

MAY 17, 2016  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 120

PRESENT Mayor Dorothy Hubbard  
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Bobby Coleman, Roger Marietta, Bob  
Langstaff, Jr., and Tommie Postell  
City Manager: Sharon Subadan  
City Attorney: CN Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

1. Robert Gilliam – (distributed information – copy on file) and discussed the wrecker rotation policy, which is not being following, adding that wrecker companies have been complaining since July 2014. He said he is present today to argue why instituting tiers will not work and to determine how to get the City to adhere to the rules already instituted. He referred to pg. 2 ‘qualifications’, which lists requirements to operate a wrecker service and be on Albany’s rotation list: small and large trucks and insurance qualifications in order to protect all; and said he would like to have these rules enforced. Referring to pages 4-5 he noted that rules were updated in 1984 and, on page 6-10, he commented on the cost of trucks, adding that for the last 30 years these rules have been followed. He suggested that several wrecker services have been put on the list that do not qualify. Some companies followed the requirements and bought the heavy-duty trucks only to discover that others on the list did not comply with requirements; he again asked that everyone complies with the rules already in place.

Discussion followed with Commissioner Coleman stating that having been in effect for 38 years, it is time to update/change rules and to make policies to be inclusive. It’s a plus for companies with heavy-duty hauling capabilities, but it is unfair to exclude those just starting out. He said he supports the insurance, but cannot support excluding anyone on the list. Additional discussion followed on the proposed tier policy. Commissioner Marietta mentioned that a two-tier system would result in 1) delays and 2) the potential that no one would have the capability to haul big rigs from a wreck site. He suggested that requirements should be in place and adhered to by everyone on the list. Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Davis if the list can be capped with the 11 currently on it; however, anyone subsequently wanting to rotate would have to be able to haul big rigs. Mr. Davis stated that a grandfather clause can be put in place, adding that preference calls are allowed. Commissioner Coleman discussed disagreements/debates and looking for solutions to problems. If those on the rotation have the capability to respond to big rigs, but for some reason cannot respond - lives are at risk. He commented on those who do/do not have heavy duty trucks since wrecks are about ‘life’. Mr. Gilliam said he has been working on this for several years; it has been discussed with the last few City Managers, former Fire Chief, and others, adding that those following the rules are the ones complaining. No one is trying to discriminate or pointing fingers; they are merely trying to get everyone on the same level playing field. The way those in the business see it, two sets of rules are being created, which is unfair. Commissioner Marietta asked Mr. Davis to look at case law to see if any city has been held liable regarding dispatch. Commissioner Coleman asked Mr. Davis to research state laws as well. In response to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Gilliam said he has worked for Robert Lane 26 years, who has been in business 38 years. Commissioner Postell asked the number of times that A-1 has responded to a

call involving a big rig. Mr. Gilliam replied that including preference/non-preference calls they response to approximately 15 calls of that nature per year, with two being non-preference calls. He said anyone with a wrecker could be on the list. Commissioner Postell commented that a pick-up truck could be considered a wrecker; Mr. Gilliam agreed, adding that one with a trailer could be considered as such. Commissioner Postell said he does not see a pick-up truck as a wrecker service; they can pull a vehicle to another location, but that is the extent of their capabilities. He suggested that a wrecker service would also need a locked storage area and said it is getting to be confusing to try and rework the policy after having worked on it for six years. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Gilliam stated again that his request is to eliminate the tier format and follow the rules that are in place. A brief discussion followed regarding the department under which the wrecker service falls; clarification of what defines a wrecker service (towing and recovery system); stipulations/guidelines, etc.

Mayor Hubbard thanked Mr. Gilliam for his information and said a report is forthcoming from staff.

