

CITY OF THOMSON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
December 12, 2019

6:30PM
Council Chamber

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Scott Whittle, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Clifford Lunceford, Councilmember
Doris E. Johnson, Councilmember
Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney
Frank Etheridge, City Administrator
Shanda Reese-Grant, HR Director

Also Present:

Eugene Bird
Patsy Hall, RSVP Steering Committee
W. David Hall, D.C.
Georgia C. Hobbs, RSVP
Dexter Reese
Chuck Cason, Public Works Director
Nora Douglas
Andy Knox Sr.
Andy Knox Jr.
Denise Etheridge

Absent:

Dianne Landers, City Clerk

Mayor Usry welcomed all to the December 12th regular council meeting. Invocation was given by Rev. John Smalley followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PRESENTATION:

Dexter Reese, a CDL Truck Driver, in the Solid Waste Department was recognized for 20 years of outstanding service with the City of Thomson.

MINUTES:

Councilmember Lunceford moved to approve the November 14, 2019 regular council minutes. Councilmember Belton seconded. All were in favor. Minutes approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Second Reading of the Proposed Joint Planning Commission Ordinance (#569):

The second reading of the Joint Planning Commission for the City of Thomson, McDuffie County and the City of Dearing was presented. This ordinance creates the Joint Planning Commission, defines the organization and rules to include membership, terms of office, officers, compensation.

Councilmember Smalley made a motion to approve the ordinance, which was seconded by Councilmember Whittle. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The Council also discussed the two seats that the City will have on the Joint Planning Commission. There was a brief discussion of the membership of the current City of Thomson Planning Commission.

Councilmember Belton made a motion to appoint Howell Roberts and Penny Lowe to the Joint Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Johnson and the motion passed unanimously.

Second Reading of the Amendment to Gas Ordinance #481:

The purpose of this amendment is to prohibit obstructions around any gas meter. This gives the owner the responsibility to remove such obstruction to their gas meter that would hinder the gas meter from being read.

Councilmember Smalley made a motion to approve the Ordinance, which was seconded by Councilmember Johnson. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

First Reading of Proposed Revision to the Road Ordinance

A proposed revision of the current road ordinance was presented to address what local roads trucks and busses could be on.

This was the first reading.

EIP Loan for Greg Derry to Purchase the Real Property of the David Joesbury Insurance Agency

The Mayor went over the recommendation of the EIP Loan Committee from their November 21st meeting. They recommended that the City take a second mortgage of \$135,000 at an interest rate of 5% for with a balloon at 60 months for a 15 year term.

Councilmember Smalley made a motion to accept the recommended loan, which was seconded by Councilmember Whittle and passed unanimously (5-0).

Pitt Street Park Renaming Request

This item was initially discussed two months ago when Eugene Brown approached the Council to request some recognition for his aunt Bernice Brown who had served on the City Council and lived on Pitt Street. The Recreation Department finally provided a response on the possibility of renaming the park. There was also a discussion on the type of signage, which will be handled by the Mayor through the Archway program.

Councilmember Johnson made a motion to rename Pitt Street Park for Bernice Brown in recognition of her service as a Councilmember and an active resident of the Pitt Street area. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Belton and passed unanimously (5-0).

TSPLOST Update

The Mayor went over the revised drawing for the SR17 project between Gordon Street and the National Guard Armory. He went over the lane designs and options for the center turn lane. Several members of the public stood up to make comments about the designs they favored. These included Andy Knox, Jr. and Patsy Hall. Their comments addressed the existing drainage/flood issue, traffic calming, pedestrian-islands for pedestrian safety, and the impact on the community.

Councilmember Lunceford made a motion to approve the proposal with the pedestrian-islands and also request GDOT to look at and ensure a left turn into the voting precinct parking area and for GDOT to look at the ability to install left turn signals at the intersection of SR17 and Gordon St./Tom Watson Way. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Johnson and passed unanimously (5-0).

FY 2020 Budget

After brief comments about the proposed budget Councilmember Lunceford made a motion to approve the FY 2020 Budget. The budget was seconded by Councilmember Smalley and passed unanimously (5-0).

Painting of Crosswalks on Main Street

The Mayor went over the painting of 5 of the crosswalks on Main Street in downtown. We will be responsible for traffic control during the time the contractor applies the red paint. The paint will require approximately 30 minutes to dry before accepting traffic over it. The cost is \$2,500.

Recycling Discussion

The Mayor made a request to discontinue the recycling program as it is losing money. He presented a budget sheet that showed the program had revenues of less than \$2,000 for the first 11 months of the year and costs in excess of \$140,000. This is for a program that is actively used by less than 30% of our residential customers. He stated that the County would be willing to have a dumpster placed at the Transfer Station to accept recyclable materials. The cost would be \$500 for each load that was picked up by the waste hauling company.

Councilmember Belton had concerns that our tipping fees will increase as more people would place recyclables in their trash cans rather than making a trip to the Transfer Station.

Councilmember Whittle wanted to know which employees were be funded through the funds the County provides for this service.

There being a lack of a motion this issue fails.

Councilmember Johnson requested that we build a plan to address the recycling business.

Proposed Holiday Schedule for 2020

The 2020 Holiday schedule was submitted.

Proposed City Council Meeting Schedule for 2020

The proposed meeting schedule for the work sessions and regular monthly meetings was submitted.

The Mayor requested an additional item be considered on this agenda to address seed money for a Blind Willie McTell statue in town. We currently budget \$35,000 for promotions in our annual budget and this line item still has more than \$25,000 remaining till the end of the fiscal year. He would request that we move \$15,000 from this promotion account and combine it with the Special Projects fund to create a \$50,000 fund that can be used as seed money to raise addition private and community funds to create a Blind Willie McTell statue.

Councilmember Johnson made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Councilmember Smalley and passed unanimously (5-0).

Councilmembers presented their monthly reports.

Councilmember Whittle requested that the Council enter into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Smalley and passed unanimously.

Council entered into Executive Session at 7:21 pm.

Council re-entered the regular meeting at 7:45 pm.

There being no further business, Councilmember Whittle moved to adjourn. Councilmember Johnson seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Dianne Landers
City Clerk