

CITY OF THOMSON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 14, 2024

6:00PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

Benji Cranford, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Keryl Corley, Councilmember
Elaine Johnson, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Scott Whittle, Councilmember
John Waller, City Administrator

Lucretia Ferguson, City Clerk

Not Present:

Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney

Also Present:

Chief Dan Carrier, TPD
Karen Fioretti, McDuffie Progress
19 Interested Citizens

At 6:00pm, Mayor Cranford called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order and Councilmember Smalley gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

CITIZEN INPUT:

County resident Jarvis McNair asked why the CDBG 2024 Public meeting scheduled for March 15th was cancelled and was told that the City was not applying for the 2024 grant, but would apply again in 2025. City resident Joseph Greer spoke on the problem with roaming dogs, both strays and neighborhood animals. He questioned if there is an ordinance that covers leashed animals. County resident Bea Moss questioned how the public can be contacted in more ways than the current posted notices, radio coverage, newspaper coverage and social media.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The motion was made by Councilmember Corley and seconded by Councilmember Smalley to approve the agenda as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Council Meeting, February 8, 2024. A motion was made by Councilmember Corley and seconded by Councilmember Whittle to approve the minutes as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

BUSINESS:

- a. NAACP Request to Use Government Center on June 15, 2024: The local chapter has asked, for the second year, to use the exterior of the Government Center for the 2024 Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 15th. The County Commission approved the Juneteenth request in their last meeting. A motion was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Corley to approve the request. A vote of 5-0 was taken in favor.

- b. Ordinance 585 - Mayor Pro-Tem Charter Change – Second Reading: Upon City Administrator Waller’s explanation that this ordinance would change Section 2.07 of the City Charter to the Mayor Pro-Tem position being elected by the Council every even numbered year, Councilmember Whittle made a motion to table the ordinance. Councilmember Belton made a motion to approve the ordinance. Councilmember Corley seconded the motion to table the ordinance. A vote taken to table the ordinance change failed to pass, 2-3. A second to the motion to approve the ordinance was made by Councilmember Smalley. Mayor Cranford called for a vote and the motion passed 3-2, thereby adopting Ordinance 585 which changes how the Mayor Pro Tem is appointed.
- c. Resolution 01-2024: GEFA Loan CW2020015 Modification: The City has two separate GEFA loans for upgrades at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. This resolution changes the repayment dates to make them the same for both loans. A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Belton to approve the resolution. A vote taken, passed the motion 5-0.
- d. CSRA Probation Services Contract Update: The current probation provider for Thomson Municipal Court has submitted a contract extension with very little change. The contract is for one year ending March 31, 2025 with an automatic renewal for no more than three years. A motion made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Belton to approve the extension passed with a 5-0 vote.
- e. DBT Aviation Contract: DBT Aviation maintains, among other things, the AWOS weather system at the airport. Their contract is up for a two-year renewal with a \$500 change in cost. A motion to approve the contract renewal made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Corley passed with a 5-0 vote.
- f. Resolution 02-2024: Gas Authority Voting Delegate and Alternate: Long time delegate and Natural Gas Director Rodney Dunaway is leaving the City’s employ and a new delegate must be appointed. The motion was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Corley that Gas Authority Board member Kenneth Usry be appointed as voting delegate and Interim Natural Gas Director Trelles Robinson be appointed as our alternate. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Council Report: Councilmember Johnson spoke on nuisance and loose dogs on MLK St. Discussion was on the general stray animal problem in the City. The Animal Shelter has opened again and is fully staffed, but completely at capacity. The Charter will be reviewed and CA Waller will clarify with the County Shelter what their procedures are. Councilmember Smalley spoke on the council procedures of surrounding communities and commended Chief Carrier for his handling of responsibilities and recruitment of officers.

Councilmember Belton joined in with praise. Councilmember Whittle spoke of the City workers who have been out and hard at work during our spate of good weather.

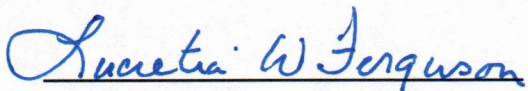
City Administrator Report: CA Waller spoke on the Council retreat to be held on June 4th and 5th at the Thomson Campus of Augusta Tech. The American Rescue Plan Act funds that the City received in 2022 have their reporting of spending due April 30th, must be obligated by December, 2024, and must be spent by the end of 2026. The City's financial audit is due by June 30th, and we are in good shape to complete all of these requirements. He reminded the Council that Trash Amnesty Day is on March 23rd from 8am-noon and a farewell lunch for Rodney Dunaway will be March 15th in the Depot Annex.

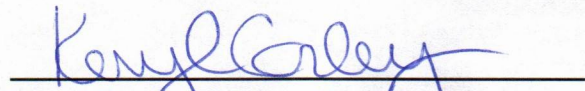
Mayor Report: Mayor Cranford thanked all in attendance for coming and said he would be checking on how the loose dog situation can be addressed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

Having no other business before the Council, a motion to adjourn was tendered by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Smalley. A vote of 5-0 ended the meeting at 6:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk


Keryl Corley, Mayor Pro-Tem

