



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, April 6, 2020 – 7:00 PM
Via Teleconference**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

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

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Matt Pepper – City Manager
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Jody Reid – Utility Superintendent
Dave Harvey – Police Chief
David Strickland – City Attorney

OTHERS PRESENT: Lyn Pace, Laura Gafnea

1. The meeting was called to order by the Hon. David Eady, Mayor.
2. The invocation was delivered by Lyn Pace (Oxford College).
3. **A motion was made by Jim Windham to accept the Agenda for April 6, 2020. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).** (Attachment A)
4. **A motion was made by Jim Windham to accept the Consent Agenda for April 6, 2020. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).** (Attachment B)
5. **Mayor's Report**
Governor Brian Kemp passed an emergency declaration that included a shelter-in-place mandate. In his order he stated that any local declarations/ordinance passed would be suspended and his would be the governing declaration. The scope of his order is very similar to Oxford's. Governor Kemp's order is scheduled to be in effect through April 13. If he does not extend it, Oxford's declaration will go back into effect. Oxford posted the information on social media sites and sent letters out to citizens. The city has also adopted procedures for waiving utility billing penalties and suspending cutoffs.
6. **Planning Commission Recommendations/Petitions**
None

7. **Citizen Concerns**

Mayor Eady asked Laura Gafnea to give an update of the status of students on campus at Oxford College.

Ms. Gafnea stated that the final 49 students on campus were moved to housing on the Clairmont campus last weekend. Oxford College is operating under the state's order, with only essential personnel still on the Oxford campus. All other personnel are working remotely.

8. **City of Oxford Emergency Declaration** (Attachment C)

Mayor Eady asked if anyone has thoughts about amending or extending the city's declaration. It was the consensus of Mayor Eady and the Council members that since Governor Kemp's order supersedes Oxford's order, and it contains very similar provisions, they would wait to see if the governor's order is extended or allowed to expire before taking any additional action.

9. **Resolution for the Community Development Block Grant Application** (Attachment D)

Matt Pepper advised that this issue was discussed at the March Work Session, but since then he was asked to add the amounts involved. The revised version was sent to all Council members. The resolution must be submitted with the city's application for the Community Development Block Grant for proposed water main improvements. **Jeff Wearing made a motion to approve the resolution. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

10. **City Welcome Sign Project** (Attachment E)

Jim Windham stated that given circumstances in the world at this time, he is convinced we are going into a recession. The revenue and cash flows for the city are in question currently. He supports everything on the agenda but believes some consideration should be given to a moratorium on non-essential spending.

Laura McCanless expressed similar concerns and stated the city should proceed with caution before making any large purchases.

Jeff Wearing also expressed concerns about spending money, and also has some issues with the sign itself.

Mr. Wearing made a motion to table the City Welcome Sign Project. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (7/0).

Mr. Windham clarified that water main improvements could be considered essential, while a city welcome sign is not. Mr. Holt agreed and expressed his desire to reexamine some of the projects the city had planned for in the next fiscal year while developing the budget.

11. **SR 81 Sidewalk Study** (Attachment F)

The FY 2020 Capital Budget includes \$100,000 to repair existing sidewalks located along SR 81 and carry out a study to install a sidewalk along SR 81 from Soule Street to the

northern city limits. Keck & Wood has provided a quote to complete a concept plan for construction on the sidewalk.

Laura McCanless asked if there are any advantages to completing the study now rather than later. Mayor Eady stated that the city may be able to seek state or federal funding to complete this work. He also pointed out that during the last recession there was stimulus funding available for “shovel-ready” projects. Completing this study would position the city to apply for funds intended to help kickstart the economy. Mayor Eady would like to apply for some funds through the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Keck & Wood was selected for this project because of their experience with GDOT projects.

George Holt stated that the city cannot enter an agreement to do work that was not budgeted. Mayor Eady stated there is some money in the budget for sidewalk work. Mr. Holt stated that the money in the budget has been there for about three years, and is for sidewalk repairs, not studies. He stated it was changed in the FY 2021 budget to say Sidewalk Repairs and Planning (Planning was added).

Jim Windham stated there is value in completing the study so that the City of Oxford is in a good position to apply for funds if the opportunity arises, and he has been advocating for the sidewalk for many years. Mr. Holt stated he advocates for the sidewalk as well, but wants it done properly, and there is no money in the FY 2021 budget for the sidewalk.

Mayor Eady clarified that the city does not yet have a FY 2021 budget. He also stated that the FY 2020 Capital Budget does explicitly include the concept study being discussed. At this point, the work would not start until FY 2021, and the thought is to include it next year's budget or beyond, with the possibility of being able to move forward should the funds become available.

Lynn Bohanan asked if there is a problem with postponing until there is more information available about the economic situation. Mr. Windham pointed out that the study is a nominal cost. Also, the stretch of SR 81 being discussed also includes the future pedestrian crossing at Asbury Park, which needs to be completed. Mr. Windham recommends the city move forward with the study to get a firmer idea of the cost, which side of the street it should be own, etc., so that if money is available, the work can proceed.

Mr. Holt asked what happened with the original study completed by Jordan Engineering. The city paid for the feasibility study of which side of the street to put the sidewalk on, then nothing was done. He is not in favor of doing another study that will sit. By the time the city can do the work, the price will change.

Mayor Eady advised that Jordan Engineering gave an initial cost for both sides of the street in 2014, then gave a revised estimate for one side of the street in 2017. Robert Jordan has stated that this is not his area of expertise. It is a large project and he made a lot of assumptions. The idea is to have a firm analysis of the implications of having the sidewalk on either side, something that the city does not currently have.

