

Council Minutes  
Special Called Meeting  
June 29, 2020

Mayor Womack called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. All members were present, Councilman Garrison attended the meeting virtually. The press was notified. The meeting was closed the public and was streamed via YouTube due to COVID-19. Lisa Chapman, City Clerk served as the recording secretary.

Councilwoman Breazeale gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Womack called the Public Hearing for the FY20/21 City of Easley Budget to order. Mr. Steese gave a brief overview of the budget. This budget takes into consideration the unknown due to COVID-19 and how it will impact revenue. We are expecting a decrease in hospitality and accommodations tax. There is a \$2 increase in stormwater fees that will help with a lot of the projects that are failing around the city. No public comments were received. Mayor Womack closed the public hearing.

New Business first reading of ordinances: ORDINANCE NO. 2020-20 providing an extension of emergency procedures for public meetings of the City of Easley during the continuance of the coronavirus epidemic. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese explained that our first ordinance expired and if needed we could extend for another six months. If any member of council has to participate virtually this ordinance is required. There was no further discussion. Councilman Moore called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison verbally voting yes.

Old Business second reading of ordinances: Ordinance No. 2020- 15 Authorizing the lease of 130 Esther Drive for one year. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. There have been no changes since first reading.

Councilman Moore asked if the portion we needed for the fire station had been cut out.

Mayor Womack stated that it had been, a new survey done and recorded at the courthouse. There was no further discussion. Councilman Moore called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally yes.

Ordinance No. 2020-16: Providing for the issuance and sale of a not exceeding eight hundred thousand dollars (\$800,000) City of Easley, South Carolina Stormwater System Revenue Bond, Series 2020; and other matters relating thereto. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave an update. There are about 18 projects that need to be completed. We applied for C-funds to help with South 2<sup>nd</sup> St and Dogwood Lane but were only approved for \$295,000. In trying to move forward we met with the Pickens County School District to see if there are any funds or assistance that they can help with. BB&T came in at the lowest interest rate at 1.85% for a 10-year wrap around bond. The closing will be July 6<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Moore asked if any of our debt would be paid off soon that could go to this. Mr. Steese stated not at this time.

Councilman Garrison commented that we asked for \$700,000 in C-Fund how are we going to make up the difference for all of these projects? Mr. Steese stated he is currently working on an RFP to hire an engineer to help design these projects. Some projects may have to be changed to reduce cost. We can use some of the road funds money to help with paving and repair.

Councilman Dykes asked if we can reapply for C-funds. Mr. Steese stated we would have to wait until they get more funds in the next fiscal year. The best solution is to go out to bid and see how far the funds will go.

Councilwoman Webb made a motion to amended the ordinance to remove the wording of a trustee for this bond, with a second from Councilman Moore. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the amendment was approved 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally yes.

There was no further discussion on the ordinance and Councilman Garrison called for the question. The motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally yes.

Ordinance No. 2020-17: Authorize the conveyance of property located on Brookview Circle by quitclaim deed to STP Development, LLC. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. There were no changes from first reading. There was no discussion. Councilwoman Webb called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally yes.

Ordinance No. 2020-18: To provide for the adoption of a City Operating Budget, its execution and effect, for the fiscal period July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb.

Councilman Robinson made a motion to amend the budget ordinance to include a training officer for the police department, with a second from Councilman Moore.

Councilwoman Webb stated this is something that we really need with the sensitive times we are living in.

Councilman Dykes agreed with her, he stated he appreciates the Chief bringing this before Council and hopes he can find the right person for the job.

Councilwoman Breazeale stated as Chairman of the Police Committee she commended the Chief for bringing this before Council. Mr. Steese has information on how this can be afforded.

Mr. Steese explained that \$50,000 can be moved from the \$125,000 that was budgeted for equipment for the fire department to help fund the salary of the training officer. The Police Department has funds that they can use that will offset the cost.

Chief Tollison commented that he is confident that he can absorb the cost of the officer in his budget.

Councilman Moored called for the question for the amendment and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally yes.

As chairman of the fire committee, Councilman Moore made a motion to amended the budget ordinance to add a training officer for the Fire Department. The committee met and agreed that this is needed. With all of the growth that Easley is experiencing we need to have trained personnel that can perform to the best of their ability.

Councilwoman Webb commented having a qualified Fire Department will enhance our community as crisis happen. If Mr. Steese says we can afford it, she will agree with it.

Mr. Steese stated that we are not finding any new money, we are using fund balance.

Councilman Robinson said it is a worthy request but he feels the demand is more for law enforcement than on the fire department.

Councilwoman Webb called for the question and the amendment pass 6-1 with Councilman Garrison verbally voting yes, Councilman Robinson voted no.

Councilman Moore made a motion to amend the budget to \$15,287,452, with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison verbally voting yes.

Councilwoman Webb made a motion to approve the FY 20/21 City Operating Budget as amended with a second from Councilman Moore. Councilwoman Breazeale called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison verbally voting yes.

Ordinance No. 2020-19: To amend §1.6 (accessory uses) in the City of Easley's Zoning Ordinance to provide for administrative review and approval of additions, fences, pools, and other structures. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Moore. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. There were a couple of changes from first reading as requested by Council.

Councilman Robinson commented that Councilwoman Webb had some concerns about this ordinance last month, have those issues been addressed.

Councilwoman Webb stated that they had been. Item 7 has been changed to anything that needed grading.

Councilman Robinson was concerned about the issue of pet houses/kennels. Mr. Holcombe stated they would have to approved to make sure they are not on a drainage easement.

Councilman Robinson also commented that it would be challenging to educate the public about a dog house.

Mr. Steese said that we can use HOA's and Next-Door App and other social media outlets.

There was no further discussion. Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally yes.

Mayor Womack wished everyone a happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Fireworks will be at 9:30 on the 4<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged everyone to remember social distancing. He then opened the floor for anything that council would like to discuss.

Chase Campbell informed everyone that we have a new text line. You can text the word Easley to 474747. This week you will get information on July 4<sup>th</sup>. It is another way to get information out to the public.

Councilman Garrison wished everyone a happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He has received emails about wearing masks some for it some against it. He knows other cities are mandating them. He is torn on this issue but realizes the importance for public health.

Councilman Dykes stated that he had just gotten back from a trip and in the communities, he visited he rarely saw anyone without a mask. He went into a grocery store and they took his temperature and gave him gloves. We need to be proactive and have something to discuss at the next meeting.

Councilwoman Webb stated she respects the need for a mask but how is this going to impact our law enforcement? Will there be fines for not wearing a mask? Some people with breathing issues can't wear a mask.

Councilwoman Breazeale commented that she believes masks work to stop the spread of the virus, but doesn't want a burden on the police department.

Councilman Moore asked how would you fine people? He has had more calls of people that don't want a mandatory policy than want it.

Mayor Womack advised that he would like a committee to look at this and bring something to council at the next meeting. He appointed Councilwoman Webb as chairman, he suggested Chief Tollison, Chief Littleton, Stephen Steese, Chris Bowers with Pickens County Council, and a business person of her choosing. Councilman Dykes said he would volunteer for the committee also.

Councilman Robinson asked about downtown parking and the concerns of the business owners. It is an issue and he will look forward to more information. He wanted to know if we have any law about parking limits downtown.

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Mr. Steese explained that he is working with public works about doing some labeling on the roads and repainting the parking spots.

Chief Tollison stated there is a standing ordinance of two-hour parking but the signs were taken down about a year and half ago.

There was no further discussion.

Councilman Moore made the motion to adjourn at 6:40 p.m.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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City Clerk