

City of Reidsville
City Council Meeting Minutes

Monday – November 14, 2022

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FILE

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Reidsville City Council was held on Monday November 14, 2022, at 5:00 pm. Members of Council present were:

Curtis Colwell, Mayor
Lindsay Bennett, Councilwoman
Carolyn Blackshear, Mayor Pro-Tem
Donald Prestage, Councilman
Doug Williams, Councilman
Verdie Williams, Councilwoman

Duann Davis, City Attorney and Nivea Jackson, City Clerk were also present in their respective roles.

The audience was welcomed and led in prayer by Mayor Curtis Colwell. The audience recited the pledge of allegiance in unison. The Mayor announces that he would entertain a motion to adopt the last month's minutes.

Motion by: Doug Williams

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Motion Carried: Unanimously

At this time, Mayor Colwell asked for the Departments report beginning with the Fire Department. No report given. Next was Police Department, and the report was given by Police Chief Stacey Wilds. Rodney Deloach gave the report for Water/Sewer and Street and Lanes. Nivea Jackson, City Clerk, added to the report that Rodney Deloach had ordered new trash cans. It was reported to City Hall that one of the trash truck drivers was damaging the poly carts when dumping the cans. The order was made, and we have been waiting for weeks. Recreation Department was next. Councilwoman Bennett gave the report. She noted that the Rec Director was looking for grants to fund lighting around the new fields. Councilwoman Blackshear gave the report for Administration Department. Mrs. Blackshear, Mrs. V. Williams, and Mayor Colwell attended the District 9 Listening Session hosted in Vidalia, Georgia by Georgia Municipal Association. Mrs. Blackshear also announced that interviews were held, and a Finance Clerk was hired. The City was completing the required background checks and completing the hiring process. Nivea Jackson added that the audit process has officially began. It was announced that the city has plans to complete two years audit at once to completely become compliant with audits. Next was the Downtown Development Authority report. Mrs. Vicki. Nails started by asking what the little cottages were that was being built by Mr. Lew Graham near the hospital. Specifically, she wanted to know if they were going to be residential homes for citizens. She also wanted to know why Lew Graham was permitted to build the

two homes on Highway 280 on commercial property. Didn't there used to be a business located there? Nails says she has researched that property at the County office and says that property is commercial. She stresses that this is the importance of having a zoning board. She is insisting that the Council would have known that, had they consulted with zoning. The Surrency -Atkins Playground was next. No members were in attendance. Councilwoman Williams says she doesn't have any new updates. She stated that the basketball court was completed and that the park was awaiting the installation of bleachers and benches.

Next the Mayor gives the floor to a registered guest speaker, Mrs. Artiffany Stanley from Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). Mrs. Stanley was following up with the Mayor and Council after having a Council retreat planned and cancelled for lack of participation from the Council. She wanted to express that she could reschedule with the Council in order to support the specific needs of the city. She said the best benefit to a city is when the complete Council can participate. Councilwoman Blackshear asked how long would the retreat take? Mrs. Stanley says that it can be as long or short as needed for the Council. Nivea Jackson asks Mrs. Stanley how often should a city look at or update their codes? Mrs. Stanley answer was every few years and as laws and policies change you should be reviewing them again every two years at least. This can be accomplished through setting up a committee or having the City Attorney update the legal aspects of it. Municode should help with this. Verdie Williams asks if these changes must be approved by the State. "Yes" Stanley answers. Local ordinances do not. Jackson asks if GMA offers a service where they can come and set up operating procedures since all of the old staff left. Stanley answers, "yes, we offer Operational assessments where we can come and make recommendations for operations for your city. This is helpful to new staffs especially". Blackshear adds that she doesn't feel a couple of hours, nor a half day would do the city justice. She states that she is open to gaining the knowledge that GMA has to offer the city. Mrs. Stanley adds that GMA reps are comprised of former City officials from all over the State with many years of experience to lend as former Mayors, City Managers, City Clerks, and Council Members. Their mission is to provide support through education to all of the Municipalities throughout Georgia and to be a help. Stanley stated that she reached out to each Council member to compile a consensus of what each Council member felt the Council and City needed to be working on. Again, hoping to facilitate a conversation that cannot be had between Council at Council meetings. Blackshear asks, "the last retreat was unsuccessful because majority participation was down, if we reschedule again, will you still complete it for the Council who does show up." Ms. Stanley answers, "if that is what you all decide, but again this is more beneficial with the whole Council. I would hope that the city would use GMA as a benefit to do business in the city. Everyone who participates is guaranteed to get something from the training. We can do hourly, Saturdays, holidays, Sundays, we are here for all of you. There are other representatives that would love to come help as well from GMA just not myself." Mrs. Stanley returns the floor to Mayor Colwell.

Mayor Colwell asked Mrs. DuAnne Davis, our City Attorney did she want to talk about the derelict properties. She said, "no she had given the Council an updated list". Mayor Colwell asked the Attorney about the road closures. Davis stated that Pine St. and the VFW Drive are the proposed streets to be closed. Specifically speaking to VFW Drive, Ronnie McCall is asking that the city postpone voting on this until he can speak with the County Engineer. As for Pine St, OCGA 37-7-2 stated that there are conditions that must be met to be able close a city street. Davis stated that the Council must decide whether the street has no public interest or purpose for the city and from there they would start the process which includes contacting neighbors to let them know the intent and schedule hearings. Councilwoman Bennett

asks the public works Director, Rodney Deloach if the city would still have access to the manhole located in that area. Public Works and Street/Lane Director Rodney Deloach answers; yes, the city could enter from an adjoining street, Jennifer. Councilwoman Williams asked what about for future development. It has access to the undeveloped property near Surrency Playground. Councilwoman Bennett shares with Council that she is not for creating a road later when there is one there and it gives access to areas we need to maintain. Bennett makes a motion to not close Pine St.

Vote by: Lindsay Bennett

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Next topic for discussion is the Ethic Committee. Attorney Davis is reading the Code Ordinance on the Ethics committee. She stated that Mrs. Holly Dyer is a citizen, who is also an attorney who has come forth as a volunteer to serve on the Ethics committee. Attorney Davis asks Mrs. Dyer who was in the audience if she was still willing to serve as an attorney on the Ethics Committee. Mrs. Dyer agrees to serve. Attorney Davis stated that she would be an ideal solution to the problem of not having a legal attorney. Attorney Davis also stated that each Council member will need to bring in a name to vote. Each Council member needs to return a name at the next Council's planning session next month in order to have a list of names to pull from for voting purposes. Mayor Colwell will be responsible for bringing in the third member of the Ethics Committee.

Next on the agenda is USDA Loan application. Councilwoman Verdie Williams and Public Works Director Rodney Deloach have met with Carl Hofstadter who recommended the Council to move forward and to take the project to bid. The USDA loan needs a completed audit as well. A vote was taken to allow the council to move forward.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2nd by: Doug Williams

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Next is Worker's Compensation. Councilwoman Blackshear stated to the Council that the premiums are down 56% according to the presentation given to Council at the Planning session in November. Council needs a vote to renew for the year taking advantage of the savings from employee safety. Department heads have been encouraged to continue safety training within the departments and send copies of the trainings to City Hall. A vote was taken.

Motion by: Carolyn Blackshear

2nd by: Verdie Williams

Motion: Carried: Unanimously

Mayor Colwell asks Blackshear to explain the Employee Retention Incentives. Blackshear says that some of our employees are still struggling in this economy. Many companies are now offering incentives to keep employees especially during the holiday season. It was suggested by one of our department heads to give incentives and I agreed stated Blackshear. We want to offer this incentive to all of our employees including our volunteer Fire Dept. Blackshear says the City will fund these incentives out of the ARPA

funds and that we have already consulted with GMA about using those funds. Blackshear stated that she is unsure of the amount. That would be something that the finance committee would have to look at, but she is sure the city could do between \$350-500 per employee. Blackshear says that a motion is needed to give employees the incentives. Councilwoman Lindsay Bennett interjects saying that the Council should vote on the amount that the employees receive. Bennett informed the Council that she only received \$100 as an incentive from her place of employment. Bennett wants a separate vote for the amount. Bennett offers a motion to vote for employees to receive an incentive but for the amount to be decided next month.

Motion by: Lindsay Bennett

2nd by: No second

Motion Failed: Due to lack of second

Councilwoman Blackshear assured the Council there are enough funds in the ARPA account to cover the incentive. Verdie Williams makes a motion that ARPA funds be used to give employees an incentive whenever an amount is decided.

Motion by: Verdie Williams

2nd by: Doug Williams

Motion Carried: By majority vote

Attorney Davis wanted to bring to Council's attention that the Church St. property currently listed on the City's derelict property list has come up for sale. The potential buyer is asking that the City give time to get the property in good standing according to City code. The purchaser is requesting 90 days to bring things into compliance. Councilwoman Williams asked the City Attorney on the approach of the Lift Station that is currently located on Private property. Attorney Davis stated that she can begin the process to legally acquire the property. Davis also wanted to inform the Council that Ms. Christine Suttermire from the Attorney General's office would like to come down and give a compliance training concerning the FOIA to City employees. Davis will circulate dates to the Council in Jan and Feb for the training. A motion to adjourn was made at this time.

Motion by: Doug Williams

2nd by: Carolyn Blackshear

Motion Carried: Unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.