**Minutes**

**Forsyth City Council**

**November 20, 2023**

**Call to Order**

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

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

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. David Martin gave the invocation. In attendance for the meeting was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers John Howard, Chris Hewett, Greg Goolsby, Charles Wilder and Mike Dodd. Also in attendance at the meeting was the City Manager, Craig Mims and the Assistant City Manager, Regina Ivie. Five members of council were in attendance for the meeting, all unanimous votes will be five votes (Howard, Hewett, Goolsby, Wilder, and Dodd).

**Swearing in of Councilman Charles Wilder Jr.**

Mayor Wilson administered the Oath to Councilman Charles Wilder, Jr.

**Approval of the agenda.**

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

**Approval of the minutes from the council meeting held on November 6, 2023.**

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

**Approval of Georgia Environmental Finance Authority loan resolution and all documents related to the loan.**

Mr. Hayes Hofstadter advised that they got ahead of the EPD mandate that requires you to inventory all the service lines by October of 2024. He advised the purpose of the inventory is to detect lead and copper in service lines. Mr. Hofstadter advised that GEFA created a grant program for all cities based on the population. He stated that he was asked to apply and make the report for the grant. The city will receive $90,240 to assist the consultant that is hired, and they will submit an excel spreadsheet to EPD by the October 2024 deadline. He advised the resolution needed to be signed.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority loan and all the documents related to the loan. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing to consider a variance request regarding Article 6, Conventional Residential Zoning, Table 6.2; tax parcel F19 091.**

Mr. Cody Ellis, the Community Development Director, advised that Jane Pennington is requesting a variance on her property located at 83 Freeman Avenue to build a quadplex and a duplex. The variance would be to move the front setbacks on the property from 30ft to 20ft. He advised that planning and zoning approved the variance request unanimously in October’s meeting.

Mayor Wilson advised that the public hearing for the variance request had been publicly advertised and opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed variance request regarding Article 6, Conventional Residential Zoning, Table 6.2; tax parcel F19 091.

There being no comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed variance request regarding Article 6, Conventional Residential Zoning, Table 6.2; tax parcel F19 091, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the variance request regarding Article 6, Conventional Residential Zoning, Table 6.2; tax parcel F19 091. Seconded by Mr. Wilder, the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing to consider an application for rezoning by** **Kason Investments, Inc; Kathy Rowland for tax parcel F35 027A.**

Mr. Cody Ellis, the Community Development Director, advised that Kathy Rowland of Kason Investments is requesting the parcel that Old Mill Market currently sits on to be rezoned. The purpose of the rezoning is to go from Manufacturing-Industrial to Central Business District to closely align with current usage and the zoning of businesses in surrounding areas. They are looking to parcel out the back portion of the property to sale as individual parcels. He advised that planning and zoning approved the request unanimously with one abstention.

Mayor Wilson advised that the public hearing for the rezoning request had been publicly advertised and opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed rezoning request regarding Kason Investments, Inc; Kathy Rowland for tax parcel F35 027A.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the rezoning request regarding Kason Investments, Inc; Kathy Rowland for tax parcel F35 027A. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of an** **alcohol license application for Ramdev Hospitality LLC dba LaQuinta Inn & Suites.**

Mrs. Regina Ivie, Assistant City Manager, advised the alcohol license is for LaQuinta Inn & Suites. She advised they are requesting to have beer and malt beverages pouring, wine pouring and retail pouring at the 400 Russell Parkway address parcel F25 041A.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve alcohol license application for Ramdev Hospitality LLC dba LaQuinta Inn & Suites. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of off system energy sales margins for the power supply year 2024.**

Mrs. Ivie advised that each year MEAG participants can designate the disposition of off system energy sales. have the option to elect to have sales applied as a credit or reduction to their MEAG Power bill or deposited into their Municipal Competitive Trust.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to continue to put the energy offset sales margin into the flexible operating account. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of engagement letter with Charles Grinstead for continued CPA services.**

Mrs. Ivie advised that she and Charles meet to continue working on next year’s annual audit. She stated that Mr. Grinstead had not submitted an engagement letter in several years. He submitted a letter for the council’s approval.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the engagement letter with Charles Grinstead for CPA services. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing for the 2024 proposed budget.**

Mrs. Ivie, the Assistant City Manager advised that we will be returning to Anthem in 2024. She provided a recap of the revenues, expenditures, and the capital outlay for the Public Works, Fire, and the Police Department as well as the hotel tax fund with the 7% increase effective January 1, 2024. The police special fund 210 with revenue and expenses of $0, and the combined utilities revenues and expenses. Mrs. Ivie also advised that the 2024 proposed budget included the increases of 5% COLA and up to 4% merits for city staff. She advised they would like to add a Public Works Superintendent and two advanced laborers to the proposed 2024 budget. She provided a recap for general funds and combined utilities. The adoption of the resolution will be done on December 07, 2023.

Mayor Wilson opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed 2024 budget.

Ms. Linda Hampton at 419 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive advised that she was concerned about the housing manager in the budget and questioned if it was in the budget, could it be pointed out.

Mayor Wilson advised that she was speaking of a liaison for the housing authority.

Mr. Mims, the City Manager, advised that there is nothing direct in the budget for what she requested but they have an administrative position that would be utilized to provide support to the housing authority.

There being no further comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed 2024 budget, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing and advised that action cannot be taken on the budget. The resolution will be adopted on December 7, 2023.

**Approval of parking and sidewalk closure request by Victor Hunt.**

Mr. Victor Hunt advised he was requesting permission to block the sidewalk at 18 N. Jackson Street and to reserve five parking spaces for a boom lift between the hours of 8a.m. and 5p.m. while renovating the façade of the building. He advised he would like to start on November 27, 2023, and estimated the job to last until December 22, 2023. Mr. Hunt advised he planned to clean up after each workday to make the sidewalk assessable for pedestrians and the boom lift would be parked at the rear of the building.

Mr. Goolsby questioned how would they block the area off.

Mr. Hunt advised that the awning would be covered with a tarp, he would use yellow caution tape and cones to block off the work area.

Mr. Wilder questioned if the stucco would be safe and stable after a day’s work and should the area of the sidewalk remain closed until the renovations are complete.

Mr. Hunt advised that the stucco was very stable and stuck he would take precautions daily to make sure that it would not fall.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the closure of the parking spaces and sidewalk in front of 18 N. Jackson to allow renovations. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of unbudgeted purchase for the police department.**

Chief Blue requested the purchase of nine computers for the police department. He advised the computers that they currently have are from ten to twelve years old. He advised the cost would be $22630.00 The cost included the computer consultants, VC3, to install and run programs needed on the computers.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the unbudgeted purchase for the police department. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Requisitions Greater than $6,000**

1. **Power DMS, Inc. $7,596.61**
2. **Davis Plumbing $19,925.00**
3. **Gresco Utilities Supplies $7,526.75**
4. **Gresco Utilities Supplies $14,055.00**
5. **Industrial Chemicals, Inc. $14,850.00**

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

**City Manager’s Report**

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

-Public Works and Utilities has worked diligently over the past 10 days installing and testing holiday decorations around town.

-He and the Community Development Department met with DCA on site to discuss the One GA Grant for workforce housing. The meeting went well and a decision for the grant is expected in mid- January 2024.

-The holiday tree lighting is scheduled for November 25, 2023, at 6:00p.m.

-The Hometown Holiday Parade will take place on November 30, 2023, at 7:00p.m.

-The police department renovations are 90% complete and we are in the planning phase for a holiday open house in mid- December.

**City Attorney Report**

Mr. Bobby Melton, the City Attorney, was not in attendance at the meeting.

**Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Wilson wished everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving and commended the crew that put up the Christmas tree in front of the City Hall. He presented information for the council retreat and provided potential dates in January.

**Additional Business**

No additional business to report.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Josh Hill at 177 Presidents Way advised he had a request to have signed placed recognizing the competition cheer squad. He advised that they won their second state championship, and they are the game day champions.

Mayor Wilson advised that he and Mr. Mims spoke about recognizing the cheer squad.

Mr. Mims advised they are looking into having signs placed and information was sent to GDOT to see what could be done.

Mayor Wilson advised that the football team will be playing in the third round of the playoffs.

**Executive Session**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to go into executive session for personnel matters at 6:37p.m. Seconded by Mr. Goolsby; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to end the executive session at 6:56p.m. Seconded by Mr. Wilder; the motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:57p.m. Seconded by Mr. Wilder; the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by:

Shayla Furlow, Executive Administrative Assistant