

Council Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2020

Mayor Womack welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All members were present. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing this meeting was closed to the public in order to control the size of the gathering. The meeting could be viewed by live stream at www.Youtube.com. The press was notified by email on November 5, 2020. Lisa Chapman, City Clerk served as the recording secretary.

Councilwoman Breazeale gave the invocation followed by the pledge. The minutes from the October meeting were approved as written.

Ward 1: Happy Thanksgiving early. In anticipation of Veterans Day, thank you to all that serve our country.

Ward 2: It is sad to see the COVID numbers going up. Glad that our city employees have all gotten over the virus.

Ward 3: Working on getting the committee together to discuss the impact fees. Have spoken to the city administrator for Mt. Pleasant and he gave some good information about how it is working in their area. There is a meeting scheduled with Chris Bradley and Michael Dey with Home Builders and Realtors Associations to go over their data. It is an informational meeting but it is open to the public.

Ward 4: Thank you to all of. Veterans. Please be careful with the virus. Keep Barry Bridges in your prayers.

Ward 5: Stay safe with your families as you get together for Thanksgiving. Wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving

Ward 6: Sad to hear about Gary Harris passing away. He was the city's auditor for a long time.

Report from City Administrator: We will have the Festival of Lights in partnership with the hospital starting on Nov. 27th. The tree lighting will be at 6:00 p.m. on the 27th on the City green. The carriage rides will be on the 27th and 28th, 5:00-9:00 p.m. The cost is \$15.00 per person and it is a funding raising event for the hospital foundation. Santa will be at the gazebo on Saturday nights (5th, 12th, 19th) from 6:00-8:00. Looking forward to kicking off our holiday season.

New Employees: Chief Littleton introduced a new firefighters Noah Benton, he is the second new hire that came through our Junior Firefighter program, and is also in the Army Reserves as a firefighter.

Police: Chief Byers introduced three new employees with the police department. Chianne Bailey dispatcher, Gus Samuel, police officer and prior military, Alex Herden, police officer, he was with the Sherriff's office explorer program.

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Presentation: Ken Meadows with Green and Finney gave a report on the FY19/20 audit. The city received an unmodified opinion meaning no modifications are needed. The city is responsible for maintaining internal controls, and regular risk assessment as well as financial statements.

Auditors are responsible for reasonable assurance that financial statements are materially correct.

General fund - Expenditures exceeded revenue by \$1.9 million it was from debt issuances in the last fiscal year and the money being spent in this fiscal year. The City is close to breakeven from a normal operating stand point. Fund balance was \$7.4 million.

We have a healthy fund balance. It is good to have due to uncertain times. Revenue came in higher than budgeted about 4% over budget. Over budget by \$2.6 million in expenditures. This is from the new Operations/Maintenance/Fire station cost, new brush truck, and general government.

Councilman Dykes stated that the audit looked good and appears city is in good financial shape.

Councilman Robinson asked if good is the highest condition you get?

Mr. Meadows commented from 4 years ago the City has done really well and improved.

There were no citizens comments.

Unfinished businesses. Second reading of ordinances.

Ordinance no. 2020-26 an amended ordinance to approve the sale of 122 Folger Avenue to Silo Holdings, LLC, a limited liability corporation in South Carolina, and establish a security interest for remaining amount owed per lease agreement. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale.

City Attorney Brian James gave an explanation. We recently learned that if we take a subordinate mortgage it will hinder Silo Holdings from getting their loan from the SBA. First Citizens Bank suggested we take a security interest in a controlled account. It would be better than a 4th mortgage on the property.

Mr. Steese commented that based on their investment they have made and will be making; we feel confident they will meet their obligations. There was no further discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the ordinance passed 7-0.

New Business: First reading of ordinances.

Ordinance No. 2020-27 A sixth supplemental ordinance providing for the issuance and sale of a not exceeding \$9,300,000 City of Easley, South Carolina Hospitality Tax revenue

Refunding Bond, Series 2020; and other matters relating thereto. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave a brief

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explanation. After talking with our bond council, a lower interest rate was found at 2.06%. The refinance cost is about \$50,000. We will be refinancing with same lender, BB&T. It is a great opportunity to lower payment and save money over the life of the bond.

Councilman Dykes asked when the closing would be.
Mr. Steese said after the second reading so probably around December 15th

Councilwoman Webb stated that she is glad we are looking to save money. There was no further discussion. Councilman Moore called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Ordinance no. 2020-28 to amend the 4.11(nonconforming and non-complying sign provisions) of the City of Easley Zoning Ordinance. Councilman Garrison made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Dykes. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. Most of the signs have come into compliance but there are several that remain. The new ordinance would provide a one-time six-month extension that extends the deadline for compliance from 1/1/2021 to 7/1/2021. Due to COVID there have been some financial impacts on businesses and businesses being closed during that time.

Mr. Holcombe gave out a list of those not in compliance. We are down to about 58 signs. We are currently working with several that are in review or permitting. If the ordinance passes then a letter will go out to the list of businesses that have not complied.

Councilman Garrison commented that after discussing this in the work session this is an appropriate act to take.

Councilwoman Webb stated that based on the fact that sign companies were not available it is reasonable that an extension be offered. However, we appreciate the businesses that complied.

Councilman Dykes commented that driving down 123 you can see a difference. Looks more orderly. The ones not in compliance stand out. We should not extend passed the 6 months.

There was no further discussion. Councilman Garrison called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

New Resolutions:

Resolution No. 2020-23 to express the intention of the City Council of the City of Easley, South Carolina, to cause the City of Easley, South Carolina to be reimbursed for certain costs for certain public improvements with the proceeds of tax-exempt obligations.
Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb.

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Mr. Steese gave a brief overview. We are not ready to do the financing for the new trash truck or dump truck. We do need to get the forklift. This will allow us to get the forklift then finance all three in the spring and reimburse ourselves.

There was no discussion. Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion passed 7-0.

Councilman Moore made the motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk