

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual Meeting)

PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough
Mayor Pro Tem Jon Howard
City Commissioners: Chad Warbington
City Attorney: C. Nathan Davis

Mayor Dorough called the (virtual) meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. and confirmed the attendance of those on the virtual conference call as follows: City Manager Sharon Subadan, Commissioners Matt Fuller, BJ Fletcher, Bob Langstaff and Demetrius Young.

SPEAKER APPEARANCE

1. Shaunae Motley, President/CEO United Way of Southwest Georgia, used a PowerPoint presentation to show the support the organization has provided to this area during the COVID-19 pandemic; that partnering with other agencies ‘together, we have collectively been stronger’; goals; and the next steps in addressing long-term issues.

Commissioner Young asked Ms. Motley to discuss United Way’s partnership with local non-profits. Ms. Motley stated that they have partners focused on: youth development; the aging population; small businesses; and the health arena, to move change through the community. He mentioned that there are several non-profits in this area, some more effective than others and asked if United Way made efforts to help strengthen those organizations. Ms. Motley replied in the affirmative, adding that next year they want to ensure that even those not receiving funding from United Way are strengthened, through the launch of training and technical assistance, funded by the Truit Foundation. The goal is to help all non-profits perform at a high level and mentioned the possibility of some non-profits merging with other non-profits, which share the same goals.

Mayor Dorough advised that the presentation would have been better had it been an agenda item. As a speaker, she was limited to a five-minute presentation and what United Way has done is relevant to the community. He asked that she get with the City Manager in order to present the information as an agenda item, which will be educational and beneficial for everyone.

2. Joanna Jackson stated that she is a 9-5 Utility Business Fellow and a community organizer. She said she became a 9-5 Utility Fellow to help improve the conditions of others in her community; especially those with high utility bills. One goal of 9-5 Georgia, an economic organization for working women, is to help with higher/equal pay. She stated that there is a utility crisis in Albany and change is needed. She mentioned a petition that started a month ago, which listed their demands and was presented to the Utility Board. Protests were organized and staged at the Utility Department, as well as having discussion with Mayor Dorough and Asst. City Manager (Stephen Collier). She referred to national programs/initiatives designed to help with affordable housing, adding that similar national programs for affordable utilities are needed and asked that the Commission take action to help hurting families.

Commissioner Warbington asked Mayor Dorough if there are any to-do lists or actions items coming from their meeting. Mayor Dorough stated that he sent out a letter, memorializing what had been discussed and that he will resend. He stated that Ms. Jackson brought up issues today that were not discussed in the meeting and briefly commented on items discussed, i.e., some of which would result in a significant increase in delinquent accounts, adding that the group was provided with statistics and documentation

verifying representation. There were suggestions that 9-5 encourage citizens to obtain information about the consumption of a residence before leasing an apartment or house, and, he agreed that more needs to be done to help property owners weatherize to make their property more energy efficient; 9-5 was assured that the City is open to discuss suggestions and mentioned Memphis TN having options that could be explored. Commissioner Warbington stated that he agrees with Ms. Jackson's statement that a utility bill should never be higher than someone's rent, something he sees all over the city. However, he does not see it as a rate issue since our rates are not astronomically higher than Georgia Power or Mitchell EMC. He briefly commented on other issues, i.e., high utility rates in poor housing structures with duplexes/apartments/houses utility bills higher than rent and discussed briefly policies in Memphis, adding that additional research would show their success rate including their energy efficiency code for rental property, putting the city in a position to stand up for renters by holding landlords accountable to certain standards, however, he stated that it would be a long-term solution that the Board would have to agree and stick with it.

Ms. Jackson commented on the city of Lawrenceville's stabilization plan and discussed how their policies help lower lights bills.

Commissioner Young mentioned utility bills as a campaign issue for some candidates to get elected to office and told Ms. Jackson he appreciates her keeping them accountable in tackling this issue and keeping it in the forefront. He suggested that a look is needed at the fundamental way that Albany Utilities is operating; it is an enterprise utility to generate revenue for City coffers. However, if the Utility Department is making a profit, citizens need to see a direct benefit and not have the funds disappear into the budget. He also suggested that putting policies in the City's Code will hold landlords accountable through developing a utility rating and, renters would know beforehand how much to expect in utility bills, through a weatherization code. The City needs to do what it can as a utility, with the resources and, change the culture of Albany Utilities or the way we operate for citizens to see a benefit from it. For something that belongs to the people, it seems to be a hinderance to people in Albany getting ahead. He stated that Georgia Power and Mitchell EMC are not viewed in that light by their customers.

3. Shanika Owens stated that she has just completed the 9-5 Utility Justice Fellowship, which has been engaged in research/advocacy on the utility crisis in Albany, with many families suffering because of it. Commissioners need to know that the public needs progress on this issue and are demanding change because of the crisis. She stated that evictions are up, some have not begun to receive their unemployment and cannot afford the high light bills. She reported that advocates realize that a lot of the issue is due to contracts the City entered into with MEAG and Plant Vogtle and suggested that the public needs transparency and to see contracts of the City. She commented on the utilities making money to fund the budget and suggested the extra money should go back into the community, etc., adding that poverty is high and policies are needed to help the poor in our community, especially those who cannot break out of poverty because of their high bills. She suggested that the community needs to be a part of the decision-making process, able to speak with leaders before they enter contracts, etc., elected officials should be held accountable and suggested changes to the members of the Utility Board. They realize that both Boards have inherited a lot of problems; however, the demand is for action, leadership and real change, which they will support. She briefly discussed recommendations that will help Albany's citizens and suggested that the community needs active leaders who care and are willing to make realistic moves that will bring relief to this community.

Commissioner Warbington referenced comments made by Ms. Owens regarding MEAG and stated that he has advocated for more involvement with MEAG. He advised that currently a decision is on the table to end the City's operating agreement with Plant Wansley; an old, expensive coal plant that is not eco-friendly, adding that MEAG might end the agreement in the near future. He explained that MEAG rates Albany #2 and 3 in the entire state and we should have a voice in that decision. Albany stands to gain a lot; it will lower the extra amount of kilowatts that we bear the cost of and, since Albany is a small part of the decision, and he has been told that Albany will realize a savings in the millions of dollars a year if the agreement is ended.

Commissioner Young referred to Mss. Owens' and Jackson's involvement being community organizers and Fellows with 9-5 and asked Ms. Owens to discuss her background in terms of who she is and being a life-long resident of Albany. Ms. Owens discussed being born and raised in Albany; following in her mother and grandmother's footsteps as a strong support in the community; how she became involved and saw the need for change; her goals and wanting a better future for, not only her children, but all children. She mentioned the need for funds to provide for children and said she is taking on the responsibility to be an agent of change.

Mayor Dorough advised that there is a need to change the order of items on the agenda, asking if anyone objects to moving up the presentation of the Hotel Gordon next on the agenda; there was unanimous consent to move the item up next.

HOTEL GORDON

Downtown Manager Lequrica Gaskins stated that the presentation is an update on 207 Pine. She introduced Jason Benedict, CEO/owner of J. Car Development who introduced Nina Grodin, lead designer in the project, to discuss the scope of the project of located at 207 Pine to include the development of 43 new jobs with an 80-key boutique hotel development, and includes an entertainment venue. He reiterated that as stated, the concept is to bring Hotel Gordon back in a modern form and create a three and half star hotel and beverage experience. Following her presentation, he stated that he will discuss the economic/financial components of the project.

Using a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file), Ms. Grodin reviewed the redesign of the hotel, which she described as an urban oasis.

Mr. Benedict discussed the economic impact of the hotel by: creating 43 high-paying jobs; six more jobs created by another business that will occupy the building; total investment for the hotel being between \$13-14.0 million, with the value increasing significantly once completed; and being a stimulus for more development downtown. He mentioned the impact of the coronavirus on the hospitality industry, but they are back on track and anticipate the official groundbreaking at the end of this year or early part of next year with an estimated 16-month completion schedule.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if the project will be completed by the end of next year. Mr. Benedict explained that the planned grand opening is mid-2022; 16 months from commencement of construction. Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked Ms. Subadan the appraisal value of the building. Ms. Subadan replied that the estimation exceeds \$10.0 million when improvements are made with an estimated tax value in that amount as well.

Commissioner Warbington stated that the Commission needs to consider the buildings surrounding the \$13.0 million project (the Government Center, the judicial building, etc.), suggesting that those buildings be updated/modernized to complement the hotel.

Commissioner Young asked Ms. Gaskins the status of a downtown master plan; the Commission needs to review and be prepared when it is ready for discussion. Ms. Gaskins referred to a 2016 Master Plan and other plans also being utilized and explained that the Master Plan was scheduled for discussion at a retreat, which had to be postponed. However, as a result of that, a proposal was submitted to Georgia Tech for development of a Master Plan. A joint meeting of ADICA and DDA is scheduled for November to discuss moving forward with the Master Plan.

Mayor Dorough stated that we are impressed and grateful of J. Car Development's investment in Albany's downtown adding that if developed as designed, this property will be something exceptional for Albany/Southwest Georgia. Mr. Benedict agreed adding that it will be the first of many projects to make Albany a destination.

