



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 – 7:00 PM
Via Teleconference**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

David Eady – Mayor
George Holt – Councilmember
Jim Windham – Councilmember
Lynn Bohanan – Councilmember
Jeff Wearing – Councilmember
Laura McCanless – Councilmember
Avis Williams - Councilmember

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Andrew – City Manager
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Dave Harvey – Chief of Police
C. David Strickland – City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: Rev. Virginia Brown (Rust Chapel United Methodist Church), Mike Ready

1. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. David Eady, Mayor.
2. Invocation – Rev. Virginia Brown, Rust Chapel United Methodist Church.
3. Mayor Eady clarified that separate votes will be taken for consideration to add two holidays to list of official City holidays in Item #10.

Avis Williams made a motion to accept the Agenda for September 7, 2021. Jim Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).
(Attachment A)

4. **Avis Williams made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda for September 7, 2021. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**
(Attachment B)

5. Mayor's Announcements
Mayor Eady introduced the new City Manager, Bill Eady.

Mayor Eady stated that he recommends the City Council continue to meet remotely because of the high COVID-19 numbers in Newton County. The City Councilmembers were comfortable with this recommendation.

Mayor Eady announced a City Council mini-retreat scheduled for October 29, 2021. The session will include updates from the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG),

Newton County Water and Sewer Authority (NCWSA), and Dean Hicks at Oxford College. The agenda will also include a review of the City's Short Term Work Program as well as some preliminary preparation for a strategic planning engagement with the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG). He will be bringing a proposal from CVIOG to the City Council to decide if they want to engage them in this process.

He is also discussing a classification/compensation study with CVIOG to examine the job classifications the City currently has and benchmarking them against other cities. This study will provide an analytical basis for reevaluating the City's classification structure and pay scale. The cost will be in the range of \$6,000-\$12,000, and probably closer to \$6,000. He will also bring this proposal to the City Council when it is available.

6. **Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions**

None.

7. **Citizen Concerns**

None.

8. **Adoption of 2021 Millage Rate** (Attachment C)

Rollback of the millage rate for 2021 to 5.444 has been discussed by the City Council in order to avoid a property tax increase in 2021 for Oxford residents.

George Holt made a motion to adopt the rollback rate of 5.444 for 2021 for the City of Oxford. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

9. **Tax Collection Intergovernmental Agreement** (Attachment D)

The City of Oxford has discussed a new agreement for the Newton County Tax Commissioner to prepare the Oxford tax digest and to levy, assess, and collect property taxes. Execution of a new agreement is required because a new Tax Commissioner was elected for Newton County in 2020. Other than the Commissioner being a different person, the terms of the contract are the same as in previous years.

Jeff Wearing made a motion to approve the Tax Collection Intergovernmental Agreement. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

10. **Official City Holidays** (Attachment E)

The City Council has discussed a proposed resolution adding two holidays to the list of official City holidays: Veterans' Day (November 11th) and Juneteenth (June 19th).

Laura McCanless made a motion to add Veterans' Day to the list of official city holidays. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Jim Windham stated he asked another Councilmember what the rationale was for adding Veterans' Day and was advised that it is because it is a federal holiday. He stated there are two other federal holidays not recognized by the City of Oxford, i.e., Columbus Day and President's Day. The City has the same number of holidays as the federal government, but recognizes two that the federal government does not, i.e., the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. He recommends that the City create a holiday whenever there is a federal or state election. He feels doing so is a better way of honoring the country's veterans and its democracy. Voting is becoming increasingly problematic, and he does not expect it to ease up any time soon.

Avis Williams stated she understands what Mr. Windham is saying but she does not have any problem with giving City employees Veterans' Day off.

George Holt stated he thinks Mr. Windham has a valid point. In speaking with Matt Pepper about this issue he was initially concerned about allowing more holidays since the City already allowed the same number of holidays as the federal government. He was not in favor of giving the City more holidays, but also did not want to vote against it.

Laura McCanless likes the idea of making election day a priority. She just does not want to see the employees get cheated out of a holiday in a non-election year. She likes the idea of giving employees another day off, since most of them must work on July 4th to support the annual parade activities.

Lynn Bohanan stated her thoughts are in line with those of Ms. McCanless.

Jeff Wearing voiced objection to not observing Veterans' Day. He understands Mr. Windham's point but disagrees with a holiday for Election Day being approved in lieu of Veterans' Day.

Marcia Brooks stated that in addition to comparing the City's list of holidays to the federal holidays, thought was also given to ways the City can attract and retain employees. A review of the surrounding counties and municipalities that Oxford regularly loses employees to revealed that these jurisdictions are observing the two proposed holidays.

Ms. McCanless asked how many personnel are needed on hand to handle an election. Ms. Brooks advised that she is the election superintendent so she would be the person handling this. Ms. McCanless also stated that she respects Mr. Wearing's position.

The motion carried by a majority vote (6/1) with Jim Windham voting Nay.

Jim Windham made a motion to add Juneteenth to the list of official City holidays. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Mayor Eady stated that the topic of Election Day as a City holiday can be added to a work session agenda. Providing opportunities for employees to vote can also be handled very liberally from an administrative perspective to ensure all employees have the opportunity.

11. **Employee Handbook** (Attachment F)

The Council has discussed proposed revisions to the City of Oxford Employee Handbook. No comments have been received since the matter was last discussed at the August work session.

George Holt stated that he has had a few calls since the last meeting. He feels that more time is needed to look over the information given the volume of information they must absorb. He recommended that they spend some time discussing the changes at the upcoming mini-retreat.

George Holt made a motion to table discussion of the Employee Handbook. Jim Windham seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

12. **Alarm Monitoring Services** (Attachment G)

Due to dissatisfaction with the City's current alarm monitoring service, staff obtained quotes from three alarm monitoring companies to provide monitoring services for City Hall and the Maintenance Facility. Staff recommends awarding the contract to All-Star Alarms, which provided the lowest bid.

Laura McCanless made a motion to award the contract for alarm monitoring services to All-Star Alarms. George Holt seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Jeff Wearing advised the Mayor and City Council that he believes All-Star Alarms is not the best selection because the owners are wanting to sell the business. This could lead to problems with service in the future. He believes Viper is the better choice even though their price is slightly higher. They serve all of Newton County government's buildings and he believes they will give better service. He also spoke to Sheriff Ezell Brown who gave them a high recommendation and indicated they were the best company the Sheriff's Office ever had.

Jim Windham and Avis Williams asked if references for the three vendors could be checked.

Marcia Brooks let the Mayor and City Council know that the current contract has already been canceled and expires on 9/30/2021, so action needs to be taken expeditiously.

George Holt suggested that since the normal procedure is to accept the recommendation of staff, that the City Manager be allowed to further investigate and see if he wants to amend staff's recommendation.

Laura McCanless and George Holt withdrew their motion and second.

Jim Windham made a motion to table a decision on the alarm monitoring services contract until the September work session. George Holt seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Marcia Brooks asked if tabling the decision would allow enough time to avoid a lapse in security monitoring. Mayor Eady stated a called session could be held at the start of the work session to take a vote.

The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

13. **Approval for Purchase of Lawnmower** (Attachment H)

The Public Works Department requests approval to purchase a lawnmower which was authorized in the FY2022 Capital Budget. Three bids have been obtained. The Public Works Department has ordered the mower from Monroe Power Equipment due to the long lead time required to get the equipment. Staff recommends approval of the purchase of the equipment from Monroe Power Equipment for \$10,941.

Jim Windham made a motion to approve purchase of the lawnmower from Monroe Power Equipment. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (7/0).

14. **Approval for Purchase of Police Car**

The Police Department requests approval to purchase a police car which was authorized in the FY2022 Capital Budget. The City of Oxford is authorized to utilize \$100,000 in 2017 SPLOST funds for public safety purposes. Three bids have been obtained for a Ford Explorer Hybrid. Mayor Eady stated that the recommendation is to purchase the vehicle from the lowest bidder, Wade Ford, for \$36,095.

George Holt made a motion to approve the purchase of a police car from Wade Ford. Laura McCanless seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Chief Dave Harvey stated that arrangements have already been made with Allan Vigil Ford to purchase the vehicle from them. Bill Andrew added that the 2021 model is no longer available, but Allan Vigil Ford will deliver the 2022 model for the same price previously quoted for the 2021 model.

George Holt amended his motion to approve the purchase of a police car from Allan Vigil Ford. Laura McCanless amended her second likewise. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

15. **Invoices**

Mayor Eady stated that he is having discussions with Marcia Brooks and Bill Andrew about revising this part of the agenda to be a brief financial report that will provide more useful information. The list of invoices will still be provided to the City Council for review.

16. **Executive Session**

None.

17. **Adjourn**

Jim Windham made a motion to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer