



CITY OF
Swainsboro GEORGIA
Crossroads of the Great South



City Council Meeting

March 17, 2022

A special call meeting of Mayor and City Council was held **Monday March 17, 2022** at 7:00 P.M. City Hall.

Members Present: Sconyers, Stafford, Parker, Collins and Davis
Councilperson Quarterman arrived during the meeting.

Prayer of Invocation: Police Chief Randy Ellison

Pledge of Allegiance

A. Old Business:

1. Council discussed the ARPA and SPLOST funds. Mayor informed council that we are still waiting for bids on the theater and gym projects. Councilperson Parker asked about the other projects on the lists and the reporting requirements for the ARPA funds. The city attorney Jon Levis discussed the reporting requirements for the ARPA funds with the council. Councilperson Parker asked could the SPLOST monies be used to pay the debt off for the theater and gym project. The city attorney discussed the legal requirements for paying off debt with SPLOST funds.
2. Councilperson Parker asked about the forensic audit. Councilperson Stafford stated that this had been looked into and there was no target for a forensic audit. Councilperson Davis stated that he had check with GMA and if a forensic audit is done the city will be ineligible for any federal or state funding. Mayor Bennett stated that the city is audited every year. Councilperson Sconyers made a motion to appoint Councilperson Collins to use the \$40,000 that was budgeted in a prior year to get a forensic audit for 25 years on the former city administrator. Mayor Bennett informed the council that there were no funds appropriated for a forensic audit in this year's budget. Councilperson Sconyers withdrew his motion lack of funding in this year's budget.

B. New Business:

1. Councilperson Stafford made a motion to amend the agenda to discuss a tractor for the public works department.

Motion by: Stafford

Seconded: Sconyers

Passed 6-0

2. The mayor presented three quotes from Clearwater to purchase a tractor.

J&B Tractor \$56,800.00

Mid-State Tractor \$61,565.00

Blanchard Equipment \$61,000.00

Council considered the bids and opted to purchase the tractor from Blanchard Equipment due to the October 2022 delivery date of the J&B Tractor. Councilperson Stafford made a motion to purchase the tractor from Blanchard Equipment out of SPLOST monies.

Motion by: Stafford

Seconded: Sconyers

Passed 6-0

3. Councilperson Parker addressed the council regarding the pay in lieu of insurance for city employees. Councilperson Parker asked had GMA or the attorney general's office been contacted regarding the pay in lieu of insurance. Councilperson Parker questioned the authority of the city clerk relating to a letter that was sent out to all council members. The city clerk stated that the letter was sent out based on an opinion letter from the city attorney. Councilperson Parker stated that a motion was made and

seconded to cease and desist until further notice. Councilperson Parker stated that this practice has taken place for more than 25 years. Councilperson Parker asked was an open records request submitted to the city from The Crossroads Chronicle regarding the pay in lieu of insurance for the mayor and council. Councilperson Parker asked how could city employees continue to receive the pay in lieu of insurance and the council not. Councilperson Parker asked Mayor Bennett is it common practice that every elected official taken this but you. Mayor Bennett replied that he has not taken any salary, insurance, or reimbursements. Councilperson Sconyers asked the city clerk what the cost difference was between employees taking the insurance and taking the in lieu of insurance payment. The city clerk responded that there was not a cost difference to the city. Councilperson Davis suggested that if the city offered \$8 per hour added to the employees pay and offer insurance at a cost of roughly \$400 to \$500 per month. Councilperson Parker stated that he done a tabulation regarding employees pay based on years of service and education. Councilperson Parker asked Mrs. Overstreet when employees could be added to the insurance. Mrs. Overstreet stated that the new insurance company said they could get the employees in without any stipulations. Mrs. Overstreet stated that open enrollment for GMA is October. Mayor Bennett stated that the city is looking into a company to perform a salary study for the city employees. Councilperson Parker stated that the city needs to cease and desist until we find out where in the minutes that a city employee can get compensation in lieu of insurance. Councilperson Stafford stated that the council voted to give all elected officials and employees health insurance. The city attorney, Jon Levis, stated that every single member present has a copy of the minutes in 2001 where health insurance was extended to every single councilmember. The city attorney stated that in 1999 Councilperson Stafford brought up offering payments in lieu of insurance for employees. Councilperson Sconyers made a motion to put off any change in insurance until October for any city employees.

Motion by: Sconyers Seconded: Stafford Passed 3-3
For: Sconyers, Stafford, Davis Against: Parker, Quarterman, Collins
Mayor Bennett broke tie motion passed.

4. Councilperson Parker discussed the charter regulations regarding code of ethics regarding financial interest. Councilperson Parker stated that it is a conflict of interest for the mayor to have anything to do with issues regarding the Crossroads property when it comes to his position as mayor. Councilperson Parker also stated that when the mayor or any members of council has any interest in an agenda item they must leave until the item has been voted on and a decision has been made. Councilperson Parker stated that Mayor Bennett violated this when the vote was made on the Crossroads property. City attorney, Jon Levis stated that if there is an issue that an ethics violation can be filed following the proper procedure. Councilperson Parker stated that he has requested who is on the ethics committee and has not got an answer. Mayor Bennett stated that he would have a committee by the next meeting.

C. Committee Reports:

1. None

Councilperson Sconyers made a motion to adjourn.

For: Sconyers, Stafford, Davis Against: Parker, Quarterman, Collins
Mayor Bennett broke tie motion passed.

Submitted: ***Melissa Kirby***, City Administrator