



**MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023 – 7:00 PM
CITY HALL**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

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

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Andrew – City Manager
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Mark Anglin – Police Chief
Jody Reid – Supervisor of Maintenance
David Strickland – City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: three residents at 804 Emory Street (AKA “E. George Street”), Jamie Porges (Peak Solarworks)

1. The meeting was called to order by the Honorable David S. Eady, Mayor.
2. **Jim Windham made a motion to amend the agenda for the November 13, 2023 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting to add an item regarding the recent incident at Asbury Street Park. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
(Attachment A)
Jeff Wearing made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).
3. **Jeff Wearing made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda for November 13, 2023. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).** (Attachment B)
4. **Mayor’s Report**
Noted on agenda.
5. **Citizen Concerns**
None.
6. **Water Line Easement on “E. George Street”** (Attachment C)

Mike Ready made a motion to approve the water line easement. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

7. **Resolution for a Sewer Connection Moratorium due to Unknown Sewer Capacity**
(Attachment D)

Jeff Wearing made a motion to approve the resolution. Erik Oliver seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Jim Windham asked for a list of the exempted property owners. He is concerned about exemptions being open-ended. Mayor Eady advised the exemption is limited to the property owners on Emory Street who have until December 23, 2023 to pay a reduced rate to connect to the North Emory Sewer tap, a property owner on Moore Street who expressed interest in a commercial warehouse on their property, and Archer Aviation. This will be documented in a memo and attached to the record.

The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

8. **Water Fountain Replacement at Asbury Street Park** (Attachment E)

Mike Ready made a motion to approve replacement of three of the four fountains at Asbury Street Park, excluding the one next to the pavilion. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Staff have only received one bid thus far. The price to replace three fountains would be under \$10,000.

Jim Windham asked why the fourth fountain outside the pavilion is not being replaced and what will happen to it. Jody Reid confirmed that the fourth fountain will be removed and capped because it is not needed at that location.

Mike Ready amended his motion to grant administrative discretion to Bill Andrew to approve the lowest bid if it is less than \$10,000. George Holt seconded the amended motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

9. **Bike-Friendly Community Designation from League of American Bicyclists** (Attachment F)

Erik Oliver made a motion to approve pursuit of the designation. Mike Ready seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Jeff Wearing asked if this designation would mean changes for Highway 81 and for the sidewalk being installed/replaced. He asked if bicycle lanes will be required on Highway 81. Bill Andrew stated that bicycle lanes are not required. Having the designation may provide some leverage for having a discussion with GDOT in the future about adding bicycle lanes. He has discussed a timeframe for the designation with John Devine, Executive Director of Georgia Bikes. Mr. Devine suggested laying the framework for the application by the June deadline in 2024 with the goal of fully developing the application in time for the 2025 application deadline.

The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

10. **Whatcoat Street Realignment** (Attachment G)

Mayor Eady stated that the purpose of this vote is to decide whether to move forward with obtaining bids on the job based on the 100% drawings from Atkins that reflect what was approved in the 50% drawings along with some changes. Bill Andrew added that the RFP will require per-unit costs that cannot change after the contract is awarded. The bids will provide a more accurate cost for the work compared to the planning figure used in the FY 2024 Capital budget of \$700,000.

George Holt expressed concern about per-unit prices increasing after award. Jim Windham stated that any contractor will put time limitations on per-unit prices to avoid their costs increasing if the work is done later. This will put pressure on the City Council to take some action soon. Jeff Wearing stated that prices are usually good for ninety (90) days with this type of contract.

Erik Oliver asked David Strickland if there is any issue with the City putting out official bid documents related to property the City does not yet own. Mr. Strickland advised the ownership issue should not be an impediment to getting bids, because the bidding process is not approval to go forward with the actual work.

Laura McCanless stated her support of getting a more concrete cost estimate.

Mike Ready made a motion to approve releasing the job for bids. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion carried 4/3. Mike Ready, Jeff Wearing, David Eady and Laura McCanless voted yea. Jim Windham, George Holt, and Erik Oliver voted nay.

11. **Atkins Task Order – Possible Bike/Pedestrian Path Routes** (Attachment H)

Jim Windham made a motion to approve the Atkins Task Order. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

12. **Invoices** (Attachment I)

The City Council reviewed invoices paid for \$1,000 or more during October 2023.

13. **FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: Peak Solarworks Power Purchase Agreement** (Attachment J)

In order to make the 2 MW solar project proposed by Peak Solarworks work, one of two things must be done:

1. Connect to both circuits (north and south) by running cable overhead or underground for about 5,000 feet.
2. Have the substation reconfigured to allow power to flow from one circuit to the other without going outside the meter. MEAG has advised that the substation should have been initially configured this way but was not.

The cost for either option is estimated to be around \$250,000. Jamie Porges with Peak Solarworks spoke to the City Council regarding how this additional cost would impact their proposal if they pay for it initially. He also mentioned that the estimate does not include property tax. They hope to request a property tax abatement from Newton County. They would absorb all but \$60,000 of the cost upfront and ask that \$30,000 be recouped in Years 1 and 2. In Year 5 they would have good-faith negotiations. If the savings they anticipate are realized, they are

asking that one third of those savings be used to reimburse them for the remaining costs plus property taxes.

Jim Windham asked for some examples with order of magnitude figures for the discussion during the next work session.

Mayor Eady discussed an option for the City of Oxford to pay the full cost upfront by withdrawing the City's money in its Municipal Competitive Trust short term investment, which has a balance of around \$300,000.

Of the two options, George Holt and Laura McCanless supported upgrading the substation. Erik Oliver asked if Emory would realize cost reductions from the project. Mr. Porges stated that they would be able to show progress toward their environmental goals. They would get renewal energy credits in exchange for leasing the property to the City. He also stated that if the City decided to pay the full cost for the interconnection up front, his company would absorb any property tax costs.

The consensus of the City Council is to reconfigure the substation and to pay for it up front using the Municipal Competitive Trust investment funds. This decision will be ratified at the December regular session.

14. FOR DISCUSSION ONLY: New System Development Charges for Water and Sewer
(Attachment K)

Nelsnick Enterprises has been working on a rate study for water and sewer to help the City determine how to recover the cost for the additional sewer capacity needed on the Dried Indian Creek line to support Archer Aviation. The City of Covington has offered to sell capacity to Oxford at \$22 per gallon. The City's rate is substantially less than that and is based on Newton County Water and Sewer Authority (NCWSA) rates from 2016. Not only are the City's rates probably outdated but are also based on a cost structure for a different entity with different operating costs (NCWSA).

The immediate decisions to be made are whether to proceed with requesting the capacity needed from the City of Covington to support Archer Aviation, and also whether to request additional capacity based on possible future needs.

Jim Windham asked if this same company can analyze the City's future capacity needs. Bill Andrew advised they should be able to do that within the next couple of weeks.

14.5 Criminal Damage to Property Incident at Asbury Street Park on November 11, 2023

Chief Mark Anglin spoke of the incident which occurred on November 11, 2023 at Asbury Street Park. A stolen car was driven onto the green at the park and got stuck. The suspects also broke into the utility room that houses the camera system. One of the suspects was hiding in the utility room. He expressed his disappointment that the City of Oxford must rely on the Newton County Sheriff's Office for support for calls such as this, requiring taxpayers in other areas of Newton County to support Oxford. He recommends increasing sworn staff based on staffing levels at nearby law enforcement agencies and requested an administrative staff person to handle clerical and technical duties.

He has several recommendations for immediate changes. The bathrooms will be locked by deadbolt each night. He has already had a lock installed on the utility room and recommends

that access to it be restricted. He recommends more barriers to prohibit vehicular access to the green.

Jim Windham stated that he pays County taxes and doesn't think the fairness of deputies supporting Oxford is a valid argument. He also mentioned that there have been very few incidents in the park and does not believe barricading the park is a solution. He does think more sworn staff are needed. The City should not have to rely on county law enforcement personnel.

Erik Oliver stated that Oxford College should provide law enforcement support or should contribute financially to augmenting the City's sworn staff because of the responsibility the City of Oxford has to protect the students on and off campus.

15. **Executive Session**

Jim Windham made a motion at 8:53 p.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Jim Windham made a motion at 9:13 p.m. to exit Executive Session. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

16. **Adjourn**

Jim Windham made a motion to adjourn at 9:13 p.m. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer