**Minutes**

**Forsyth City Council Meeting**

**September 05, 2023**

**Call to order**

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

**Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation by Lloyd Strickland, and Roll Call**

Mayor Wilson requested a moment of silence in honor of councilman Ralph Ogletree. Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. The invocation was led by Mr. Lloyd Strickland. 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.**

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

**Approval of minutes from the council meeting held on August 21, 2023.**

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

**Approval to apply for a One Georgia Rural Workforce Housing Grant.**

Mr. Cody Ellis, Economic Development Director advised the state has set aside 25 million dollars to be used as an initiative for cities and other municipalities to attract and develop rural workforce housing. He advised the grant would assist in providing infrastructure for the housing. Mr. Ellis advised they have an area they are looking into; it is in the annexed property on Johnsonville Road. The housing must fall within a certain price range. Municipalities can receive up to 2.5 million dollars from the grant. He advised the deadline for the application is in October.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve applying for a One Georgia Rural Workforce Housing Grant. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval to proceed with bid process for Indian Springs Water Line Replacement Project.**

Mr. Cody Ellis advised if the waterline coming from Main Street to Indian Springs to Morse is replaced it would provide adequate increase in the water flow. He advised the estimate provided from Hofstadter includes their fees and costs. He was seeking approval to proceed with the bid process. He advised it would not affect this year’s budget and they will be looking into grants for assistance with the project.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve proceeding with the bid process for Indian Springs Waterline Replacement Project. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of an emergency purchase of a belt press for the South Wastewater Treatment Plant.**

Mr. Craig Helms advised that the belt press located at the South WWTP is currently non-operational. The significance of the belt press is the final stage of removing solids from the wastewater facility. If the solids are not removed the wastewater facility will have solids retention, toxicity in the process, and it will begin to kill of the biological process. He advised that the belt presses inability to remove solids is a compliance issue.

Mr. Helms advised that the USDA deemed this issue an emergency and advised if the city purchased the belt press, they would reimburse the funds.

Mr. Craig Mims, City Manager, advised the funds would come from the Municipal Competitive Trust. He advised that the process could take six months to be operational. There are two options: to transport solids or to rent a belt press. He advised that the belt press was over thirty years old.

Mr. Goolsby asked what will be done in the six-month time span.

Mr. Helms advised they would continue to keep the current belt press running; the other option is to transport the solids.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the emergency purchase of a belt press for the South Wastewater Treatment Plant. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of an appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission.**

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to appoint Mr. James Freeman to serve on the Planning and Zoning Commission. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of request by Will Davis to hold a debate on Monday, September 25th from 6p.m. to 8p.m.**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion for the debate to be held on September 25th at the Alderman Hall. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of a street closure request for the Bank of Dudley during construction.**

Mrs. Regina Ivie, Assistant City Manager, advised that Chris Morris requested street closure during daily construction activity. The construction would last approximately seven months. She advised the crews would clean and pressure wash the streets after construction.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the street closure for the Bank of Dudley construction. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion failed with four opposing votes (Howard, Hewett, Goolsby, and Dodd).

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to table the approval of the street closure until September 18, 2023, to allow the businesses in the area to be informed. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Walter Goodson**

Mr. Walter Goodson advised that he met with Mr. Mike Batchelor, the Utilities Director, regarding the street that was not being used off Powell Street. He advised that he was told the street couldn’t be sold because the homeowners would not have access to their houses. The street was never constructed. He advised that each house has twenty-five feet which is enough to get in and out. The city can offer to sale the land to the homeowners or him.

Mr. Mims advised that he was speaking of issues that were determined five to six years ago.

Mr. Batchelor advised that a survey was done on the right of way, it is there but it is not being used.

Mayor Wilson advised Mr. Goodson to allow the City Manager and the City Attorney to discuss the street issue to allow them to give them a briefing to better assess the issue.

Mr. Mims questioned Mr. Goodson about what he was trying to accomplish.

Mr. Goodson advised that he wants the road fixed or sold; or would the city rather keep it for no reason. He stated that the city is not using the road and it is causing problems.

Mr. Bobby Melton, City Attorney, asked for the name of the road.

Mr. Goodson advised that the street was unnamed and that he wants to establish the land. He stated that Mr. George Willis gave the land to the city in 1985.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to table the discussion of the unnamed road until September 18, 2023, to allow mor information to be obtained. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Update- E911- Upgrade & Redundancy**

Mr. Kevin Bunn, Forsyth Fire Chief, provided an update regarding the Smarr E-911cell tower, which was struck by lightning on July 3, 2023, damaging the microwave shelf and top amplifier. He advised the cell tower was restored partially functioning. The Justice Center cell tower was struck by lightning on July 31, 2023, and the incident impacted all three tower sites. Chief Bunn advised that the county had proposed two options with quotes, that are being presented to the County Commissioners. He advised Mr. Hedges was going to recommend option two which would upgrade the existing microwave (Smarr) and add Cabiness and the Justice Center. Additional microwave equipment would be added at Cabiness, Knight Road, and Town Creek. The quoted cost is $613,82.77. The city is responsible for fifteen percent of the cost, which would be no more than $62,078 with insurance.

**Tabled agenda items from August 21, 2023, meeting:**

* **City Court location possibilities**
* **GDOT Roundabout Project**

**-Approval of indication of roundabout support from Department of Transportation**

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to remove the City Court location possibilities from the tabled items. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Woodrow Blue, Forsyth Police Chief, provided advantages and disadvantages of holding court at the Monroe County Justice Center, the City Annex, and the City Hall.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to continue holding court at the current location until more information is received. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to remove the GDOT Roundabout Project- Indication support letter from the tabled items. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Ivie presented the answers from GDOT regarding concerns from the council.

Mr. Howard offered a motion to approve the indication of roundabout support letter from the Department of Transportation. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

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

* **Industrial Chemicals, Inc $15,187.50**

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

**City Manager’s Report**

Mr. Craig Mims reported that:

-Audit submitted to GFOA on 8/29/2023.

-Monroe County Development Authority announced last week that they have finalized a deal that will bring Chik-fil-a to Forsyth, it will be located at the corner of Hwy 18 and Industrial Park Drive.

-Splash Pad was inspected and passed on 8/29/23.

- The Police Department has hired four new officers: Mitchell Bell, Aubrey Walker, Richard Jackson, and Dylan Cody. Mitchell Bell and Aubry Walker are Certified. Richard Jackson and Dylan Cody will be attending the January Police Academy. They have two applicants that have just started the hiring process.

-Jackson Heights re-conduct project:

* Cut trees and cleared the right of way for new line route.
* Transferred the electric load on old line for removal of one phase.
* Set and worked out several poles.

-The Belt Press at the South Wastewater Treatment Plant had a catastrophic failure. The Belt Press is approximately 30 years old and has exceeded its useful life. Currently, we are unable to process solids at this location. The staff is working with our engineering firm on a solution.

**City Attorney Report**

Mr. Bobby Melton, the City Attorney, advised he did make recommendations for the unnamed street years ago. He advised he would not change his recommendation.

**Mayor’s Report**

Mayor Wilson advised the Bicentennial Festival is September 22 - 24, 2023; he encouraged everyone to make plans to come and celebrate in downtown Forsyth. Mayor Wilson also advised he will be attending the Georgia Municipal Association legislative policy council and board meeting.

**Council Board Reports**

Mr. Hewett advised that Monroe Hospital Authority met last Thursday, August 31, 2023; they did not renew their agreement with Atrium Health, they signed a new agreement with Aletheia Health Partners.

**Additional Business**

Mr. Hewett inquired about receiving Platt information from Planning and Zoning.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to receive information for anything that will come before council rezoning, zoning changes, and variances have a Platt to show what will be done. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Noah Harbuck of 101 Slippery Rock Place questioned if the Splash Pad days of operation could be extended by ten days.

Mr. Kevin Bunn, Fire Chief, advised that the Splash Pad must be closed to be sealed properly. The weather must be nice to complete the sealing process.

**Executive Session**

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to go into executive session at 7:02p.m.to discuss potential litigation. Seconded by Mr. Howard; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Goolsby offered a motion to end the executive session at 7:10p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Goolsby stated he had additional business regarding the internet service on the town square. He advised we need to find a way to enhance coverage in the downtown area.

Mr. Mims advised that we have a technology committee that could investigate that issue.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:13p.m. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

Minutes Submitted by:

Shayla Furlow, Executive Admin. Assistant