**Minutes**

**Forsyth City Council Meeting**

**November 6, 2023**

**Call to Order**

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

**Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation, and Roll Call.**

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation. 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, and Assistant City Manager, Regina Ivie. 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.**

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

**Approval of the minutes from the work session and council meeting held on October 16, 2023.**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the minutes from the work session and council meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public hearing to consider a variance request by Momentum Christian Church, tax parcel 053 029D.**

Mr. Cody Ellis, Community Development Director, advised that Momentum Christian Church is requesting a variance to allow for relocation of their church into a Highway Business Zoning District. The church is looking to relocate to parcel 053 029D on Benson Ham Road. He advised the church would be on the back of the parcel. The property would remain HB, Highway Business, with the front of the parcel being used for commercial businesses. Mr. Ellis advised planning and zoning recommended approval of the variance request unanimously.

Mayor Wilson advised 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 by Momentum Christian Church, tax parcel 053 029D.

There being no comments in favor of or opposition to the variance request by Momentum Christian Church, tax parcel 053 029D, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion approve the variance request by Momentum Christian Church, tax parcel 053 029D. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public hearing to consider amendments to Article 6 Table 6.2 and Article 28 Section 30.**

Mr. Cody Ellis, Community Development Director, advised the proposed changes to the zoning ordinance would be like the R3 zoning requirements. He advised the Residential Multi-family dimensional requirements regarding the minimum lot size for single family detached dwellings would move up to a third of an acre rather than a quarter of an acre. The minimum lot size for other uses would go from 10,000sqft to 15,000sqft, minimum lot width would go from 50ft to70ft and the minimum heated floor area would go from 900sqft to 1,000sqft. Mr. Ellis advised that the proposed changes for Article 28 Section 30 are regarding the base requirements for streets. He advised the engineers recommended that the minimum base thickness be changed from 6 inches to 8 inches to increase the lifespan of the road. Planning and zoning recommended approval unanimously.

Mayor Wilson advised that the public hearing for the recommended amendments had been publicly advertised and opened the public hearing for comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed amendments to Article 6 Table 6.2 and Article 28 Section 30.

Mrs. Jackie Green questioned if current parcels a quarter of an acre would be grandfathered in.

Mr. Ellis advised they would be grandfathered in; the amendment would only affect parcels that would be rezoned or going forward for any new usage.

Ther being no further comments in favor of or opposition to the proposed amendments to Article 6 Table 6.2 and Article 28 Section 30, Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the amendments to Article 6 Table 6.2 and Article 28 Section 30. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

**Commissioner Davis to discuss Monroe County Senior Center.**

Commissioner Davis advised the Monroe County Senior Center needs financial support. He advised he came before the council on behalf of the Senior Center to see if they could get grace on the utility bill or look into giving some sort of financial support, so that the senior citizens are able to go out and do different activities.

Mr. Goolsby questioned how much they pay out on utilities.

Commissioner Davis advised that from September 2022 to October 2023 the Senior Citizen Center paid around $8,500.00 for the year.

Mayor Wilson advised some research would be done and pursued it later.

**Approval of construction easement for Monroe County, GA for the Old Brent Road Storm Drainage Repair Project.**

Mike Batchelor, Utilities Director, advised that the county is in the process of doing repairs to the Old Brent Road Bridge culvert pipe. He advised the County needs a standard construction easement that would be tied into the city’s property.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the construction easement for the Old Brent Road storm drainage project. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of management agreement with Forsyth Country Club.**

Mr. Craig Mims, City Manager, stated that he finalized the Forsyth Country Club agreement, and they signed off on it; he is seeking the council’s approval to move forward with the agreement.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to approve the management agreement with Forsyth Country Club as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of employee Christmas bonuses.**

Mrs. Regina Ivie, Assistant City Manager, proposed the employee Christmas bonus in the requested amount of $350.00 for full-time employees and $150.00 for part-time employees, totaling the amount of $29,725.32.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the employee Christmas bonuses. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval to reschedule December 4th council meeting.**

Mrs. Ivie advised that the ECG Annual Meeting will be held from December 3, 2023, to December 6, 2023. She advised that herself, Mayor Wilson, Mr. Mims, and Mr. Batchelor are registered to attend and requested that the December 4, 2023, council meeting be rescheduled to Thursday, December 7, 2023.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the December 4th council meeting be rescheduled to Thursday, December 7, 2023. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of City Hall closure request for the upcoming holidays.**

Mrs. Ivie advised he was seeking approval for closure at the City Hall on November 22, 2023, and December 22, 2023, at noon in observance of the upcoming holidays.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the closure request for the upcoming holidays. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

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

Police Chief Woodrow Blue requested approval to purchase two Ford F-150 police responder trucks and the equipment for the trucks. He advised that with the continued hiring of officers the Police Department does not have enough vehicles. He is looking to hire six officers in December.

Mr. Mims stated salary savings would fund the purchase of the trucks and the equipment.

Mr. Hewett questioned how many officers he would have after this round of hiring.

Chief Blue advised that it will be twenty-one officers with one open to be fully staffed.

Mayor Wilson questioned why the purchase of trucks.

Chief Blue advised they can go places that cars and SUVs can’t, and they will be used to transport larger pieces of evidence.

Mr. Mims stated that the trucks will work better for community events.

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

**Approval of an unbudgeted purchase for the fire department.**

Fire Chief Kevin Bunn advised the rescue truck is nearing seven years old with 75,000 miles; the transmission was replaced. Chief Bunn requested approval to purchase the chassis for the rescue truck. He advised purchasing the chassis now they are a year out, if it is not purchased this year, it will be two years out.

Mr. Hewett questioned who provided the quote.

Chief Bunn Advised it was from Custom Truck Works in Woodberry, GA; They get chassis from Wade Ford.

Mr. Mims advised they found savings in the department for funding.

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

**Approval of TSPLOST intergovernmental agreement.**

Mayor Wilson advised the TSPLOST was approved years ago as a county. He advised that by early next year we will have exceeded the limit. A joint meeting was held with the county and the city of Culloden on Friday, November 3, 2023, to discuss the possibilities of renewing and voting on extending the TSPLOST. Mayor Wilson advised the county presented an intergovernmental agreement. Monroe County and the City of Culloden approved their agreement however the city could not approve it due to not having a quorum. Approving to extend would allow to continue collecting tax in the TSPLOST and it could be used for anything that the tax allows. He asked that the city make a motion so that the county could move forward with putting this on the ballot for next year.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the intergovernmental agreement related to TSPLOST as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**2024 Proposed Budget Review.**

Mrs. Regina Ivie, Assistant City Manager, presented information for the first reading regarding the proposed budget for 2024. She provided information for the revenues and the expenditures. Mrs. Ivie advised information was received from Donna Davis regarding insurance; Cigna came back with a high increase of 14.38 percent of the current cost, Anthem came back with a 4.76% decrease which would save $133,993.92, and MetLife had a slight increase. She presented information for Cigna, Anthem, and United Healthcare and recommended renew employee medical coverage with Anthem at 4.76 decrease in premiums%. Mrs. Ivie presented 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 public hearing will be held on November 20, 2023, and the adoption of the resolution will be at the December 07, 2023 council meeting.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to renew Anthem for health insurance. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of requisitions greater than $6,000.**

* **Axon Enterprise $8,707.40**
* **Davis Plumbing $20,044.00**

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, reported that:

-We have completed the potential TSPLOST list of projects and will start tweaking it over the next few weeks.

-Resolution to adopt proposed budget at the December council meeting.

-Police Department renovations are approximately 80% complete, we are awaiting new furniture.

-Trick or Treat around the square was successful; with an estimated 5000 attendees. Approximately 30 businesses and organizations participated in the event.

-Work Session needed to discuss a possible joint city/county project- first meeting in December.

**City Attorney Report**

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

**Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Wilson had no further business to report.

**Council Board Reports**

Mr. Howard advised he didn’t have a council board report, but he had a comment. He stated he wanted to talk about the article that was written in the Monroe County Reporter regarding his power being disconnected in 2022. He stated he spoke with the editor of the newspaper and told him he was unaware of the disconnection because it never happened. Mr. Howard advised he spoke with the city manager and was told he was never disconnected, nor did he pay a reconnect fee. Mr. Howard also advised the editor made a comment about his late fees; he pays in the middle of the month to budget and balance.

Mr. Hewett advised the Hospital Authority will meet on November 16, 2023.

Mr. Goolsby advised the Development Authority will meet on November 07, 2023, at 8:30a.m.

**Additional Business**

No additional business to report.

**Public Comments**

Mrs. Lois Allen at 364 Brookwood Drive advised that she was insulted regarding her utility bill in the Monroe County Reporter. She advised that she felt it was wrong for Will to print that information in the reporter during the election. Mrs. Lois stated that Will prints a lot of negative things in his paper; we need a paper that we can read and enjoy.

Ms. Linda Hampton at 419 MLK Jr. Drive advised that the Housing Authority does not have a staff person over the committee. She questioned how the committee works without a liaison to look into grants and other information for the Housing Authority.

Mayor Wilson advised he would be attending the next meeting that will be on November 14, 2023. He stated that he spoke with Mr. Mims regarding looking into training.

Ms. Hampton advised that the city needs to look into community-based services. She advised support is needed for community seniors and for the homeless.

Ms. Corkietha Hicks at 493 Stroud Street advised that information given to Will Davis needed to be fact checked she was not residing at 493 Stroud Street in 2011.

Mr. J.W. Beavers at 2757 Boxankle Road advised the hospital sign crossing under the highway at the interstate and Hwy 42 is down.

Mr. Hewett thanked Commissioner Davis for his efforts in getting the end of N. Frontage Road paved.

Ms. Corkietha Hicks questioned when other roads would be paved in the Blount Hill area.

**Executive Session**

No executive session necessary.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:52p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes submitted by:

Shayla Furlow, Executive Administrative Assistant