Jeff Wearing agreed with Mr. Windham that \$4,500 is not a lot of money to have a shovel-ready project, and as long as the Council remains flexible and does not have to obligate itself to spending a large amount of money right now, he recommends that the city proceed with the study.

Laura McCanless advocated for the study because it includes analysis of the pedestrian crosswalk at Asbury Park, and the study puts the city in a strategic position to jump on the chance to start on this project if funds become available.

Jeff Wearing made a motion to proceed with the SR 81 study. Avis Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed 6/1. George Holt voted nay, all other Council members and Mayor Eady voted yea.

12. **Stop Sign Replacement Project** (Attachment G)

The Stop Sign Replacement Project uses state funding with a match from the City of Oxford in the amount of \$20,000 from GDOT to replace stop signs throughout the city limits. The grant requires a 30% match from the City of Oxford, which is \$6,000. The proposal is to go with the low bid of \$21,675 from Brown's Asphalt Maintenance. The balance of the funds would be used to replace other signs in the city on a prioritized list.

Mr. Holt asked which budget line item this is being paid from. Matt Pepper advised it will come from the Street Repairs and Resurfacing line item in the Capital Budget.

Laura McCanless made a motion to approve the bid from Brown's Asphalt Maintenance for the Stop Sign Replacement Project. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (7/0).

13. **Resolution for City Health Insurance** (Attachment H)

May 1 is the annual date for renewal of health and life insurance coverage with the City of Oxford. The cost to remain with the broker the city has used for several years was increasing by about 40%. The increase over current rates with Georgia Municipal Association's plan is much less, between 10-20%, and the coverage is better. The City of Oxford is changing to GMA's plan for its health and life insurance coverage. GMA requires that the City Council adopt a resolution/ordinance to verify its agreement with the city's purchase of this insurance.

Jeff Wearing made a motion to approve the resolution for City Health Insurance. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously (7/0).

14. **Invoice Approval**

Jim Windham asked about the status of Jordan Engineering's work on Marshall Street and Moore Street. Matt Pepper advised that the invoice was for some final work with them on the right-of-way survey. There are still some tasks to wrap up with them that should be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Windham asked about the percent of completion on the Moore Street work. Mr. Pepper advised it is about 50% complete. Mr. Windham asked how much HCS Services, LLC has drawn. Marcia Brooks stated that including the third draw listed in this month's invoices, they have drawn \$93,500. The total contract is \$228,835.75 and the remaining balance is \$135,335.75. Mr. Windham stated that they will need to show some progress on the project by the next meeting. He asked Jody Reid his opinion of their progress. Mr. Reid stated about 45-50%.

Mr. Windham asked if the meters the city is purchasing are forward compatible and can be used with electronic systems. Mr. Reid stated that the meters are compatible with several different automated systems, and that is why the city continues to buy from Sensus.

Mr. Windham expressed his appreciation to Mr. Reid for getting the pet sanitation stations set up in Asbury Park. It was a great addition for people under quarantine who are out walking their dogs.

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

George Holt asked if the city will follow the same budget it has been following for the FY 2021 Capital Budget. The document they received does not have some of the information that is needed for decision-making and for GASB requirements. Mayor Eady advised they will get a revised draft in the same format they are used to getting. What they received was just a first draft to get feedback from everyone.

Jim Windham asked if it is appropriate to discuss the moratorium on non-essential spending right now, or if the discussion should be deferred to the work session. He acknowledged that the topic is not on the agenda, but the economic environment we are in is unprecedented.

Mayor Eady advised a called meeting may be needed as part of the work session to review the declaration, and it could be taken up then. Discussion about the budget could occur during the work session. He also pointed out that there will not be any major expenses before the work session, so there is not really anything to put a moratorium on.

Laura McCanless asked if the city has delayed starting on the Maintenance Facility fence and the George Street Park fence. Mayor Eady advised that the work is delayed because the vendor selected for both projects brought up that he had not been paid for work on the original Maintenance Facility fence as a subcontractor, and he refused to do the work on the split rail fence.

Jim Windham stated that the city should be requiring affidavits from all contractors stating that they have paid all subcontractors. David Strickland stated that the city uses interim and final lien waivers and has been using them as long as he has been the city attorney. Mayor Eady advised that we know there was a lien waiver signed for this work, and we

were never notified of a lien being filed. Marcia Brooks stated that she searched for liens regarding this issue at the courthouse and did not locate any.

Mayor Eady asked David Strickland about Mr. Windham's question regarding changing the agenda.

David Strickland advised that the Mayor and Council always have the right to move that the agenda be amended and bring something up that has not been discussed previously.

Mr. Windham observed that it appears most are in favor of a spending moratorium. The next two weeks will give everyone time to think about it and it can be discussed further at the work session. Jeff Wearing stated he feels it is a little premature to impose a spending moratorium, but the Council is in a good position to call an emergency meeting if needed to take action. Mr. Holt stated that this decision cannot be delayed too long because the Council needs to decide whether to include the requested capital items in the FY 2021 budget. If they are included in the budget, they should not be purchased without approval from the City Council.

Mayor Eady stated that it is incumbent upon each Council member to share his/her reservations or concerns about the proposed expenditures in FY 2021 so that the Council can decide if they should be included.

Mr. Windham stated that he is not against putting the items in the budget, but they may need to be pushed back to later in the fiscal year if the economic situation looks dire at the beginning of the fiscal year. A decision needs to be made about a moratorium before the budget is finalized.

Mayor Eady advised that the first draft of the budget was constructed before the pandemic started. He wants to work on a second draft but needs everyone's specific input. He hopes to have a second draft to everyone before the April work session.

15. **Executive Session**

None.

16. **Jim Windham made a motion to adjourn Regular Session at 8:07 pm. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).**

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer