



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2024 – 7:00 PM
CITY HALL**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

David Eady – Mayor
George Holt – Councilmember
Laura McCanless – Councilmember
Mike Ready – Councilmember
Jim Windham – Councilmember
Jeff Wearing – Councilmember (late)
Erik Oliver – Councilmember

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Andrew – City Manager
Stacey Mullen – Deputy City Clerk
Mark Anglin – Police Chief
David Strickland – City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: Art Vinson, Laurie Vinson, John Boudreau (Atkins Engineering)

1. The meeting was called to order by the Honorable David S. Eady, Mayor.
2. Jeff Wearing made a motion to accept the agenda for the February 5, 2024 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0). (Attachment A)
3. Erik Oliver made a motion to amend the meeting minutes from January 8, 2024 to reflect that Laura McCanless made the motion for Item 9 and Jim Windham seconded the motion. Laura McCanless seconded the motion. The motion was accepted unanimously (7/0).

Jim Windham made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda for February 5, 2024. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0). (Attachment B)

4. Mayor's Report

Mayor Eady apprised the City Council of conversations he has been having with various groups and individuals regarding the changing of the name of Dried Indian Creek to Catova Creek. He stated he is waiting for representatives of the Muscogee Nation to review the proclamation before it is brought before the City Council.

5. Citizen Concerns

None.

6. Improving Neighborhood Outcomes in Disproportionately Impacted Communities Grant (Attachment C)

John Boudreau with Atkins Engineering presented information on the three proposed routes for this grant: E. Bonnell Street to Bob Williams Parkway, W. Bonnell Street to Cousins Middle School, and Old Church Trail to Hull Street/Oxford Road. The goal is to try to get all three trails developed with the \$2.2 million funding from the grant. Each of the routes would provide connectivity via alternative methods of transportation to locations outside the City of Oxford to other areas of Newton County.

Jim Windham made a motion to approve the three proposed routes for the grant and submit them to the Georgia Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) as the grant's revised scope. Mike Ready seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Erik Oliver expressed concerns about not including the E. Clark Street option as a contingency for the third route.

The motion was amended to include that this contingency would also be submitted. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

7. Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant Program (Attachment D)

John Boudreau with Atkins Engineering presented information on the proposed route for this grant to build a sidewalk and bike/pedestrian bridge over I-20.

Mike Ready voiced his concern with a 12-foot wide path because it would give the residents a perception of losing their yards even though the 12-foot width is within the City's right of way.

Erik Oliver made a motion to approve the five-foot route with lighting up to the 5,000 foot requirement. Mike Ready seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Laura McCanless stated that Art Vinson suggested a pedestrian signal at Geiger Street and Highway 81. Mayor Eady stated the pedestrian signal at Hamil Street and the one being installed at Asbury Street Park are designed to be mid-block crossings. He recommends a traffic signal at the intersection. This will need to be an amendment to the proposal that will take some time to work through.

The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

George Holt stated there is an error in the first sentence of the resolution memorializing the City of Oxford's intent to jointly apply for the grant with the City of Covington. It should read, "...a joint application...".

Erik Oliver made a motion to correct the resolution and approve the amended version. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

8. Amended Agreement for Newton County Water & Sewerage Authority (NCWSA) Sanitary Sewer Flow Study (Attachment E)

Jim Windham made a motion to approve the amended agreement. Erik Oliver seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

9. Oxford-Covington Wastewater Capacity Agreement (Attachment F)

Jim Windham made a motion to approve the agreement. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

10. Transfer of Funds to Georgia Fund 1 Account (Attachment G)

George Holt made a motion to approve the transfer. Jim Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

11. City Hall Landscape Plan (Attachment H)

Jim Windham made a motion to proceed with formal negotiations with Shades of Green about adding additional scope to the original bid. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

12. FY 2024 Capital Budget Amendments (Appendix I)

Erik Oliver made a motion to approve the amendments. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

13. Oxford Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Membership (Attachment J)

Erik Oliver made a motion to approve reappointment of Brian Barnard as the DDA Chairman. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

The City Council discussed the appointment of Natalie Raymond to replace David Allen, who has resigned from the Authority. There was concern about having too many members who have ties to and might advocate for the interests of Oxford College above the interests of the City as a whole.

Jim Windham expressed that citizens feel like the City does whatever Oxford College wants. He is concerned about the perception of having multiple members with ties to Oxford College on the DDA, even if their actual actions would not be swayed by their connection. Several City Council members expressed a desire to have broader representation of Oxford's residents and increased diversity on the DDA.

Mayor Eady asked the City Council members to come up with some other nominees, since the DDA has already done some work identifying their proposed nomination.

Erik Oliver made a motion to use the month of February to seek other candidates and to vote on a candidate at the March meeting. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion carried (5/2). David Eady and Mike Ready voted nay.

14. Acceptance of the “Ballard-Mask-Archer” Sewer Easement to connect Archer Aviation to the City’s Catova Creek Sewer Line

George Holt asked why the City of Oxford is involved with this agreement. David Strickland advised this is an unusual situation. Even though the easement is extending across the Ballard property, it will tie to the City’s current lines.

Erik Oliver asked if there will be any disturbance of the riparian buffer. Mayor Eady advised that the design is to bore under the creek and enclose the pipe in metal to protect the creek.

George Holt made a motion to accept and record the easement as presented, contingent upon delivery of the fully executed document. Jim Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0)

15. Invoices (Attachment K)

The City Council reviewed invoices paid for \$1,000 or more in the month of January 2024.

16. Executive Session

None.

Other Business

Chief Anglin asked for approval to purchase a vehicle. He advised this is an emergency request, and he just received the third quote last week. The lowest bid is for a Ford Explorer for \$44,210 from Wade Ford. The Capital Budget for FY 2024 includes \$75,000 for the purchase of a police vehicle to be paid from SPLOST 2023 funds.

Erik Oliver made a motion to add consideration of purchase of a police vehicle to the meeting agenda. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Mayor Eady stated he would prefer to purchase an electric vehicle, and that it would cost less over time. Chief Anglin stated that there is a limitation with the Ford Mach-E vehicles. Tires can only be rotated by a dealer with special tools. They have had several minor issues with using the Mach-E for patrolling because it is not made as a police car. Any major work may have to be sent outside Covington to a facility that has EV certified repair technicians. He knows of problems with charging batteries in Chevrolet electric vehicles.

He proposes purchasing the gasoline Ford Explorer from Wade Ford. The cost to outfit the vehicle will be additional.

George Holt expressed reservations about purchasing electric vehicles now and prefers to wait until service options are more readily available locally. He also asked for clarification on how many vehicles the Police Department would have if this one is purchased. Chief Anglin advised they would have a total of six (6) and would either sell one or repurpose it, leaving one spare vehicle for the Police Department.

Erik Oliver made a motion to approve the purchase of the gasoline Ford Explorer from Wade Ford. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

17. **Adjourn**

Jim Windham made a motion to adjourn at 9:04 p.m. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Stacey Mullen
Deputy City Clerk