2. Gordon Hall spoke in opposition to the rate increase for WG&L adding that the current utility bills are extremely high and WG&L is a profitable entity. Rather than raise rates on customers, he asked why not use profits to assist customers. He said that his utility bill is \$780.00, which is extremely high and citizens cannot afford such high utility bills. He suggested that customers should be receiving rebates, etc., and again asked that profits be used. Responding to Commissioner Marietta, he showed his utility bill and said that he owns Shabazz restaurant in E. Albany.

Discussion followed regarding the amount of the utility bill, with Mr. Hall stating that this is the highest bill he has ever received; they usually range between \$500-700. He mentioned a \$7.0 million transfer last year and said rent and utilities are the two highest expenses in Albany.

Commissioner Langstaff explained the complicated issue of Commissioners trying to figure out ways to raise revenue through limited avenues, while trying to keep expenses down. To get the needed funds to run the City, either taxes and/or utility rates have to be increased or services reduced/eliminated. He mentioned the billion dollars of taxes that are lost because of being owned by non-profits. However, they pay utility bills and that is the most equitable means to ensure that everyone pays their fair share, adding that the City of Albany's utilities are lower than Georgia Power. He discussed variables that affect customer's utility bills and mentioned the survey that compares Albany's utility rates, which ranks Albany consistently lower in all categories. Mr. Hall countered that taxpayers own property in the city, but are now paying higher rates adding that - regarding the City's operating costs, Commissioners should look at cutting costs. In theory, Commissioner Postell agreed with Mr. Hall; however, he said the City is working within the budget, adding that some [increases] are incremental. He listed the different services – sewer, water, trash, storm water, etc., and said he feels it should be broken out separately. Referring to Mr. Hall's bill, Commissioner Marietta said that water was not charged for two months and suggested that Mr. Hall have his bill reviewed.

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Mayor Hubbard stated that Commission always look at costs and urged customers to look at just their electricity portion of the bill to make an accurate comparison to Georgia Power because the City offers other services. The Utility Board reviewed rates, proposed an increase and made that recommendation to the City Commission. She mentioned making sure the bill is paid by/before the due date to avoid a late fee being assessed.

Mr. Hall mentioned the cut-off fee of \$45.00, with Mayor Hubbard stating that the Utility Board is in the process of looking at all fees.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. Two appointments to KADB to fill unexpired terms ending January, 2017

Commissioner Howard moved to appoint Samuel Sneed and Jackie Dixon, seconded by Commissioner Langstaff; the motion unanimously carried.

2. Five appointments to Barrier Free Board for three-year terms ending March, 2019

Commissioner Langstaff moved to reappoint Donna Parker, Debbie McDonald and Tim Spencer, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

Commissioner Langstaff moved to continue advertising for the vacant positions, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

MEETING DATE CHANGE

Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve the meeting date change to Tuesday, July 19, 2016, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

**PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS**

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATION:

1. Mikes Country Store 3, Inc., 3203 Gillionville Rd; R. Rodgers/Agent; Beer/wine consumption – WARD 5

Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion carried 5-1 with Commissioner Howard voting no.

## **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS**

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR LIHTC APPLICATION

Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

A \$97,616.71 check, in lieu of taxes, was presented to the City of Albany by Dan McCarthy, Albany Housing Authority Ex. Director. Mayor Hubbard thanked Mr. McCarthy and mentioned the Connect Home Project meeting that was held last week.

## **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS**

### FY 2017 PROPOSED BUDGET

Ms. Subadan discussed information (copy on file) regarding the proposed budget, adding that the budget is balanced \$274.0 million and does not include use of MEAG funds or a property tax increase. She stated that expenditures have been carefully scrutinized with no increases to the general fund budget, even though some costs have increased, which is beyond the City's control. She said there is no increase in the personnel budget, with the majority of the fund balance seeing a slight increase at the end of this fiscal year. She mentioned purchased utilities, one of the largest contingency costs, adding that this budget is a combined budget of the City's general fund and Utility Department. She explained that 25% of the budget comes from transfers from the entire Utility Department, not just the Lights Department; adding that when utilities make a profit that is transferred to the general fund to allow services to be provided. Referring to the Airport, Transit, and Civic Center, she said they are not self-sufficient and the City has to subsidize those operations. Regarding capital improvements, she explained that it includes SPLOST projects with a storm water/sewer fund being incorporated, adding that she intends to secure a loan, which will make the number look high compared to other years. She reported that the benefit of the Wellness Center is holding down health care costs, with no expected increase in health insurance. With the proposed rate increase of water, solid waste and storm water, she said the concerns have been heard; there is no proposed increase in lights and the intent, effective July 1, is to increase the amount of time for customers to pay their bills from 20 days to 30 days. She reviewed the revised strategic priorities which are 1) Safe, sustainable and business friendly; 2) Economic Development and Jobs 3) Infrastructure and Asset Management 4) Effective and Excellent Service Delivery, 5) Fiscal Responsibility and 6) Promotion of the City of Albany as a great place to live, work and play. She briefly discussed the R3M program (Repair, Renovate, Replace) to address existing infrastructure; Fight Albany Blight; partnership with the Boys & Girls Club at the Thornton Gym & Splash Park; APD's focus on community relations; the pursuit of revenue in certain areas, especially underserved areas; update of technology by Albany Transit; and improvements in Parks & Recreation's facilities and the Civic Center. She mentioned challenges

that were found in the City's Pension fund that needed changes to comply with State mandates; with the budget including a 2% Pension contribution increase at a cost \$919,700 and said the City will begin FY 2017 with a budget that is \$1.5 million less than last year and includes a proposed millage rollback. She mentioned that last year the Commission approved a weatherization program in the amount of \$200,000, with the proceeds applied primarily to seniors, adding that the program has been successful and a few case studies will be brought to the Commission. She urged citizens and businesses to have an energy audit performed at their homes/businesses in an effort to reduce their consumption/bills. She thanked staff for their work in putting the budget together.

Commissioner Postell asked about County renovations of this building using SPLOST funds and how much of the budget covers the building that was recently purchased. Ms. Subadan explained the annual rent payment for this building (\$465,000), which is included in the budget. HB 489 will be brought back to the Commission for consideration, which included the matter regarding the building. In reply to Commissioner Postell, she mentioned negotiations with the County. Mayor Hubbard asked the rule in place regarding ownership when the building was constructed. Ms. Subadan said her thorough the research and documentation indicates that the City paid half of the debt service and that a transfer of title should have been executed, but never was. The County's position is not so much ownership of the building, but rather that the City pays capital on all three buildings – the issue of ownership of the other two is clear – they belong to the County.

Discussion followed on use/cost of the building. Mayor Hubbard asked to see a copy of the agreement and questioned paying the \$465,000 every year if the City is part owner. Ms. Subadan stated that it is the operating cost for the three buildings. Commissioner Howard asked if departments will present their budget to Commissioners; Ms. Subadan stated that today's information is for review and specific departments can be brought back if this is the will of the Commission since most of the budget is similar to last year; however, some departments can be brought back at the next work session. Commissioner Howard asked the number of City employees; Ms. Subadan replied that the number of positions is 1175, but is being reduced to 1171, with about 90% filled; she briefly discussed attrition. Commissioner Howard asked to see a spreadsheet of positions and salaries in each department from the top to the bottom and asked that Public Works, Engineering and Code be brought back, and to include public safety departments.

Commissioner Marietta complimented Ms. Subadan on the budget and the 'budget in brief', asking if it is available on the website. Ms. Subadan said this is the proposed budget; the adopted budget will be available to the public. Mayor Hubbard stated that Commissioners can call department heads and meet with them privately. Commissioner Marietta mentioned the priorities and goals, expressing appreciation that Commissioners' input was heard and heeded and for the positive outlook.