DANGEROUS AND VICIOUS DOGS

Commissioner Warbington briefly discussed an informal committee comprised of him, Messrs. Davis and Capers who met and proposed to postpone this item until next month to present. He welcomed anyone wanting to join the committee and advised that the goal is to bring a formal proposal at the first work session in October. Mayor Dorough suggested the item go on the second work session and explained the omissions he discovered in the ordinances resulting from his research of the ordinances/policies of other cities. Commissioner Warbington agreed that the second work session provides more time to review.

Mayor Dorough moved to table the item until October 20, seconded by Commissioner Warbington, who stated that Commissioner Young indicated that he wants to serve on the committee. Following a rollcall vote, the motion unanimously carried.

PACE BUILDING RENOVATION

Facilities Director Don Gray explained the initial numbers for the build-out of only the clinic, with a budget of approximately \$375,000, which includes 20 contract line items.

Commissioner Fuller advised that he reviewed the numbers and, if the Mayor and Commissioners are satisfied with the numbers, he recommends moving ahead with the clinic.

Commissioner Warbington clarified that the \$375,000 gets the clinic up and running, with the back remaining a shell, which is still being developed. He asked Mr. Gray if the next time he comes to the Board will be to discuss the back 2/3 of the building; Mr. Gray agreed.

Mayor Dorough stated that his concern is imposing a limit on the cost to renovate the building, however, he said he is impressed with the savings the City has realized through the health plan and clinic. He commented on the building being properly equipped as a medical clinic and having all the tools they need to provide patients quality care, etc. In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Gray agreed that the clinic will be

properly equipped and advised that the clinic portion was designed by Care Here personnel in conjunction with Risk Management.

Ms. Subadan assured the Commission that a substandard product will not be produced, adding that she is concerned about storms brewing and the possibility of Albany being hit. She asked that a straw poll be taken to approve moving forward and not wait until the regular meeting, adding that it is an estimated budget with the possibility that waiting results in the numbers being much different.

Mayor Dorough asked if the Commission supports staff resuming construction; the consensus was to move forward on the clinic.

PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATIONS

Marshal Walter Norman, Director of Licenses and Business Support, reviewed the following information, advising that the application does not meet criteria for approval; the applicant has requested a hearing.

1. Radium Auto Sales LLC; d/b/a Club Frozen Bar & Lounge; 1020 Flint Avenue; K. Vamper/Agent; Liquor, Beer and Wine Consumption; Ward 3

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Davis explained that denied alcohol license applications require a hearing and that he will consult with Marshal Norman to schedule.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked the difference between this establishment and the one that was there in the past. Marshal Norman stated that his office now uses the State Functional Classification to make a more specific determination of a street's classification. Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked Marshal Norman to provide the Code Book's definition of arterial and collector streets. Regarding the distance from schools, Mayor Pro Tem Howard mentioned that the old Albany High School is now being used as an administration office; is it still considered a school. Marshal Norman replied that it is not considered an educational facility, but as office administration. Mayor Pro Tem Howard noted that there are students there. Marshal Norman stated that it would be classified as a school; however, according to the Board of Education, St. Theresa will be utilized as an active, full-time educational facility as opposed to the old Albany High School.

Commissioner Fuller stated that since the applicant asked for a hearing, he assumes one argument will be because the location was a previous nightclub; he asked the last time it was used as a nightclub. Marshal Norman replied that it was last used as a nightclub in 2016. Commissioner Fuller suggested that it be made clear to the applicant that the guidelines address the issue of streets.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that people have come before this Board, with the same claim of investing massive amounts of money, only to be denied. She suggested that the City get ahead of this and let applicants know the possibility of being denied before they invest in the business.

Commissioner Warbington referred to the issue of street classification and asked the importance of the City prohibiting on-site consumption of alcohol on a local street. Marshal Norman explained that local streets are normally within residential neighborhoods and are close to residences, children, schools, etc.; the intent is to maintain the integrity of the residential community close to a commercial area. In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Marshal Norman stated that there are residents on Haley Street. Commissioner Warbington asked if a facility is offering GED classes, is that considered a school. Marshal Norman explained educational facilities as defined by Georgia law. Commissioner Warbington stated that Sherwood Church holds GED classes at the Hope Center, which is around the corner from this location and needs to be looked at and confirmed.

Commissioner Young mentioned Walgreen, USA Food Market, etc., asking if this is a commercial area for the most part; Marshal Norman agreed. Commissioner Young asked if the designation of the street is based on it being a collector street and the residential classification. Marshal Norman advised that the GA Dept. of Transportation identifies different classifications for different city streets and how they are used. This street is considered a local, not residential, street and is the same classification used in residential neighborhoods. Commissioner Young asked if it is something in-between; Marshal Norman agreed.

PUBLIC FUNCTION MATTERS

2020 CENSUS UPDATE

Using PowerPoint (copy on file), Planning Director Paul Forgey, provided an update of the census. He reported that the Complete Count Committee and Commissioners efforts have greatly increased numbers. It is his hope to match or beat the final response rate of the 2010 census (66.5%); the ‘bad news’ is that Georgia is in the bottom five states for total response rate. He advised that enumerators in our region have completed approximately 49% of their work; we are also behind the rest of the US in that count. Because the original deadline of October 31 was moved up to September 30, a temporary restraining order was issued to prevent the Census Bureau from ending operations. A hearing this week will decide if the deadline will be extended back to October, with outcome expected to be announced Thursday or Friday. He mentioned upcoming events to help citizens fill out their census.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if the percentage for East Albany went from 30% to 51%. Mr. Forgey replied that is a total in his ward, the census tract of the Thornton Gym area, near Roses is not progressing as quickly as the others. Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked that Mr. Forgey arrange another date in East Albany and recommended the Pic-n-Save parking lot, maybe on the 26th of this month. Much like voting, some of his constituents, are not interested and, the community must be made aware of the importance of the census.

Commissioner Young gave an open invitation to join the civic celebration for a screening of the documentary *John Lewis: Good Trouble* from 6 pm – 9 pm, September 19 at the Mary Young Cummings Park. He stated that citizens need to be engaged, adding that the best way to get the best government is the participate in it.

Mayor Dorough asked who filed the lawsuit; Mr. Forgey replied that a group of organizations, i.e., Civil Rights organizations, cities and counties, and organizations of which they are members. Not having a complete count affects everyone financially, as well as in representation. In response to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Forgey agreed that they have no definitive numbers to back up the performance and response rate of enumerations.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

PURCHASES

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

1. Professional Services – Albany Police Department Assessment

She explained that the recommendation is approval of the contract with BerryDunn, Portland Maine with a total expenditure of \$68,000 and then introduced Mitch Weinzetl to present the plan for the assessment.

Using PowerPoint (copy on file), Mr. Weinzetl discussed the timeline of the four-phased project and mentioned the current unrest about law enforcement, with public demand for reform. With that in mind, the Community Co-Production Policing (CCPP) suggest that the community should have an influential voice in shaping the policing strategies that affect it. He stated that it is paramount that substantial involvement includes the community and critical stakeholders.

APD Chief Michael Persley stated that he is onboard with the assessment and that he feels that he should have done when he first became chief. He agreed that the current climate makes this the right time to move forward with an assessment and that it will be beneficial to have the community involved.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if spending \$68,000 is a step in the right direction for a better trained, performing and engaged police department for our community. Chief Persley stated that the outcome remains to be seen, but the assessment may help the department focus on its relationship with the community; the intent is to have a better connection with the community, and this may help set the standard for the future. Its success depends on the partners who will be involved in the process. He suggested sticking close to the plan and allowing some flexibility as the best course of action for the future.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that according to today's paper, our colleagues on the County Commission came after this body because of an incident that happened Friday night. City and County Commissioners, along with our law enforcement departments, need to sit down to address and resolve issues. He suggested a future agenda item for the City Manager and law enforcement to meet with the judges and DA's office about the high crime rate here.

Commissioner Warbington asked if there has ever been an operational assessment, if so, when was the last one. Chief Persley stated that there have been operational assessments under previous administrations; however, to his knowledge there has never been one with community involvement. Commissioner Warbington asked if ADDU and the Gang Task Force will also be assessed. Chief Persley advised that

the Gang Unit is a unit within his department as part of the uniformed bureau and they are included. He added that the Albany-Dougherty Drug Unit may be discussed with some additional recommendations; any information on agencies the City partners with (state/federal task forces) will be submitted and accessors recommendations will be applied when practicable. Commissioner Warbington asked if the DA's office will be looked at to see how cases are being closed and, will the need for investigators be a part of the assessment. Chief Persley explained that the focus area is on the case management part, from how they start a case to it being presented to the DA for prosecution. He stated that any agency that touches the police department, even non-profit organizations which have some type of function with the criminal justice process, will be involved.

In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Weinzetl discussed his background in law enforcement as an officer, Chief of Police, teacher, and his current career conducting assessments. Commissioner Young mentioned best practices in crime prevention and asked if he will be making suggestions or just analyze what Albany has in place. Mr. Weinzetl explained that the department will be analyzed for efficiently, effectively and appropriately carrying out its function in a best practices format. Commissioner Young mentioned discussions on community-oriented policing and, the disbanding of sub-precincts throughout the city, which may be reinstated and asked Mr. Weinzetl's thoughts on those practices in reducing crime. Mr. Weinzetl stated that there are two pieces to his question 1) value of having sub-stations throughout the community; there is value to it because part of something they promote is geographic policing, officers become familiar with the residents, businesses and challenges of that particular area of the community; 2) community-oriented policing is something they are very careful about. There is a philosophy that community policing is the responsibility of a handful of officers who might work in a unit or a particular sub-station or a particular category of work, when foundationally, community policing is designed to transcend the organization, making everyone responsible.

Mayor Dorough commended Chief Persley and stated that from the start, he was on-board and committed to improving the delivery of services as well as the moral of the department. He recalled Mr. Weinzetl's statement 'we are going to determine whether Albany's police department is efficiently, effectively carrying out its operations consistent with best practices', adding that he is not interested in giving the police department a grade; he wants to see how we can improve and move forward in the 21st century. He has always questioned the operation of the Albany-Dougherty Drug Unit, in which we have basically relinquished control to a joint body and suggested that the ADDU and the Gang Task Force be combined. If the Sheriff's Office and Dougherty County want to cooperate, they can, but he thinks that the unit, which operates primarily in the city, needs to be under the supervision of the Albany Police Department. He said he is convinced that precincts/substations are needed in south and east Albany and commented on recent crime rates and homicides within the last few weeks that are unacceptable, adding that he does not blame APD for the crime rate. The possibility of improving relationships with the District Attorney's office has been discussed, to address deficiencies in preparing cases for presentation and prosecution. He stated that he wants to know what can be done to increase retention rates to determine if any changes are needed in promotional practices, adding that he would be very disappointed if the report comes back and we see 'the Albany Police Department is doing a good job'. Mr. Weinzetl stated that he did not mean to give the wrong impression regarding best practices; he is saying that the data will show if there are gaps in the department's practices, with improvements being identified. It is common for the reports to generate 40-50 recommendations in areas where the department can improve, and the intention is to provide the City with a roadmap for the right way to do things. They have found that often, police departments are

the example of best practices and doing things not being done in other places or is not visible to others, those will be highlighted as well.

2. SPLOST VII 2020 Sidewalk Project

Ms. Fields discussed information (copy on file), stating that Zane Grace Construction was the lowest and most responsive bidder, with the project taking 300 calendar days.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked when construction will start. Engineering Director Bruce Maples explained the various processes before they begin, adding that it could possibly take 30-45 days before they are given notice to proceed.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Maples explained the easement process which will be worked on as the process proceeds. Commissioner Warbington mentioned crossing a lot of driveways, asking if the City will address those that are cracked, in the right-of-way, etc. Mr. Maples stated that driveways are a part of the contract and will be addressed, as well as making them ADA compliant as possible.

Commissioner Young mentioned discussion regarding the Broad Street sidewalk and having it connect somehow with the east transfer point for Albany Transit and asked if any more thought had been given that and how to do it. Ms. Subadan discussed the BUILD grant (Albany's third time applying), adding that there is no anticipation that the BUILD grant will be released until just before elections. We are hopeful to be considered this year and, funding has been set aside in the budget for local required match. If we are not successful, she said that she will come back to Commissioners to ascertain if they want to take a different path and pick some of the sidewalks to be done with local funding. Commissioner Young stated that his question was if any planning has been done to connect the Broad Street sidewalk to the east side transfer point behind Pic-n-Save. Mr. Maples explained that it will be included in what Ms. Subadan just referred to as part of the BUILD grant. The whole East Broad corridor was originally discussed to go from Broadway all the way to the section they are looking at now regarding construction and eventually tie to Park Avenue and make a corridor to Walmart on Clark Avenue.

3. Professional Services re: Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund

Ms. Subadan explained that the City applied for and received the Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund grant. The \$800,000 grant does not require a local match and the Board is being asked to consider the overall design of the program and management of the grant with the help of Cardno. They have partnered with the City and have been instrumental in obtaining grants; they have the technical expertise to establish and manage the revolving loan fund along with helping vet projects. She advised that it is not a Utility Board item.

Ms. Fields stated that she is confused as well, the agenda item (copy on file) does state the need for a budget amendment. Ms. Subadan agreed that it will require a budget amendment and explained that when the City was going through the budget process, we did not have confirmation that we were getting the grant. If the Board approves and we make an expenditure, a budget amendment is required. Ms. Fields advised that the expenditure is \$192,000.

Commissioner Warbington asked if this was single-sourced or bid out. Ms. Fields advised that it was both and discussed the formal bid from Cardno, adding that they were evaluated and selected. This is a follow-up on work they had already done, making this part a single source. Commissioner Warbington asked if the \$192,000 will come out of the \$800,000 grant; Ms. Subadan agreed. Commissioner Warbington noted that 25% of the grant is being spent on administration, which seems high. Ms. Subadan stated that as an estimated expenditure, it is up to that amount, with these projects tending to be over several years; she discussed their responsibility in managing the grant. Commissioner Warbington asked at what point will Commissioners be able to provide input. Ms. Subadan stated that approval is needed before making any kind of expenditure and the City will have to establish the revolving loan fund rules, which will be brought to the Commission for input and approval. She explained that the Brownfield project is designed to help with economic development and, if a community has property with an environmental challenge, this is a tool that can bring those properties back into economic development viability. She stated that regardless of how we do this program, it has to be established in accordance with federal guidelines, which they and the Commission must approve. Initially, Cardno will set up the program with the Commission being able to accept, change, or tweak it.

Keith Ziobron, Cardno PE, advised that the \$192,000 proposed fee is a not to exceed limit based on the initial \$800,000 grant. If there is one project that uses the balance of the money and no further work for them to do, it can be reallocated to clean-up work. Commissioner Warbington stated that if it is not too late, he would like to look at TTL and suggested that being a local vendor, the Commission should determine if it has a vision for the \$800,000, before committing 25% of the funds to a vendor.

Mayor Dorough stated that there is a distinction between blighted residential property and commercial property due to environmental concerns and, the City would not want to take possession of it. He asked to see a list of commercial property. Ms. Sudadan stated that in addition to that, she can also provide a list of identified Brownfields property. Mayor Dorough stated that he understands that Dougherty County has three superfund sites and asked to also get that information in preparation of the upcoming retreat. He asked if Cardno is involved with remediation of the Manufactured Gas Plant; Ms. Subadan replied in the affirmative.

LIFT STATION TELEMETRY UPGRADE

Ms. Field discussed information (copy on file) and advised that the two lowest bidders fell short of meeting bid specifications, with the recommendation of Kazmier & Associates for a total expenditure of \$348,746.90.

Commissioner Warbington asked the percentage of lift stations this will cover; Jeff Hughes, Sewer Maintenance Engineer, stated that it will be 100% and, in reply to Commissioner Warbington, he listed the contacts who will be notified in case of a malfunction. Commissioner Warbington asked if by accepting the bid, will we be going into the annual maintenance cost agreements for the next five years. Mr. Hughes explained that it is a year-to-year agreement, but once the hardware is installed, we will be locked into the vendor. In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Hughes discussed services the City receives for the \$66,000/annual maintenance cost.

LIGHT BUDGET AMENDMENT

Finance Director Derrick Brown discussed items approved by the Utility Board, which fell within their spending purview. However, the two items - the electric charging stations, a pilot project - and the other, a bid for a consultant to evaluate the current utility contract, are not part of our original budget adopted June 23.

Commissioner Warbington asked the need for a consultant. Assistant City Manager Stephen Collier listed some of the items the consultant will be looking at, giving a thorough look into our electrical relationship with MEAG. Commissioner Warbington asked if the intent is to get a second opinion or to provide something that MEAG would not. Mr. Collier explained that the present Board wanted an independent review. Commissioner Warbington stated that it seems that there is no retail consulting in the contract. Mr. Collier stated that he is correct; the rate design is within the capability and whatever the Board wants. Commissioner Warbington asked if we are still contracting with Electric Cities of Georgia; Mr. Collier replied in the affirmative. Ms. Subadan referred to Wansley, which they have been asked to look at as well, but do not believe that the City will have any savings by getting out of Wansley, contrary to what he might think, but would want that clarified. They have also been asked to opine on Plant Vogtle because we are committed to the second 20 years; the cost overruns of that project have created a lot of concern and will be looked at by the consultant.

Commissioner Young asked if the cost overruns are being absorbed by citizens with increased utility rates and, are we were trying to catch up to what we owe MEAG versus the actual consumption of a household. Mr. Collier advised that the study will provide more insight to the business model. Commissioner Young mentioned the ladies who spoke today expressing concern about a long-term contract. Our citizens should be able to understand what we tell them. Ms. Subadan stated that it is important to make the City's position plain; because they are independent, they will be able to provide an unvarnished/unbiased look and educate citizens on how this works. We want to ensure that the report they produce will be understandable to the Board and public.

Mayor Dorough stated that because our citizens do not understand these contracts; he hopes that some of the questions Mss. Jackson and Owens asked will be answered in the report. He is curious about the City of Albany, contracting years ago to buy a percentage of production as opposed to the amount of the consumed utility, with the City being locked into the purchase agreements. We need to know if we can sell the excess power and bring renewable energy into the mix, as well as knowing our options. He commented on the EV stations being placed downtown and his advocating purchasing electric vehicles, adding that the entire fleet of New York City is now electric.

2020-2021 HOUSING COUNSELING GRANT AWARD

Community and Economic Development Director Shelena Hawkins discussed the information (copy on file) and advised that the City set aside approximately \$333,674.00 in CDBG funds as a match, but no match is required for this grant and will allow for program administration. The City's Housing Counseling Program is deemed as a HUD-approved housing counseling agency, with a counselor on staff; she listed the type of assistance provided through the grant and recommended approval of the Housing Counseling Grant.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Howard regarding the amount of the award, Ms. Hawkins explained that it is \$14,512.00, adding that no match was required, but the City allocated \$33,000.00 for program administration.

Mayor Dorough asked if there is some way that Community and Economic Development can work with residents before signing a lease and advise citizens of energy consumption history at that property. Ms. Hawkins discussed working with renters, the homeless, and homeowners, before and after purchasing a home. Referring to renters, she explained the process of assisting them to prepare for rental; which is a requirement of Fair Housing regulations. She and staff want to help them look at their household budget and ensure that they can afford the unit. Mayor Dorough stated that Utilities can provide this information, which her department can use and groups like 9-5 can use to educate the community.

APPROVAL OF 2021 EMPLOYEE GROUP BENEFITS PLAN

Human Resources Managing Director Veronica Wright stated that they are present today seeking approval of the 2020-2021 employees group benefit plan, adding that Tammie Starkey, Vice President of NFP, will review a presentation.

Using PowerPoint, Ms. Starkey reviewed the information (copy on file) and then introduced her associate, Dave Lee, Co-Managing Director of NFP Rx Solutions, a team within NFP that is dedicated to assessing the discounts and evaluating programs for their clients. She advised that Mr. Lee will discuss more in depth about what his team does and the value of their recommendation for no increase to the 2020-2021 health plan.

Continuing with the PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Lee stated that his division is NFP's pharmacy lead division across all 50 states and basically is an extension of the NFP Atlanta office, focused exclusively on pharmacy benefit-related opportunities. He discussed the \$1 billion plus in savings, with 100% of the discounts/savings/rebates from the PBM's passed on to the City and explained that the three free audits offered by NFP saves the City at least \$125,000 if it contracted with an objective auditing firm. He stated that this is an additional value they provide versus going directly to a PBM and explained that they are the consultant/watchdog which ensures that the City gets all the value of the PBM contract and all decisions made by the PBM are in the City's best interest.

Ms. Starkey stated that the coalition pricing that Mr. Lee referenced, as well as the additional clinical program and oversight, provides a substantial savings that allow them to recommend: no increase to the funding of the health plan for 2020-2021, no increase in employee contributions, and no changes to the overall plan design; it will just include a change to the pharmacy benefit manager and she briefly discussed the benefits of that change. She stated that they were able to work with CareHere to negotiate their management fee; further negotiations reduced the fee by \$43,186.00, which is a five-year agreement. They are also proposing to implement occupational health and Worker's Comp services at the health clinic, including the drug screenings and a lot of the pre-employment physicals. Comparing that to marketplace costs, year one is projected to save the City a little over \$123,000, which does increase in future years as the cost of implementing the program is recouped. She advised that, all-in-all, employees will see no change in their health insurance cost and a reduction in the cost of their dental and vision coverage throughout the year, the overall cost of employees benefit package will decrease for 2020-2021.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard mentioned the annual HRA (Health Risk Assessment) in which blood is drawn and asked about using the blood to test for A1c. Ms. Starkey stated that Duane Eggert, CareHere Clinic, will be able to answer that. Mr. Eggert advised that they can do an A1c, which is left up to providers; typically when there is a glucose level that has reached the threshold (100 and over), they will order an A1c, if directed by the doctor or nurse practitioners. Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that having the A1c incorporated in the lab work will provide information to employees to make necessary changes in their lifestyle. Mr. Eggert assured Mayor Pro Tem Howard that when it is indicated they will do an A1c.

Commissioner Young asked what employees will be losing through the changes. Ms. Starkey advised that coverage changes will only be on prescription drugs, with the majority of employees seeing an enhancement in their prescription drug coverage, 5% will see a lower copay for the same medication and .5% of employees will see a higher copay moving from \$30.00 to \$60.00 for their medication; however all of those medications will have a lower cost alternative available. She stated that 33 patients will see a medication that will no longer be covered under the new plan, but there is a therapeutic alternative available. Employees falling within this category will receive communications well in advance of the change on January 1 so that they can confer with their physician to change to a covered medication in the plan.

Mayor Dorough stated that the City will be relieved to see no increase in health care cost for employees; in past years whenever they received a small raise, it was consumed by a corresponding increase in health care costs. He asked the threshold covering catastrophic claims; Ms. Starkey stated that it is \$250,000 during the calendar year. Mayor Dorough asked how long NFP has handled the City's health plan. Ms. Starkey stated that ShawHankins, the City's former insurance broker and consultant, was acquired by NFP last year, with ShawHankins and NFP working with the City since July 2008. Mayor Dorough asked for a list of catastrophic claims since 2008.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that on September 7, Ms. Subadan advised that she is one of two finalists for the City Manager position in Augusta. With her possible departure, he suggested the need to determine who on staff can assume her responsibilities until a replacement is found.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE

Ms. Subadan advised that the Fire Chief has a presentation on the outdoor warning siren update and that she will be submitting her written report with the status of projects.

Chief Cedric Scott discussed changes to the outdoor warning siren, adding that the PIO team will be sending out this information later today to our community. He stated that the outdoor warning sirens will be activated under the following conditions: the National Weather issues/reissues a tornado warning; during a severe thunderstorm warning, only if destructive winds of 85 mph or greater are observed by a trained spotter or indicated in the National Weather Service warning statement or without a warning, reliable reports from trained weather spotters indicate a tornado or extreme winds occurring or are imminent in our area. He stated that in the past, voice instructions were a part of the system; this has been eliminated, as well as the 'all clear' message. When sirens are activated, the public should seek shelter

immediately and closely monitor their radio and tv during these events and urged everyone to sign up for Code Red. Dougherty County has established an ultra-high-speed telephone communication service for notifying the public of emergencies, with the system allowing communications to all, or targeted areas, of the county when immediate action is necessary. The notifications can be used for weather-related warnings, evacuation notices, missing persons and other vital information; those not signed up for Code Red and added to the database will not be called. He provided information for the public to register for Code Red through the logo on the home page of the Albany Fire Department's website; those without internet access may call the Fire Department to register. He advised that Code Red will only be used in the event of an emergencies requiring immediate notification and information entered into the database will not be used for any other purpose and, questions should be directed to the Emergency Management Agency. He recommended that citizens purchase a NOAA weather radio and stock an emergency supply kit. If citizens have any questions/concerns about the items discussed today, they may call 229.431.3262.

Mayor Dorough announced that we are back to Other Business.

Commissioner Young advised that the Election Board has requested an increase in funding for additional resources for November elections. He has been in touch with Ms. Subadan; funding for which we may qualify has been identified. He asked the Board's permission and support to provide the funding, through either grants or increasing the amount allocated to the Election Board, which he will further discuss.

Mayor Dorough asked Ms. Subadan to identify the source of available funds next Tuesday. Ms. Subadan replied that they have already identified a grant; if it is not available, she and Derrick Brown will identify a City-funding source. In reply to Mayor Dorough, she stated that she did not get the final number from Ginger Nickerson, Election Supervisor, the article in the newspaper quoted it as being under \$200,000; however, she will confirm the amount with Ms. Nickerson.

Commission Young reminded and encouraged everyone to attend the Civic Celebration this Saturday at Mary Young Cummings Park.

Mayor Dorough referred to Chief Persley's statement about APD having had assessments in the past and asked for copies. He mentioned a letter he sent to the Chairman and County Commissioners several months ago, identifying several items, but they were never brought to the County Commission. The items included: 1) both Boards exchanging half of their appointments to ADICA and the Hospital Authority with each other; 2) a study of health care costs in our community; 3) electing a tax commissioner in Dougherty County. He is surprised that Dougherty County never took the initiative to discuss these items, especially regarding the tax commissioner; action is needed by the local delegation, which typically requests that both bodies concur. He also suggested to the County that consideration be given to placing the Tennis Center near the Civic Center. He stated that that the County Commission did not give the courtesy of a response and it is his understanding that they will build more tennis courts at ASU West, with tennis courts already saturating that area. He is baffled by their decision, especially since they do not have the staff to operate it. He asked Ms. Subadan to ascertain the answers from the County Administrator, as it seems the County Commission is not going to respond nor put it on an agenda.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 15, 2020
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 100 (Virtual Meeting)

SISSY KELLY
ASST. CITY CLERK