



CITY OF THOMSON
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MAY 10, 2021

5:00PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Keryl Corley, Councilmember
Elaine Johnson, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Scott Whittle, Councilmember
John Waller, City Administrator
Lucretia Ferguson, City Clerk

Also Present:

Chase Beggs, Planning & Zoning
Julie Gerlach
Wayne Parham, McDuffie Progress

At 5:02pm, Mayor Kenneth Usry called the City Council Work Session to order.

BUSINESS:

- a. Chase Beggs explained the signage variance that CVS on West Hill Street has requested. CVS requested illuminated signs from corner to corner on two sides of their building to advertise more services and modify the monument sign in front of the business. None of the requests meet sign requirements of the City or the Historical Preservation Committee. This building was built in 2009 under the current restrictions. The Planning & Zoning Board voted unanimously to deny the variance request. A Public Hearing will be held on May 13, 2021 at 6:30pm, preceding the City Council meeting, at which the city council will consider this sign request.
- b. Mayor Usry presented the Council with a request to close the remaining portion of Borders Street and deed it to the First Baptist Church. The church owns all property on both sides of the street and would like to stop through traffic for the safety of its members. The Mayor encouraged Council to go and study the layout of church property and street before any decisions are made. This topic was for information only.
- c. The council discussed placing the old Hughes Building and Fire Station into the Land Bank or downtown Development Authority.
- d. Ordinance 575-Broadband Ready Community. This will have its second reading at the May 13th meeting.
- e. Ordinance 576-Mesena Road De-annexation. The Mayor pointed out the corrected plat that was submitted by the land owner and approved by City Attorney Jimmy Plunkett.

Before yielding the floor to CA Waller, Mayor Usry spoke on a 192 acre Whiteoak Road tract of land that does not have sewage available. The developers understand that the City does not have the available \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 that would bring sewage to them. They would now start with 27 lots of approximately one acre that would allow septic systems and are asking for an exception to the City's ban of such systems. If sewage becomes available at a later date, they will connect to it and develop the back half of the acreage.

- f. Resolution 02-2021 Water/Sewer Commission recommendation on GEFA Loan CW2020015, \$8,361,000. CA Waller explained to the Council the EPD discharge limitations and cost of deferred maintenance of the Waste Water Treatment Plant in past years that makes this loan necessary. If the full amount is used, the City will receive a \$1,100,000 forgiveness of principle. This will not add capacity to the plant, but will allow more efficient use of the current treatment capacity. The Water/Sewer Commission voted to approve this loan on April 20, 2021.
- g. Water Meter GEFA Loan DW2017007 increase. CA Waller explained that the acquisition and installation of radio-read meters is funded by the GEFA loan that stipulates a completion date of November, 2022. The original loan of \$1,194,000 was partially used for the MUNIS software upgrade that was required along with the new meters. The City's manpower is not sufficient to have new water meters installed by the deadline. Carter & Sloope, the City's engineering contractor, estimates that to contract the installation of the remaining meters would cost \$380,000. The City would not want to request a loan modification and then fall short, so CA Waller recommended that the modification be for \$500,000. This would increase the current loan to \$1,694,000, at 0.91% interest.
- h. Curbside Garbage Pickup. Bids from three solid waste companies were received on April 23rd. CA Waller presented a Power Point presentation to the Council. The Solid Waste Fund loses money. Between the years of 2016 through 2020, Solid Waste showed a loss of between \$65,000 and \$188,000 each year. The City charges each residential customer \$19.00 monthly for garbage and yard trash pickup. References were checked and each company was graded by CA Waller and Billy Edwards, who assisted the City in writing the RFP. The grading results and residential bids are:

Waste Management:	9.32 (\$12.25 per customer)
Capital Waste:	9.36 (\$14.46 per customer)
Meridian Waste:	9.30 (\$17.90 per customer)

CA Waller recommended that the City contract with Waste Management at a cost of \$12.25 per residence, which was also the lowest bid. WM will use natural gas for their trucks, buy their fuel from the City and are willing to buy the City's machinery. They are a national brand with a good reputation. If the Council approves a contractor, he recommends that the City enter into an initial 12-24 month contract.

- i. Council Concerns: Councilmember Johnson spoke on only having one utility billing cashier late on a “due date” day. The customers were backed up inside and at the kiosk. Mayor Usry said he would look into that. Councilmember Whittle asked for an update on the TPD Chief search. CA Waller hopes that we will have interviews here in mid-June.
- j. City Administrator Report: No additional information.
- k. Mayor Report: The City has contacted Universal Concepts to price an additional four feet to be added to our outdoor Christmas Tree. To go from eighteen feet to twenty-two feet, matching our tree and with bulbs attached, is regularly priced at \$4,965, but they would discount that to \$3,750. To have it decorated exactly as the original portion is an extra \$925, for a total of \$4,675. This would match the Depot height. Many people in town have been upset about the condition of the Thomson Post Office. Mayor Usry contacted our Washington, DC congressional delegation for assistance.

Having no other business before the Council, Mayor Usry called the meeting adjourned at 6:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk


Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor

