**Minutes**

**Forsyth City Council Meeting**

**October 16, 2023**

**Call to Order**

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:02p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation by David Blalock, and Roll Call.**

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was led by Mr. David Blalock. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers John Howard, Chris Hewett, Greg Goolsby, and Mike Dodd. Also in attendance was the City Manager, Craig Mims, Assistant City Manager, Regina Ivie, and City Attorney, Bobby Melton. Four members of the council were in attendance for the meeting; therefore, all unanimous votes will be four votes (Howard, Hewett, Goolsby, and Dodd).

**Approval of the agenda.**

Mayor Wilson suggested that the agenda be amended to add the approval of a street closure request for John Walton between items 15 and 16.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the agenda with the amendment for the approval of street closure for John Walton to be added between items 15 and 16. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the minutes from the council meeting held on October 2, 2023.**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing to consider amending Section 4-504 of the city alcohol beverage code.**

Mr. Melton advised ordinance Section 4-504 of the city alcohol beverage code was discussed in the work session with proposed amendments and changes could be made.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed amendments for Section 4-504 of the city alcohol beverage code.

There being no comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed amendment to Section 4-504 of the city alcohol beverage code, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the amendment to Section 4-504 to require anyone wishing to temporarily sale alcohol inside the city of Forsyth to obtain a city business license. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Eagle Scout Project proposed by James Pippin.**

Mr. James Pippin presented his eagle scout project proposal. He proposed to pressure wash and paint the pavilion walls and picnic tables at the Forsyth City Park. Mr. Pippin advised he planned to attain project approval during the month of October, to pressure wash pavilion walls and the picnic tables in early November, and to repaint the pavilion walls and picnic tables in late November and early December of this year. He advised the proposed project will be financed by donations solicited from community members and that he planned to develop a comprehensive safety plan before scheduling workdays.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the Eagle Scout Project. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Greg Boike, Director of Planning & Public Administration to review current compensation structure for external equity.**

Mr. Greg Boike advised that a review of compensation of similar municipalities around the state, that the city was competing with to attract and retain top talent in ranks of city employment. The City of Forsyth was compared to similar cities and surrounding jurisdictions. Mr. Boike advised that throughout the city they looked at twenty-seven different positions. The city of Forsyth is five percent below comparable communities. It is based off the entry level salary for people with the qualifications to do the job. The data from the fiscal year of 2022 was used. He advised that options are to continue to do cost of living adjustments and merit-based increases for employees that are doing particularly good jobs. He advised that another option is to look at adjusting grades for positions.

**Review of 2022 Comprehensive Financial Report by Justin Elliot, CPA with Mauldin & Jenkins.**

Mr. Justin Elliot advised that they offered an unmodified opinion for the city, which is the highest level of assurance that external auditors can give to a local government. He advised that the city is in a very good position with no issues or findings that need to be discussed. Mr. Elliot provided information for the general fund, fund balance, revenues, pension, and expenditures.

**Approval of Electric Cities of Georgia request regarding a portion of Mahala Drive.**

Mr. Daryl Ingram advised that ECG is purchasing approximately twelve acres of land from the Development Authority in Monroe County. He advised that ECG and Development Authority are requesting that the city abandon the portion of Mahala Drive that protrudes into the property and for the portion of the road to be quick claimed by the Development Authority to be purchased by ECG. Mr. Ingram advised it would be used for the entrance of the ECG training center. The city would retain any utility easements.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the request to abandon Mahala Drive and for the portion of the road to be quick claimed to the Development Authority. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Economic Development Department Conversion.**

Mr. Craig Mims, the City Manager, proposed a restructuring of the Economic Development Department to a Community Development Department a component of Economic Development, in addition to change the fund from the administrative position to a Project Coordinator/Manager to better manage city wide projects.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the economic development conversion. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of street closures for remaining 2023 Main Street Events**.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the street closures for the remaining 2023 Main Street events. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of street closure for the Hometown Holiday Parade on November 30, 2023.**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the street closure for the Hometown Holiday Parade. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of legal agreements related to United States Department of Agriculture funding.**

Mrs. Regina Ivie, Assistant City Manager, advised that since the council has decided to move forward with Mrs. Brodie in changing bond council new documents need to be signed for USDA funding; one for water and one for wastewater.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the legal agreements related to the United States of Agriculture funding. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Housing Authority appointments by Mayor Wilson.**

Mayor Wilson appointed two people to serve on the Housing Authority Board: Mrs. Linda Hampton to serve until May 01, 2025, and Mr. J.W. Beavers to serve until May 01, 2026.

**Update on outstanding sidewalk projects- Mike Batchelor.**

Mr. Mike Batchelor, the Utilities Director, advised that the sidewalk projects are to refurbish the sidewalk on MLK Drive and add a sidewalk on the opposite side of the Road. He also advised that W. Johnston Street out to W. Main to tie into the sidewalk near the lumber yard.

**Approval of street closure for John Walton.**

Mayor Wilson advised that Walton wants to film a movie on October 18, 2023, from 11p.m. to 4a.m. in front of The Rose Theatre and Grits Café from red light to red light.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the street closure for John Walton. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**City Manager’s Report**

Mr. Craig Mims, the City Manager, reported that:

-The Fire Hydrant painting and flushing was completed last week.

-The budget overview will be presented during the first meeting in November and plan for budget adoption during the first meeting in December.

-M&R Services has completed our annual phase 3, meter testing.

-The trick or treat around the square will take place on Tuesday, October 31, 2023, at 5:30p.m.

**City Attorney Report**

Mr. Bobby Melton, the City Attorney, advised that an ordinance variance to amend a zoning district of 27.85 acres is being advertised for public hearing on November 6, 2023. He advised that Parcel 053 029D is being advertised for a proposal to remain Highway Business with a variance for the use of property for a church building and a parking lot on Benson Ham Road.

**Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Wilson had no further business to report.

**Additional Business**

Mr. Hewett reminded the council members that are running for election not to put signs on the right of ways.

**Public Comments**

Mr. J.W. Beavers at 2757 Boxankle Road thanked the council for appointing him to be on the Housing Authority Board.

Mrs. Joi Thomas at 777 Hemlock Street extended council an invite to the community leader reception on November 1, 2023. She advised they should have received invitations.

Mrs. Linda Hampton at 419 MLK Drive questioned where the sidewalks would start and stop on MLK.

Mr. Mike Batchelor, the Utilities Director advised the sidewalks would extend from Highway 41 to Washington Drive.

Mrs. Linda Hampton thanked the council for appointing her to be on the Housing Authority Board.

**Executive Session**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to go into executive session and to include Cody Ellis, the Economic Development Director, at 7:03p.m. to discuss possible pending litigation. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to end the executive session at 7:19p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:21p.m. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes Submitted by:

Shayla Furlow, Executive Admin. Assistant