#### PURCHASES:

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

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1. Oracle Software Maintenance, Oracle USA, Inc.  
Total expenditure \$78,089.95

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

2. Internet Services, SyncGlobal, Bremen, GA  
Total expenditure \$358,000.00

Commissioner Howard moved to approve for discussion, seconded by Commissioner Marietta.

3. SPLOST VI Alley Paving, HTS Construction, Albany, GA  
Estimated expenditure \$637,266.38

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Phil Roberson, Asst. City Manager, said this is phase 2 and if approved, notice to proceed will be issued within 30 days of the vote. He mentioned phase 3/design and said this will be forthcoming as well. Commissioner Howard asked if this bidder has done alleys before; Mr. Roberson replied that this is their first time doing alleys.

Commissioner Coleman expressed concern regarding length of time to start/complete projects and asked if the six month turnaround is still being followed. Mr. Roberson replied in the affirmative.

Hearing no further comments, the motion carried 5-0-1 with Commissioner Langstaff abstaining.

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following, seconded by Commissioner Marietta.

4. Demolition of Structures, Oxford Construction Co., Albany, GA  
Total expenditure \$106,535.38

In reply to Commissioner Postell, Tripp Swilley, Director of Facilities Management, explained that the north hangar at the airport is to be demolished. In reply to Commissioner Postell, David Hamilton, Transportation Director, discussed the hangers to be demolished.

Hearing no further comments, the motion carried 4-0-2 with Mayor Hubbard and Commissioner Langstaff abstaining.

Yvette, Fields, Central Services Director, discussed the following (copy on file).

5. Utility Expansion, Triple S Communications, Inc., Moultrie, GA  
Estimated expenditure \$235,513.75

Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Marietta.

Discussion followed with Ms. Fields explaining the bidders/bid/security bond as questioned by Commissioner Marietta. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Roberson explained the expansion

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into Lee County/US HWY 82. In reply to Commissioner Marietta, Mr. Roberson discussed cash flow, increased revenue sources, return on investment, future revenue stream, costs, etc.

Hearing no further comments, the motion unanimously carried.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Commissioner Coleman congratulated the Fire Birds, which made the playoffs. He asked the status of the sign/poster for Rabbitman's Extravaganza with the new City logo. Ms. Subadan said she will get with Mr. Williams.

Commissioner Howard said he received an email regarding the Thornton Pool and asked if the grand opening will be on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Subadan replied in the affirmative adding that if the weather holds, they would like the Mayor and Commissioners at the ribbon cutting.

Commissioner Postell referred to Municipal Court, asking Ms. Subadan if she met with Judge Weaver. Ms. Subadan said she met with all departments, including Judge Weaver. Commissioner Postell commented on a raise for Judge Weaver and help for municipal court. Mayor Hubbard said there was a committee to look at Judge Weaver and other employees, but the process is not complete; she asked that the committee bring a recommendation. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mayor Hubbard stated that the committee was comprised of Commissioners Howard, Postell and Mayor Pro Tem Fletcher. Ms. Subadan stated that salaries for appointed officials are set by the Commission, but she did add additional funding for Municipal Court.

Commissioner Coleman asked the Commission to come up with something for Olympian Alice Coachman. A track meet bearing her name is held each year, but the turnout is slim. Having four high schools and two universities attendance could be greatly improved. City leadership is supposed to lead by example and being more involved in events is one way to do that.

Commissioner Howard mentioned attending two days of the track meet at Hugh Mills Stadium with a lot of schools participating. He asked to invite winners to come to the night meeting to recognize them as state champions.

## **CITY MANAGER UPDATE**

Ms. Subadan mentioned the May 31<sup>st</sup> date of the ribbon cutting for the pool.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – pending litigation

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At 10:23 a.m., Commissioner Postell moved to enter into executive session, seconded by Commissioner Howard; the motion unanimously carried as follows:

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

At 10:40 a.m. Commissioner Howard moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Marietta; the motion unanimously carried as follows:

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

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

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SONJA TOLBERT  
CITY CLERK