/month bill and assists those when the sewer, etc., rates were raised and said people are actually assisting already. Commissioner Fletcher suggested creating a committee of community members, churches, etc., to look at what can be done to assist.

Mayor Hubbard agreed that finding a solution to the problem is the concern of everyone and how to position the community for the future.

Commissioner Langstaff thanked Rev. Heard for being here today and addressed the old WG&L building and his rationale for approving the move, adding that renovating the building was excessively expensive as opposed to purchasing a newer building. There are developers who are waiting to get tax credits to rehab the building for potential housing. Regarding raising utility rates, the question is, do we need to spend more money and the need to look at other cities to see how they are handling this issue. He said he is conducting research, which he hopes will show Albany is in line with comparable cities as far as spending. Sources of revenues to pay expenses are slim, collection of fines, property taxes and utility are the only sources we currently have. He addressed renters controlled by landlords and passing increased costs onto renters, property taxes going up with no control over that, high millage rates in the City of Albany and the choice of cutting expenses or getting money from somewhere else. He said he will do additional research and bring it back for consideration, adding that he thinks about the poverty rate and will not vote to raise rates without that in mind. Mayor Hubbard said she is in the same position as a senior citizen and said she voted for the new building for the same reasons Commissioner Langstaff noted including the ingress/egress, which created safety issues at the old building.

Commissioner Postell said he is not campaigning for or against until he has heard everything and apologized for those who are bringing politics into the discussion.

Commissioner Howard thanked Rev. Heard for coming and asked if he is in opposition on a rate increase with Rev. Heard agreeing and asking that another way be found instead of raising rates. Commissioner Howard said he believes the votes today indicate that the City Manager is being directed to review the budget to not increase rates or lay off employees.

Gordon Hall agreed with comments that were said earlier and specifically spoke to a rate increase, which is basically a double tax on property owners; it is a rate increase and property tax increase.

He asked that a way to cut cost is found because the poor and elderly cannot afford a rate increase as they are on a fixed income.

Commissioner Coleman said he is encouraged that the City Manager and Finance Director will meet with Commissioners to discuss the budget. He mentioned the poverty/unemployment levels within the city and asked that they be kept in mind when making decisions.

PURCHASES

Kim Allen, Buyer, discussed the following:

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| 1. | Airport Parking Lot Exit, Jim Boyd Construction | |
| | Total expenditure | \$152,334.00 |

Mayor Hubbard asked the timeline for completion with Ms. Allen stating 60 days. Mayor Pro Tem Marietta asked the funding; David Hamilton, Transportation Director, stated that it comes from the airport as noted.

There were no additional comments on this item.

Dale Henry, Buyer, discussed the following:

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| 2. | Bus Engine Replacement Cummins South, Albany, GA | |
| | Total amount | \$46,563.02 |

There were no comments on this item.

Joshua Williams, Buyer, discussed the following:

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| 3. | Bus Shelters, Brasco International, Madison Heights, MI | |
| | Total expenditure | \$75,800.00 |

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Hamilton stated that GDOT looked at bus stops and adjustments of setbacks will be looked at, adding that he will look at the specific concern.

There were no additional comments on this item.

MGP REMEDIATION PROJECT - 2017 GROUNDWATER MONITORING

Mr. Maples discussed information as noted (copy on file). There were comments on this matter.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Ms. Subadan deferred to Chief Rowe regarding a storm recovery update. Chief Rowe commented on the Jan. 2 and Jan. 22 storms that came through Albany/Dougherty County with an estimated \$1.0 billion collective cost. He discussed FEMA's categories of structures as it pertains to damages with over 800 meeting major destruction category; a total of 1100 homes (70% of homes in Dougherty County) being damaged/affected in some way with over 800 structures having major damage or were totally destroyed; public infrastructure was estimated at \$24.0 million in damages with \$650 million in damages to commercial areas; tourism has been affected, agriculture areas affected with over \$28 million in permitted reconstruction. Regarding social media, he suggested to continue tracking volunteer hours with over 31,000 hours being provided to date. Only 22% of applicants were provided assistance through FEMA with over 4,000 not being approved; the average applicant received less than \$4,000 through FEMA and many are still misplaced. There is a lot of psychological damages especially to children and processes are being considered in moving forward to assist with more permanent housing, countywide coverage of tornado warning system, promoting safe rooms, etc.

Commissioner Howard questioned reimbursement from FEMA with Chief Rowe stating that he does not have an amount on reimbursement at this time. Commissioner Howard mentioned collaboration between City/County with Chief Rowe explaining the process for having people in place to handle storms of this magnitude in the future.

Mayor Pro Tem Marietta thanked Chief Rowe and the volunteers who came from all over to assist with storm recovery efforts.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Hubbard announced that on Friday May 12 at 2:00 pm an announcement will be made from the Board of Regents and invited the Commission to attend the meeting at the RiverQuarium.

Commissioner Coleman commented on naming buildings and his request to suspend the policy as it is and asked Ms. Subadan to have this on the next meeting. Mr. Davis said he will do the agenda item. Commissioner Coleman mentioned the E. Towne subdivision and a problem with speeding in the area.

Commissioner Howard commented on the 2,000 visitors to Albany for Girls State Tract Meet at Hugh Mills Stadium and urged everyone to support our local high schools

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK