

JUNE 26, 2019
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100

PRESENT: Mayor Dorothy Hubbard
Mayor Pro Tem Tommie Postell
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Matt Fuller, B.J. Fletcher, Roger Marietta and
Bob Langstaff, Jr.
City Manager: Sharon Subadan
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m., and reminded the audience of the process to address the Commission (Citizen Comments/Speaker Appearance Forms).

APPOINTMENTS:

1. Appointments to Community Development Council for one-year term ending June 2020
2. Albany Housing Authority appointment for five-year term ending June 2024 (Mayor's appointment)

TRAVEL:

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following travel, seconded by Commissioner Marietta; the motion unanimously carried.

1. City Manager S. Subadan; 2019 MEAG Power Annual Meeting; Amelia Island, FL.; July 7-10, 2019; \$1,194.44

FY 2018-19 COMMISSION THIRD QUARTER EXPENSE REPORT

The Clerk advised that the reports for were provided in the notebooks for review.

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

EASEMENT ABANDONMENT IN PREVIOUSLY CLOSED ALLEYS

Mr. Davis stated that this is a construction project in E. Albany, with the developer needing the property. He advised that engineering verified that there were no City utility easements, adding that this is a corrective quit claim deed and there is no downside to having this item approved.

Commissioner Fuller asked if there is an issue later, and a utility easement is needed, can this be corrected; he then asked for clarification. Mr. Maples agreed and discussed utilities easements and the transfer of such so that the City continues to have the utility easements if needed, adding that this is part of the development process.

PUBLIC FUNCTION MATTERS

ZONING/SPECIAL APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

The Clerk read the following:

1. Zoning Case # 19-043 - Inman Solar, Inc., the applicant, requests to rezone 25 acres of a larger 73.77 acre property tract from C-R to M-1. PC approved 7- 1 (**conditional**); WARD 4
2. Special Approval Case #19-044 - Inman Solar, Inc., the applicant, requests special approval to construct and operate a solar power generating facility. PC approved 7-1; WARD 4

Mayor Hubbard advised that these items will be part of the Public Hearings held at the next meeting (regular business meeting that immediately follows the work session).

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTER

FY 2019 BUDGET AMENDMENT

Derrick Brown, Finance Director, discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding the \$272,938,742 that exceeded the FY2018-19 budget, resulting in a budget amendment. He gave a breakdown of the expenses as noted (storm recovery as much as \$24M; LED light fixtures not to exceed \$6.5 M; the purchase of the Albany Herald building, \$850,000 and the permitting fees due to the Solar Farm on Moultrie Rd., \$243,151).

Discussion followed on storm reimbursements and, in reply to Mayor Hubbard, Mr. Brown discussed reimbursements (and items submitted) for storm recovery. He said that to date, out of the anticipated expenditures of \$24.0 million, \$10.7 million has been submitted, with the expectation of receiving 85% of what was submitted. In reply to Commissioner Fuller, Mr. Brown stated that \$1.3 million has recently been deposited from previous storms.

Commissioner Howard asked Mr. Brown to discuss the permit fees for the solar farms, adding that even though they are in the County, the City has fees to pay as it pertains to HB 489. Mr. Brown explained the number of permits vs. revenue, large volume of permit fees associated with the solar farms, etc., and the percentage the County pays. He commented on loss based on fees and there being no history to benchmark this item as it pertains to what the City pays for a business in the county. In reply to Commissioner Howard regarding TSPLOST, Mr. Brown asked to explain this during the budget discussion, which is the next item.

Commissioner Marietta mentioned the disaster relief bill that Congress is passing and asked if this will assist in getting funds from the government, with Mr. Brown briefly explaining the process and advising that he does not think this will benefit the City of Albany.

Mayor Pro Tem Postell commented on funds for reimbursement from the County and asked for an explanation. Mr. Brown explained the permitting process pertaining to those for the County and how the money is distributed.

Commissioner Fuller questioned the amount collected on the permitting process with all the money going to the County at this time and the City waiting on reimbursement from the County. Mr. Brown agreed and explained the process, including when the funds should be reimbursed to the City, adding

that this may be something in the future to discuss when items of this nature come before the Commission to include re-negotiating with the County (revenue received vs. number of permits issued).

Mayor Hubbard advised that Chad Warbington submitted a comment form asking to speak on this item.

1. Mr. Warbington stated that this is concerning and asked why the budget amendment was not done in pieces, i.e., in January to allow citizens to see what is coming. He mentioned his experience when going through the storms and asked if expenditures have been delayed, adding that this amendment is a concern from a citizen's standpoint. He asked if there were budget amendments during the last three-five years and if things have been done along the way to curtail spending, etc. He asked how this impacts the budget that will be voted on.

Mr. Brown suggested that there can be many budget amendments each time invoices are paid and said he felt this did not impact the budget. Financial management policies have been adopted to prepare the Mayor and Commissioners for items of this nature and this allows staff to be prepared. He said that this amendment started in January to bring it forward and that it is the decision of the Commission to direct staff on how to move forward.

Commissioner Marietta suggested that this is an industry standard, with cities amending their budgets all the time, adding that if FEMA does not reimburse soon, another budget amendment will be necessary. Mr. Brown agreed and explained that if the funds are not received soon, it will affect the budget that is being adopted, etc; however, the numbers add up the same way regardless of when budget amendments are adopted

Mentioning the 2017 storms, Ms. Subadan explained that expenses were about half of what they were for Hurricane Michael as well as receiving reimbursements very quickly which required no need for a budget amendment. It has been disappointing that that the process has been a long-drawn out one with nothing coming back to the City at this point. She added that the City exercised the best practice for unforeseen circumstances/expenses.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Postell, Mr. Warbington stated that he prefers the way the County amends its budget, which is periodically throughout the year. It is a transparent process, which citizens can track and it is not one big bill at the end of the year.

Commissioner Marietta stated that this was commented on last month and an article appeared in the Albany Herald regarding budget amendments. Ms. Subadan added that budget amendments are rather infrequent; one has not been necessary for a number of years.

Mayor Hubbard recognized William Moore who also asked to speak on the budget.

2. William Moore asked, if as a legislative group, do the Commissioners consider themselves a team. Mayor Hubbard replied in the affirmative. Mr. Moore stated that as a citizen, he is disappointed in the team. Mayor Hubbard asked why. Mr. Moore said he can put it in writing because there are many items regarding his statement. In reply to Mr. Moore, Mayor Hubbard asked that his comments be submitted to her.

FY 2020 BUDGET ADOPTION

Mr. Brown commented on the adoption of the FY 2020 budget (copy on file) in the amount of \$288,322,879, adding that the only change was the headcount of employees. He advised that the millage rate will be rolled back to 9.729, which will be on the agenda for the July 23rd meeting.

Mayor Hubbard stated that Will Geer signed to speak on this item.

Mr. Geer agreed with comments made by Mr. Warbington and said that he is a certified public accountant, and has been a governmental auditor for over 20 years. He explained that budgetary tools are not only to be used by governments, but are required by governments as a means to monitor funds being spent. He added that these tools are in place to have an accounting system, with internal controls in place, to monitor the accounting. He commented on financial statements that follow the Code of Georgia and read from state law. Commenting on the ordinance to be adopted tonight, he mentioned the responsibility of the Commission regarding the budget, which is to fund at the departmental level, adding that the Commission does not realize what departmental levels expenditures that exceeded the budget are for. He mentioned that what they are doing is in violation and that to adopt the current budget is to continue to be in violation. He asked if the City Manager approves over-budget expenses by departments and then brings this to the Commission at the 11th hour, suggesting that this is not the way it should be done.

PURCHASE:

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

1. Residence Avenue Alley Paving, 300 Block - Zane Grace Construction, Leesburg, GA
Estimated exp. \$133,267.14

In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Maples discussed the location and the process of paving of the alley.

FY 20 CITY OF ALBANY/ALBANY STATE TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT

Tennasha Gresham, Transit Superintendent of Operation, discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding the request to delegate authority to the City Manager to sign the agreement and subsequent agreements with ASU. She updated information stating that services will be provided by three buses rather than two as previously stated.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Ms. Gresham stated that the cost last year was \$328,000 and that the difference is due to the extra bus and increase in fuel and staffing costs.

Commissioner Marietta asked if we are still making money and if there is a boost to ridership. David Hamilton, Transportation Director, stated that there is no money being made; the cost is to cover services. Ms. Subadan stated that the fee students pay covers the cost and a third bus was added at their request, adding that the City does not subsidize this; ASU covers the cost through student fees.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Postell, Ms. Subadan stated that this is a service to move students from E. Albany to the campus on Gillionville.

Commissioner Howard asked if students show ID and was advised that ID is required by the students, the public can also ride the bus and there are stops along the way.

CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE

Ms. Subadan said that there are eight buses in the budget with a grant to replace eight in FY 2020. She said there will be a cost increase of 4% if there is not a commitment to purchase soon – by the end of July 30th. She asked if the purchase can be issued to take advantage of the lower cost adding that an agenda item will be brought back next month for ratification. The total purchase of \$570,000 per bus with the cost increase of 4% being an additional \$182,000.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Postell, Ms. Subadan said that funding will be: FTA at 80%, and the State and City at 10% each. This will allow the City to eliminate all of its older diesel buses, which are at the end of their useful life and creating maintenance issues.

A brief discussion followed on whether to grant consensus of this item. Commissioner Langstaff said he will make a motion at the next meeting.

Continuing with the update, Ms. Subadan commented on: Shadowlawn sewer project being underway, ESG/Jacobs coordinating on the takeover, etc., 12,037 LED lights installed, with 3,453 repaired and that the AMI contract and the Chehaw Park draft agreement will be on the 7/23 agenda. Regarding Chehaw she advised that the agreement will be for one year due to the expiration of the enabling legislation. She mentioned the agreement with Dougherty County for a work release program, which allows for prisoners to assist with litter pickup.

OTHER BUSINESS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Fuller asked to look at Sunday sales (alcohol) to be on the ballot in November.

Commissioner Howard commended Donna Nickels, a City Utility employee, who does an outstanding job. He also advised that Albany Herald Reporter Carlton Fletcher said that this is his last night covering City news.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:14 pm.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK