

Council Minutes

May 11, 2020

Mayor Womack called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Councilman Moore made a motion to go into executive session with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. The motion passed 7-0.

At 6:55 Councilman Moore made a motion to come out of executive session with a second from Councilwoman Webb. The motion passed 7-0.

Mayor Womack called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 and social distancing the meeting was closed to the public. The meeting was live streamed on YouTube. Any public comments were sent in to the city clerk before 6:00 p.m. All members were present. Councilman Garrison attended the meeting virtually. The press was notified.

Prior to the regular meeting council met in executive session and no action was taken.

Councilman Moore gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes from the April meeting were approved as written.

Council Reports:

Ward 1: No report

Ward 2: Congratulated City Clerk, Lisa Chapman on graduating from MCTI and working towards her certification for municipal clerks.

Ward 3: No report

Ward 4: The Nalley Brown Nature Park is a jewel. It is shaded and a good walking trail.

Ward 5: No report

Ward 6: Councilman Robinson expressed his concerns about council meetings being in the City Hall Council Chambers. We are in close quarters and when the meetings are open to the public will we be able to allow for social distancing. He would like for Mayor Womack to consider moving the meetings back to the courtroom at the LEC.

Mayor Womack called on City Administrator, Stephen Steese for his report.

We are monitoring revenue sources that will be affected immediately by the coronavirus pandemic. The recreation department refunded over \$30,000 in spring sports registration fees. Local option sales tax is up \$64,103.42, Hospitality tax is down \$73,370.01, Accommodations tax is down \$2505.68, Business licenses are up \$140,157.99. Building permits are currently up.

We are reopening in phases per recommendations by the Governor and Accelerate SC. We have opened our offices to walk in traffic with limited exposure. The police are increasing their stops but using precautions.

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Phase II – The complex is now open for walking and frisbee golf. The tennis courts and dog park have reopened. The staff is having more in person meetings with social distancing. Yard sale permits are now being issued with new guidelines.

Phase III- Time to be determined. Reopening will include Pope Field and baseball fields with limited use by the public. The Bagwell gym will reopen for walkers only. We will allow rental use of the Carr room for smaller groups like Rotary. The court can begin proceedings with limited cases and exposure guidelines on June 1, 2020. They may require mask be worn.

Mr. Steese turned the meeting over to Public Works Director, Eddie Fortner for an update on recycling and grass pick up.

There have been discussions about whether we will continue to pick up grass clippings. The problem is grass builds up and hardens which causes damage to impeller and housing on the leaf truck. Sometimes construction debris like bricks, cinder blocks, boards, etc. is often found buried under the grass piles, which further damages the impeller and associated parts. It takes much more vacuum energy to move grass than leaves. The City is replacing the bearings, impeller, and all associated parts approximately every six months, with a cost of approximately \$4,000 to rebuild the vacuum system. Due to the continued use of the truck year-round the City spends around \$8000 per year to keep the vacuum system running.

The Public Works department tested a new vacuum truck but the fine grass stopped up the engine radiator. The grass clippings also spread out on the road. The truck would have to be cleaned several times a day. Also, when grass has fertilizers and pesticides on it; it eats away at the metal structures on the truck. If grass is wet it will turn to paste and clog the chutes, cylinders, and other moving pieces. The price of the new truck is \$209,000 with no guarantee it will pick up grass.

Councilwoman Webb asked about having an air compressor on the truck and the cost. Mr. Fortner said he could get a price on the equipment added to the truck.

Councilman Moore asked if there was a truck that would pick up both leaves and grass. Mr. Steese stated that there is not one that would do both efficiently.

Councilman Robinson asked what we had we done in the past and what has changed.

Mr. Fortner stated that a lot of the new subdivisions use Bermuda grass and we have more volume.

Councilman Dykes asked what other cities were doing?

Mr. Fortner stated that Clemson is allowing people to bag their leaves and grass clippings. Greenville is looking at the same truck we are.

Councilman Garrison asked if the bagged debris would go in the landfill.

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Mayor Womack stated that it would go in the C&D part with construction debris.

Councilman Dykes stated that this is a tough decision to bring to council to say yes or no. Maybe residents could mulch the clippings back in the yard. The new truck already looks terrible.

Councilman Moore asked if it is cleaned with air or water pressure. Mr. Fortner stated it is cleaned with air.

Councilman Garrison stated there are no easy decisions but a decision is going to have to be made soon.

Councilman Dykes asked if we could get input from citizens.

Mr. Steese stated the council could survey their ward to get opinions.

Councilman Robinson commented that we will get a lot of complaints if we stop.

The other issue with public works is recycling. Currently, our recycling is being rejected due to contamination. We do not have the capability to prevent contamination. There are fees for processing and then it gets rejected. At this current time nothing is being recycled it is all going in the trash. Paper is in the negative right now. The market has changed and there is no market for recycling. If we continue to co-mingle, they will charge us \$65.00 per ton to process. We average about 15 tons a week, that does not include man power and vehicle cost.

Councilman Robinson asked who charges the fee. Mr. Fortner stated the end person that accepts the recycling. They charge the county and they turn around and charge us.

Councilman Dykes asked what is currently being recycled. Mr. Fortner stated #1 and #2 plastic, and aluminum and metal cans, if nothing else is in the pile to contaminate.

Councilman Garrison asked what happens if we continue to pick up. Mr. Fortner stated we would have to have a big educational program for the citizens because what is being put in the recycle containers is not recyclable.

Councilman Garrison asked if we sort or does the county sort. Justin Durrell stated that if they accept the bale from us, they will sort. Currently they are not accepting anything from the City of Easley.

The recommendation from the Public Works department is to have a recycle center behind City Hall. It would have an employee working to help the citizens sort their recyclables. It would eliminate contaminates. It would allow us to educate the public on what can be recycled and what needs to go in the trash.

Mr. Steese stated that since people have been home and stopping collection our trash has more than doubled.

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Mayor Womack commented that the staff thinks a station would be good. The people who want to recycle will come to the drop off.

Mr. Steese stated this would be a joint venture with Pickens County.

Councilman Garrison commented that he doesn't want us to do away with recycling completely. Whatever we do the public needs to be educated.

Mr. Steese stated that this doesn't have to be a permanent solution. If the market comes back maybe we can go back to curbside.

Councilwoman Breazeale commented that with the station we can make sure it goes in the right place.

Mr. Steese commented that with the guidance from Council we would like to move forward with the recycling station to open mid-June.

Councilwoman Webb stated that she agreed with the staff recommendations and it is important that we make the public aware that the market is gone.

Councilman Dykes stated he is in agreement with staff recommendations and communication is the key.

Mr. Fortner commented that since the storm on April 13th they have taken over 625 tons of debris to the landfill. That is about 3 times our normal collection amounts. The brush trucks are currently four weeks behind schedule. Employees are working 7-5 and 6 to 8 hours on Saturday. They took 39 tons which equaled 11 loads from Burdine Springs and behind the hospital this past Saturday.

Citizens wishing to address council: Currently this is being done by email.

From: Barbara Barber

I am writing with concern of the "dump site" on Crestview Rd at site of former Smithfield's Country Club Swimming Pool. This site has become a dumping site & eyesore to the Community. There is also standing water which is a health hazard.

Would appreciate City looking in to this issue for safety of the area.

Mayor Womack commented that Tommy Holcombe, Building Official was aware of this and will be looking into it.

From: Jason Kelley

I believe the council is doing a great job with COVID-19. What I would like to have addressed is the bridge on Dogwood Lane and dam on Lake View Drive.

What was once a beautiful lake is now becoming a dangerous bridge to drive across with sink holes on Dogwood lane, a collapsing creek bank due to the valve being open on the lake. All the fish were killed when the lake was originally drained almost a year ago. Now the drain is clogged the lake is not drying out and grass is taking over. This was a beautiful lake that people used on their daily walk or jog daily.

