

City Council Meeting

The regular meeting of Mayor and City Council was held on January 06, 2025, at 6:00 P.M. at Swainsboro City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Bennett, Council member Quarterman, Council member Sconyers, Council member Stafford, Council member Collins, and Council member Davis

Moment of silence for the passing of retired Fire Chief Michael Strobridge

Council member Collins wanted to give condolences and acknowledged the passing of long-time city administrator Virgil Wells.

Prayer of Invocation: Pastor John Hancock III, Beacon of Hope Church of God

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes of Council Meeting from December 02, 2024, and special called on December 11, 2024, were presented. Council member Sconyers made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Stafford Vote: 5 – 0

Council member Stafford made a motion to amend the agenda to allow the new police chief Ashely Riner to speak on a matter at the police department.

Motion: Stafford Seconded by: Sconyers Vote: 5-0

Council member Sconyers made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss the renaming of the main fire station to the Mike Strobridge Fire Station.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 - 0

Council member Sconyers made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss House Bill 581. Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Davis Vote: 5-0

Council member Sconyers made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss amending the water rates for the water filling station.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Davis Vote: 5-0

Council member Davis made a motion to amend the agenda to consider council member committee appointments.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Stafford Vote: 5 - 0

A. Old Business:

1. Council considered accepting the Lead Service Line funding from GEFA for the Lead Service Line Project. Council member Sconyers made a motion to approve the resolution as presented and to pay the loan origination fee of \$75,246.30.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Davis Vote: 5 - 0

B. New Business:

- 1. Council considered the Wastewater Treatment Plant Mixer Motors Replacement and Repair. **Postponed**
- 2. Council considered the Effluent Transfer Station Emergency Generator Update. **Postponed**
- 3. Council considered the Grass Cutting Tractor Replacement. Postponed
- 4. Council considered the replacement of the rooftop air conditioning unit at the Police Department. Council member Davis asked if we could get more than one quote. Chief Riner stated that we did get another quote and that it was \$1,000 higher. Council member Sconyers made a motion to approve the replacement of the police department rooftop A/C unit for a price not to exceed \$13,748 to be taken from the 2018 SPLOST account.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Davis Vote: 5-0

5. Council considered the repairs to the front of city hall. Council member Sconyers asked if insurance will pay for some of the damaged bricks. Administrator Middlebrooks stated that we have filed an insurance claim, and it is on our FEMA list of projects as well. I also have a call into SAS Construction to get a second opinion from a Structural Engineer. Council member Davis made to motion to approve Tharpe construction to repair the loose brick in front of city hall and check the brick work on the side of the building for an amount not to exceed \$21,900 to be taken from the 2018 SPLOST account.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 - 0

6. Council considered changing the names on the signature card at the bank. Council member Davis made a motion to approve the resolution as written to change names on the signature card at the bank from Chief Ellison to Chief Riner.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Stafford Vote: 5 – 0

7. Council considered a proposal from Police Chief Riner. Chief Riner stated that he would like to create a new division within the police department. The new division would be named the Training/Special Operations Division. Also, he would like to promote Sergeant Adam Kersey to Lieutenant and put him over that division.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Stafford Vote: 5 – 0

8. Council considered naming the main fire station to the Michael Strobridge Fire Station. Council member Sconyers made a motion to name the main fire station after Michael Strobridge.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Stafford Vote: 5 – 0

- 9. Council considered House Bill 581. Attorney Levis stated that the bill has two parts; first it provides more taxpayer rights and clarifies the appeal process for property disputes. Secondly, the referendum passed by the citizens of Georgia in November has three major impacts on municipalities and counties for taxing purposes for residential homes. (1) It grants a statewide homestead exemption for residential property. (2) It allows local governments to opt out of the homestead exemption within their jurisdiction so that exemption would not apply. Levis stated there is a very tight window on opting out and it must be done in specific way. (3) It allows local government to apply a new sales tax, called FLOST. This new sales tax would offset revenue and must be voted on by referendum if the county opts in or remains in.
- 10. Council considered the water rates for the filling station. Council member Sconyers made a motion to change the filling station rates to .50 per 100 gallons.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 - 0

11. Council considered the council committee appointments. Council member Sconyers made a motion to leave the committee appointments the same as last term until the March Meeting.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 – 0

Council member Stafford made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss the issue of speed cameras.

Motion: Stafford Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 - 0

12. Council considered the issue of speed cameras. Council member Stafford made a motion to resend the previous motion to install speed cameras.

Motion: Stafford Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 – 0

Council member Stafford made a motion not to install the speed cameras.

Motion: Stafford Seconded by: Collins Vote: 5 – 0

Council member Davis made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss flock cameras.

13. Council considered the installation of some flock cameras. Council member Davis stated that many officers have stated how these cameras have helped several organizations. Chief Riner stated that we have three at the college and two by the department of corrections facilities on Gumlog Road. Mr. Middlebrooks commented there was one on Fairground Road. Chief Riner stated that we would start with four; placing them at both ends of Hwy 1 and 80. Chief Riner explained how we can access not only the cameras we have but all cameras in the whole state, it is a big system. He also stated it's a real big tool for solving crimes. Chief Riner indicated he was unsure of the price of them. Mr. Middlebrooks states they are three thousand per camera. Chief Riner said it's a lease program; you cannot buy them. Council member Davis asks if there is money in the budget for such improvements. Mr. Middlebrooks stated we can take money from the new SPLOST account. Council member Davis made a motion to amend the new SPLOST account to purchase ten (10) flock cameras.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 - 0

Council member Davis made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss all other committee appointments.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Sconyers Vote: 5 – 0

14. Council member Davis made a motion to postpone the consideration of all other committee appointments until the next meeting.

Motion: Davis Seconded by: Sconyers Vote: 5 - 0

C. Consent Agenda:

- 1. Council considered the game room license application from Krishi 1502 LLC DBA D & I Food Mart at 334 North Main Street to operate coin-operated machines.
- 2. Council considered the game room license application from Eric Worthen DBA Hair Tight Games at 229 South Main Street to operate coin-operated machines.

Council member Sconyers made a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Quarterman Vote: 5 – 0

D. Committee Reports:

None

E. Executive Session:

None

Council member Sconyers made a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Sconyers Seconded by: Stafford Vote: 5 - 0

Submitted: *Herman Middlebrooks*, City Administrator