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**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

 **MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

 **FEBRUARY 18, 2025 @ 6:00 PM**

 **CITY HALL-204 W. CHURCH ST.**

Attended: Mayor Lundy, Council Members Fred Hartesveldt, Juanita Bryant, Carla S. Gowen, Sandra B. Marshall, Laronda F. Eason, Henry Howard, Jr.

City Administrator Mr. Gary Lee, Representative of City Attorney’s Office Ms. Susan Langford,

Recorder: Diane Brown, City Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. INVOCATION-Mayor Lundy
3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
* Meeting Decorum-Chief Flores
1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Motion to amend the agenda to add proclamation- Dr. Preston F. Martin’s Day.

Motion- Council Hartesveldt

Second- Council Eason

All in favor motion carried.

Motion to amend the agenda to add proclamation- Fort Valley Kay Center Students’ Achievements

Motion-Council Marshall

Second- Council Gowen

All in favor motion carried.

Motion to adopt the amended agenda.

Motion- Council Hartesveldt

Second- Council Eason

All in favor motion carried.

1. MINUTES REVIEW**-**January 2025
2. Work Session Meeting
3. City Council Meeting
4. ANNOUNCEMENTS-Mayor and Council

Peach Festival kick off in Fort Valley June 6-7, and Byron June 14th.

Peaches to Beaches yard sales March 14-15.

1. MIDDLE GA REGIONAL COMMISSION-Update on the City’s Webpage

MGRC has a contract with the city to provide website services. The website will be updated with the most current information, provide pdf forms for pictures, events calendar, business license, online payments links can be placed on the webpage.

1. PERSON WISHING TO ADDRESS-Mayor and Council
* Ms. Hope Hicks, Ms. Elvina Burke
* Ms. Ruby Drew-A Brighter Choice Daycare

Seeking donation for Summer Camp starts in May, focusing on safety and reading. Ages 5-yoa cost $90 per child certified instructors, provide breakfast, lunch and snack transportation available if needed.

* Ms. Tisa Horton –FVDDA update regarding CRC Archway Partnership

Façade reimbursement grant funding from the city will help setting appeal, historic preservation, revitalization downtown, strengthen the economy and cultural identity, cohesive branding, healthy ecosystem and pedestrian connectivity.

The report from UGA comes at the end of the month with a follow-up meeting.

The Peach Festival was nominated by USA Today as 10 best Specialty Food Festival.

Vote online twice a day, follow the link on the peach festival website.

* Ms. Marsha Gosier-2025 Municipal Election Calendar, (Redistricting, 1998 T-SPLOST, 2024 Resolution to annex East Gano, Willow Lake Rd, State U to Kemp St.); (Students only housing/Duplex, Planning & Zoning Committee-611 S. Camellia Blvd. right of access), (City Charter & Operational & Hiring Process)

Fill out four forms to cover her speaker’s topics. She and Mr. Pride are both here for rezoning of property.

2025 MU Election’s Calendar, elections are held in odd years, Mayor and Council set the election fee by Feb. 1st via Public Meeting or Special Meeting.

FOIA are not honored, replying received is not a enough must give a timeline, after 72 hours a person can come and view documents. The Leader Tribune is the legal organ, not Facebook. There should have been a notice of election not a notice of qualifying.

Mayor Lundy stated Ms. Gosier is out of order for the 3rd final time.

Mayor Lundy advised Ms. Gosier’s is out of time.

Council Bryant yielded her time to Ms. Gosier to continue speaking.

Remember the Dunn case.

Since 1998 annexation has not been completed. (Willow Lake and Gano areas)

Ms. Gosier was removed from the meeting by the FV Police Officers at 6:27 p.m.

* Mr. Victor Hedgpeth -Update City Council on progress of the Historic Preservation Commission Board.

The board’s role is to preserve and protect historic properties in the district.

The current meeting focuses on administrative processes and procedures.

In the process of finalizing how property owners can obtain the certificate of appropriateness to conduct necessary improvements to properties.

Goals- identify the current properties in the city that are on file at the National Register of Historic Preservation, to educate business and property owners about what it means to live and operate a business in the district and to preserve structures and landscapes that represent our historical cultural districts.

The biggest challenge is obtaining a map of the historic district from the tax office.

Meeting 2nd Mondays at 6:00 pm at the Troutman House.

* Mrs. Elle McGhee -Housing & Development

A real estate agent and investor and developer, here with other developers, they are key to the revitalization of the city’s housing market, increasing property values. Like to collaborate with the city’s vision and goals how to strategically bring affordable housing to include housing for the aging community. Like to put a plan together for those who struggle when qualifying for home loans.

* Council Sandra Marshall-Citizens, taxpayers’ issues and concerns, hiring

process city employees, and cashless city

What is the hiring process in the city of Fort Valley? Others are not given opportunities to get jobs. The jobs are not advertised or posted even if hired internally. Were the background check and drug test done? Mr. Gary Lee stated the question is for HR, the Mayor reiterated that Council Marshall get with HR for questions and answers.

Council Marshall wants the answers now for the public who are here at the meeting. Mayor Lundy advised Council Marshall that her time had expired.

* Council Juanita Bryant-Personal & Personnel

Council Bryant addresses chambers with a reading from document.

Spoke about her privilege to serve as council member, the years and experience while serving as an elected official under three previous administrations. Following the protocol requested to be on the previous work session agenda and was not, questions were raised, needed to be respected. I can’t be heard at the meeting where decisions are made. The process to get on the agenda should not be for elected officials assuring the people’s voices are heard. On January 14th during the executive session and prior to being handcuffed a contract was presented to consider the appointment of Mr. Gary lee as permanent City Administrator and Economic Development. Dir. Salary at $150,000

1. CKH GROUP

Financial Advisor**-**Mr. Kyle Hyel

Here to reviews the processes with in the finance department looking at how to streamline accounts payable from unnecessary delays, late penalties, and minimize the work.

Council Marshall ask where is the contract, the discussion has not come to the bench and the process of the government is to get 3 bids.

Council Bryant -CKH Group - will charge only $2-3,000 for the service, and that can be approved without a full council. (Mayor – it written in the policy manual).

1. PLANNING AND ZONING

Mr. Ronald Pride requests to rezone 609 South Camellia Blvd.

Change from Industrial to R-2 to build multi-family units.

Item is tabled until next month’s meeting. (March)

1. THE CITY OF FORT VALLEY- PROPOSAL FOR SERVICES

To The Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG)

Mayor Lundy stated there has been a lot of talk about having two charters that come with different interpretations, also municides therefore, we reached out to CVIOG to assist the current council to formulate a charter that all can agree on.

Ms. Susan Langford- The representative from the Interim City Attorney’s Office Mr. Jim Elliott. The proposal is in the normal scope of business of what CVIOG does, it’s not a contract no decision has been made; it would come back to the council for approval. I would make a couple of amendments so you would have additional input and receive comments from the city attorney about edits and changes. Willing to offer some adjustment and send it back to Council and Mayor for consideration.

Council Bryant knowns nothing about asking CVIOG about a Charter Proposal or decision to use CVIOG. The process should have come before the Mayor and Council.

Council Marshall- past charter review was done with City Officials and Rep. Stinson and spent $25, 819.00 did the same thing line by line.

Mayor Lundy stated he sent out emails, to Council regarding the proposal.

In 2022 the former council and mayor met went to the capital formulated what we wanted the charter to say, that charter did not go through, the new council came in some went to Atlanta to change the charter again. It went through the house of the Representative and Senate and was pulled by the Governor.

Now it’s a problem to leave the charter as is, to change it and to source it out for revision.

Mayor Lundy advised the chambers he called CVOIG, he and Mr. Lee met with CVOIG representatives regarding the Charter Proposal.

The current charter speaks three different languages regarding the strong and weak, Mayor is CEO and the same language for Mayor and the City Administrator.

Council Marshall stated we should have 3 proposals, first update the city’s manual and policies, those follow the charter. Where is the hiring process it has not been presented to me. Council Gowen stated the email was sent if this is your first time hearing it, if you are not getting your emails or not reading, that’s your problem.

Council Bryant-The City has been operating on the same charter for years.

Mayor added the Charter Proposal to Thursday’s Council Meeting Agenda.

1. ORDINANCE-Mobile Venders Ordinance 1st Read- Reading by CEO-Rhonda Walker

Ask Mayor and Council to set the fee for Mobile vendors.

This ordinance speaks to vendors going anywhere in the city. The health department will still do their inspections. The ordinance sets perimeter, and hours of operation 7-10 pm

Council Marshall-Shifting mobile vendors to utilize Festival Park. It has all the needed hook-ups, help to maintain crowds a controlled environment, and relieve congestion downtown.

Council Bryant asked if we waive the city fee for Peaches to Beaches and Peach Festival, we want the people to come.

Once the permit fee is set by the Mayor and Council it will be paid to the city.

Council Eason- for clarity asks if the ordinance covers any vendor, on any day to operate a mobile food truck in the city, Ms. Walker confirmed yes, the ordinance and permit fee covers the vendor’s operation in the city now that we will have an ordinance to cover liabilities.

Ms. Tisa Horton vendors will pay three fees, an organization fee, health inspection fee, and city permit.

Will there be a waiver for the Peach Festival, and the Downtown Development Authority.

The city special event fee is $75. Is this a time fee for the festival or per food truck vendor? This fee will be paid to the city.

The mayor wants the city to have an ordinance to govern mobile vendors and protect the city from liability. (the ordinance will be added to the agenda).

1. GEORGIA MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT SYSTEM

ORDINANCE AND ADOPTION AGREEMENT-Ms. Susan Langford

This is the retirement program for city employees, every 6 years reviews the IRS reviews for updates with current laws, to execute an adoption agreement a plan letter is issued to make sure the city is compliant. The agreement is due at the end of February, the city relies on GMA to manage the plan. There are no changes to the basic benefit plan, it is simply a review.

Adoption agreement to adopt the updated plan GMA is managing the agreement to make sure it is up to date with the IRS codes if the city does not agree with the agreement adoption, then you will need to hire an accountant and Municipal lawyers and go thru the process of negotiating an agreement.

1. RESOLUTION
* To adopt the naming of Walden Street Park to the

“HATTIE MURRAY & ELIJAH DAVIS VINEVILLE COMMUNITY PARK**”**

There was no opposition to this item it will be added to the City Council Meeting agenda.

Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion- Council

Second- Council

All in favor motion carried

 EXECUTIVE SESSION

 ADJOURNMENT-8:00 P. M.