Mayor Womack asked Stormwater Manager, Eric Greenwood to address this issue. He stated that they have some preliminary numbers to repair this for a 100-year flood event and the cost is

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approximately \$384,000. The northern end is our responsibility and the southern end belongs to private owners. This is the third time this has been worked on. We are trying to get some funding to help out with the project. The lake is owned by four private entities. Public Works has been working with them giving them some suggestions to help the situation.

Mayor Womack stated that the owners would like to meet with us to discuss the situation and options.

Councilwoman Webb asked about the pipes being small. Eric stated that some are different sizes and the project would correct that issue.

Councilman Garrison asked if it was feasible to close that section of road just to prevent it from collapsing. Eric said that is his suggestion. Every rain event it moves a little bit.

Mayor Womack asked if we can leave this up to staff to make the call.

Mr. Steese stated that we have discussed this before and we are more than glad to close it until we can get funding and see what the repair will look like.

Councilman Moore stated that it would reduce our liability.

There was no old business for second reading.

New ordinances for first reading: Ordinance No. 2020-11 - to amend §132.05 (disturbing noises) in the City of Easley's Code of Ordinances to address construction noise hours. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese turned over to Building Official Tommy Holcombe to give a brief explanation. This has been brought to you before and the construction companies have asked for more hours to work. We are asking to change construction hours to 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and Noon to 8 p.m. on Sunday. There are also some exceptions for emergencies. This allows them two more hours to work. This is the same model that Clemson uses.

Councilman Moore commented what if it is in an area where a church is having service.

Councilman Dykes agreed with the ordinance. He stated that with all that is going on if the contractors are willing to get out there and work, I am in favor of it.

Mr. Holcombe stated that if any citizens watching on You Tube have a comment or question, they are welcome to call his office.

Councilman Robinson stated that he would not want to encourage work on Sunday but he would not vote against it.

Councilman Moore called for the question and the motion passed 6-1 with Councilwoman Breazeale voting no. Councilman Garrison voted verbally with yes.

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Ordinance No. 2020-12 - an ordinance of the City of Easley, South Carolina, approving the execution and delivery of a development agreement. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. This agreement is with KP Components. We became a part of the fee in lieu of tax agreement with Pickens County when the property was annexed into the city limits. The City's agreement provides a grant on May 1st of each year for 50% of permit fees paid to the City of Easley. This is only on work done prior to the CO and initial business license at the new location. It also is for 50% of the business license fees paid to the city for five years which will begin on their first renewal. Work has begun on the project and is moving forward.

Councilman Dykes asked about construction completion. Mr. Steese stated hopefully by the end of the year and new hiring thereafter. Mr. Holcombe stated they are moving along quickly.

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

Ordinance No. 2020-13 - to approve a lease agreement between the City of Easley, a political subdivision, and Spalding Properties, LLC, a limited liability corporation, for tax map 5019-15-63-9342 located at 119 Folger Avenue. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave an explanation. This development agreement is with the silo lessee (Silo Holdings, LLC) outlines that the city would work to provide additional parking in the Silo District. The property is across the street from the silos that will be used for additional parking. We have negotiated the leasing of this property with the following details. The property will be leased for 10 years at \$250.00 per month. It can be renewed or extended with the agreement from both parties. The city will cover the property under our liability insurance. The city plans to put down gravel for this lot that will be used as overflow parking. It will add 20-30 additional parking spaces. It also borders the Doodle Trail Ext that was completed last year. Councilwoman Webb asked what the cost difference was for gravel vs. wrap. Mr. Steese stated he could get a comparison on that cost.

Councilman Robinson asked how the Silo project was coming along. Mr. Steese stated that we had met with the developers and things are moving along. They have turned in some plans to the Planning and Development office for Tommy to approve. You should see some real work within the next few weeks. They are hoping to open by the end of the year. They plan to reveal their plans within the next four weeks. The plan is for 3-5 new businesses in the facility.

There was no further discussion and Councilman Moore called for the question. The motion passed 7-0. Councilman Garrison voted verbally – yes.

Ordinance No. 2020-14 authorizing the sale of real property comprised of tax map #5019-12-75-9904, 5019-12-76-8183, 5019- 12-86-2362, 5019-15-52-2733, and portions of tax map #5019-15-53-1144 and 5019-15-52-2601 to Palmetto State Capital, LLC for \$27,000. Councilman

Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Building Official Tommy Holcombe gave an explanation. This developer has worked with us over the last year and has been a good partner with the City. The staff recommends that this be done to get more affordable housing in the area.

Councilman Moore asked if there was a blind spot there at the intersection of Liberty Dr. and Old Liberty Rd. Mr. Holcombe said he could get DOT to look at it.

Councilwoman Webb asked about the current zoning. Mr. Holcombe said it was GR2 and they are planning to build single family residences.

Mr. Steese said they could probably get 3 or 4 houses on the property. We are just selling the property it may not be developed.

Councilman Dykes commented that we need more affordable housing.

Councilman Robinson had a question about the price and why we were selling below the tax assessors' value.

Mr. Holcombe stated that we bought the property over ten years ago because it had a lot of fill dirt on it. It has been an eye sore ever since. No one has ever approached us to purchase the lots on Davis and Hastings Cir.

Councilman Dykes called for the question and the motion passed 7-0. Councilman Garrison voted verbally – yes.

New resolutions: Resolution No. 2020-07 - certifying a site within the City of Easley, South Carolina as an abandoned building site under title 12, chapter 67, Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mr. Steese gave an explanation. The SC Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act requires local governments to certify that at least 66% of buildings were abandoned and closed for business for five years. This is for the developers of the Silos to get tax credits. There was no discussion and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally – yes.

Resolution No. 2020-08 - amending the City of Easley Personnel Policy Manual related to assigned vehicles. Councilman Dykes made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. The current policy was originally adopted in the 2000's and included in the current policy that was adopted in October 2016. It allows employees with city vehicles to drive their vehicles to and from work with a 10-mile radius of the city limits. Mileage over this will be charges at the federal prevailing rate not to exceed 20 miles. Councilman Moore asked if they could drive their car for any other purposes and do we have any liability if someone is in the car with them.

Mayor Womack stated that our insurance would cover any passengers.

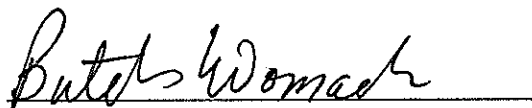
Councilwoman Webb called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally – yes.

Resolution No. 2020-09 - to appoint Phillip A. Snow to a two-year term as Chief Municipal Judge for the City of Easley. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Breazeale. Mayor Womack commented that during the executive session council met with Judge Snow and talked with him.

Councilman Moore commented that he had know Judge Snow for a long time and he would highly recommend him. He then called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally – yes.

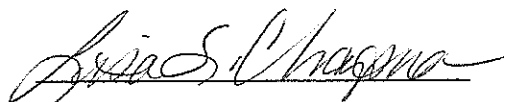
Resolution No. 2020-10- authorizing a lease/purchase agreement, series 2020a in the principal amount of not exceeding \$425,000 relating to the financing of public works equipment to be used for municipal purposes; authorizing the execution and delivery of various documents including the lease agreement; and other matters relating thereto. Councilman Moore made the motion to approve with a second from Councilwoman Webb. Mr. Steese gave a brief explanation. We received seven proposals for this financing and the best rate was 1.704% which would begin in March 2021. It is recommended to award the financing to Carolina Alliance Bank. There was no further discussion. Councilman Moore called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally – yes.

Resolution No. 2020-11 - To designate May 10-16, 2020 as Peace Officers' Memorial Week. Councilwoman Webb made the motion to approve with a second from Councilman Moore. Mayor Womack stated that he would be presenting Captain Murray with a proclamation in the next few days outside in the air because of the COVID 19 and social distancing. There was no further discussion. Councilwoman Breazeale called for the question and the motion passed 7-0 with Councilman Garrison voting verbally – yes.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk