

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

PRESENT: Mayor Bo Dorough
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, Vilnis Gaines, Chad Warbington,
Demetrius Young
Interim City Mgr. Derrick Brown
City Attorney: Michael Custer

Mayor Dorough called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m., followed by attendance roll call.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Commissioner Howard moved to adopt the agenda as noted, seconded by Commissioner Warbington, the roll call vote unanimously carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

FY 2025 Millage Rate:

Bruce Capps spoke about the property tax increase, which he does not oppose, stating that it is long delayed, adding that citizens do not want taxes increased; however, they need to be informed of what taxes provide and why they must be increased, and encouraged being proactive and informing the public in a timely manner to dispel rumors and misinformation.

Louis Vesquez resident since 1971, spoke against the tax increase and advised that his reasons is the widespread sense that responsibility must be a part of the increase. Citizens understand the need for increases, as well as the limited number of resources making responsible choices even more significant. He mentioned recruitment of public safety officers, (other than cameras, there is no traffic control in Albany), the sad state of unclean streets, curbs are not trimmed, overhanging tree limbs over alleys/roads, and lack of enforcement by the Code department. He discussed tax paying property owners, which also burdens homeowners with school taxes, and the burden is especially difficult on retirees/senior citizens who live on limited, fixed incomes. He urged that an adjustment be made in the tax code/structure, with a priority on keeping the community safe, clean and attractive.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Dorough closed this portion of the public hearings.

Zoning Matters:

1. Special Approval Case #24-043: Request Special Approval re: development and operation of a 55,000 square foot retail store with associated parking on a 5.09-acre parcel zoned C-7 (Mixed Use Planned Development District)

Paul Forgey, Planning Director, discussed information (copy on file) and provided information via power point. He advised that the request for special approval is to develop and operate a retail sporting goods store to include parking on property located within the mall development and reviewed discussed the site plan, aerial view of the property, surrounding zoning, additional photos N.E.S and West and advised

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

that the property is not in the flood plain. The criteria for approval were discussed including trip generator, road classification, road improvements, ingress/egress to the property, parking, location of open space, outdoor lighting, hours and operations, future land use map recommendations, adding that the Planning Commission recommends approval.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mr. Forgey showed the front of the building, which will face parking, etc.

Mayor Dorrough asked for information from the Secretary of State regarding the entities that were created to include principles.

There was no one desiring to speak; therefore, Mayor Dorrough closed the public hearings.

REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK

Commission Travel:

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following travel, seconded by Commissioner Warbington, the roll call vote unanimously carried.

- Mayor B. Dorrough; 2024 GMA Annual Convention; Savannah, GA; June 20-23, 2024; \$3,144.27
- Commissioner J. Howard; 2024 GMA Annual Convention; Savannah, GA; June 21-26, 2024; \$3,283.36
- Commissioner J. Johnson; 2024 GMA Annual Convention; Savannah, GA; June 20-24, 2024; \$2,960.51
- Commissioner V. Gaines; 2024 GMA Annual Convention; Savannah, GA; June 20-24, 2024; \$2,976.25
- Commissioner C. Warbington; 2024 GMA Annual Convention; Savannah, GA; June 21-25, 2024; \$2,631.05
- Commissioner D. Young; MEAG Power 2024 Annual Meeting; Amelia Island, FL; July 28-31, 2024; \$1,763.86
- Commissioner D. Young; 2024 Black Business Summit; Atlanta, GA; August 7-8, 2024; \$427.84

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Public Safety:

- New Alcohol Application: 2203 E. Broad Ave., La Bamba Night Club; S. Graves/ Agent; Beer Consumption

Anthony Donaldson, Chief Deputy/License Inspector, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the request to approve the application.

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

Calvin Rollins, , Pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church spoke in opposition of the application as there are too many establishments in the area serving alcohol, citizens would like to see things that will benefit the community.

2. Utilities/Public Works:

- Ardurra Quarterly CSS Update

Jeff Duplantis, Program Manager, introduced Butch Gallop, another member of the program team. Mr. Duplantis provided a power point presentation (copy on file), giving a quarterly update, which includes the program overview, current program (phase 1) boundaries, future phases (phase 2), other projects including 8th Ave (phase 1 & 4), Shannon Pond (design), Three Oaks Phase 2, W. Broad, E. Broad, Clark and Beattie Pond force main are complete, schedule program plan being on point for completion by June 2025, program budget. He stated that bids were received on the 29th of this month for Booker Basin, which will be brought in September for approval, with this being the last bid re: separation. Highland/Whitney is still on hold; it is the weather funding through the Mobile District Corps of Engineers.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, the Joshua Treatment Plant was discussed with a total amount of approximately \$60 million. Bruce Maples, Asst. City Manager, discussed the history of the Joshua Plant (built in 1959) regarding modifications made over the years to meet permitting requirements. Mr. Duplantis said he will provide the cost of Joshua Treatment Plant with Mr. Maples stating that he will also provide additional information which is 3x's higher than the original cost.

Commissioner Warbington commended staff and Ardurra for helping to get this project moving forward.

In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Gallop (distributed information – copy on file) and commented on the use of minority vendors.

Mayor Dorough thanked Mr. Gallop for having meetings to keep the public informed and discussed various projects. Mr. Maples discussed Shannon Pond, which is localized flooding and storm drainage issues, costs of projects including increase in cost with Mr. Duplantis explaining bids that were let with many having no response. Mayor Dorough noted that what is now Project 1 is basically getting the 85% separation; Mr. Duplantis agreed. Mr. Maples explained that the City's permit allows the City to do one of two things, separate and get 85% separation or, anything above that, which is not separated, to meet the 85%, must be treated at the plant. Project 1 takes into account any additional combination flows that are not eliminated.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Maples said he will supply information regarding the eight basins on the west side re: overflow, to include what is involved when there are heavy rains, water going into the river, etc., adding that samples are collected and sent to EPD. He mentioned that the City is down to Lift Station 25 and 27, which will be the last two big basins focused on to eliminate the combination systems. Commissioner Howard commented on the lack of concern by the public regarding these matters

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

as it relates to EPD guidelines and requirements. Mayor Dorough asked if staff can provide a presentation for civic groups so people can visually understand what is going on regarding the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Gallop noted what has been done to educate people and admitted that having a gathering has been challenging, with Mayor Dorough adding that what he is asking staff for is slightly different. Commissioner Howard asked Pastor Rollins if he would agree to host an informational meeting at his church, with Pastor Rollins agreeing.

3. Human Resources

- 2025 Employee Group Benefit Plan

Human Resources Director Towanna Howard introduced Megan McCullough, NFP Regional Director and Bart Shaw, Asst. VP. discussed information (copy on file) and provided a power point presentation regarding the proposed changes to the group health insurance.

Using a power point presentation, Ms. McCullough stated that the review will include the history, claims related to the medical/pharmacy plan, dental and the renewal for the 1/1/25 Plan year.

In reply to Commissioner Howard, Ms. McCullough and Ms. Howard, it was noted that the new payroll deductions start January 1, 2025, and go through December 31, 2025, with open enrollment being October 14-November 1st and information being provided regarding the increases with no change to retirees.

In reply to Commissioner Warbington regarding pre-65 retirees, Ms. McCullough explained pre- vs post-65 employees.

Mayor Dorough mentioned a budget amendment, with Mr. Brown advising that this will be forthcoming with staff looking at any offsets to the increase. Michael Eaton, Interim COF, explained employee portion vs. employer portions, noting page 7-8 of the presentation. Mr. Eaton said he will provide additional information regarding the budget for claims and trending amounts to provide to the commission.

Commissioner Young asked the cost increase and employees being able to go to their primary health care provider and the method of negotiation. Ms. McCollough noted page 6 regarding Anthem negotiations to provide lower cost for prescriptions. Commissioner Young commented on the weight loss drugs asking if the benefit can be added back, with Ms. Howard stating that this is a City cost and, it increased tremendously causing premiums to increase. She also explained what the clinic offers vs employees going to their PCP. Ms. McCollough discussed weight loss drugs and advised that the information will be researched and provided, as it is a highly controversial topic.

4. Public Administration/Finance

1. Purchases:

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

a. Carver Design

Breana Nixon, Deputy Recreation Director, stated that they are seeking approval of one of the two Carver designs that will be presented today by David Higgins and Brandon Park, both of whom she introduced.

Mr. Higgins displayed a power point presentation (copy on file) and discussed existing conditions of the gym, provided a brief history and proposed changes to include (NBA/College regulation size basketball court), volleyball/pickleball courts, wheel-chair seating capacity, office/concession/storage, etc., exterior drawings, and color rendering for Scheme B, pointing out various elements of the design.

Mr. Parks stated that the budget for the option just presented is \$3,457,000 and 11% (\$400,000) more for the expansion and explained the increase for the expansion.

Commissioner Warbington asked the cost if designed from scratch with it noted approximately \$4+ million. Mr. Higgins advised that the only things they are keeping are the steel structure, slab and bleachers. Commissioner Warbington noted that this is \$3.8 million, asking Mr. Brown and Ms. Custer to provide other costs that would impact the cost.

Commissioner Young asked the plan for the facility with Ms. Nixon stating that the focus is on adult basketball.

Mayor Dorough mentioned the fee and phases, which is inclusive of the entire project and the steel and concrete structure being adaptable to the extension, as there is a need for a 90 ft. court for adult basketball and it is a plus to preserve historic building and enhance the Harlem District. He noted that the numbers do not include land acquisition, asking to look at the cost for parking and updating capacity of restrooms from the existing structure. And for information regarding the adjustment of fees due to expansion and said he supports option 2, the expanded gym.

Commissioner Warbington clarified that this item is a vote for option 1 or 2, which is to move forward.

Mayor Dorough asked the management fee and providing the information if they are willing to stay involved during construction.

Commissioner Young asked staff for participation numbers for adult basketball with Ms. Nixon advising that currently there are 12 teams playing with approximately 100 registered for the teams.

b. SPLOST Distribution Process

Mr. Brown discussed information (copy on file) regarding, specifically SPLOST VIII, other entities/independent agencies that receive funding(\$6.0 million allocated to Chehaw, Flint RiverQuarium, Thronateeska, Albany Museum of Art, Civil Rights Institute) with direction from Commissioners needed regarding distribution of the funds. He advised that there are leftover funds from SPLOST VI and VII and asked which options are amiable to the Commission re: option 1 vs option 2 and how to reimburse invoices from Chehaw.

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

Commissioner Warbington noted that Chehaw has a balance of \$244,000 in SPLOST VI with Mr. Brown deferring to Tommy Gregors and Mr. Eaton.

Mr. Eaton explained the reimbursement policy, with monies left in SPLOST VI and Chehaw drawing down funds in VI, once it was discovered they had remaining funds

Mr. Gregors explained the drawdowns from SPLOST VI regarding recovery from Hurricane Michael, implementation of the master plan and currently taking monies from SPLOST VI to various commitments including improvements, which are related to the master plan. He added that all expenditures related to SPLOST are approved by the Chehaw Park Authority, with invoices presented to the City for reimbursement.

Commissioner Warbington asked the process up to this point, with Mr. Gregors advising that they typically provide updates of progress to the Commission with specific line items and list of projects provided regarding the request for funding to the Finance Department.

Mayor Dorough said he feels the Commission should consider the preference and intent of the Authority regarding drawdowns, with commission approval. In reply to Commissioner Warbington, Mayor Dorough said he is agreeable to option 1, which involves Commission Commissioner Warbington mentioned that this applies to all agencies, not just Chehaw.

Discussion continued with Mr. Brown explaining the approval process prior to disbursement of funds. Mayor Dorough referenced the master plan and being consistent when requesting funding.

- c. Flint Riverfront Trail Design Services; Robert and Company, Atlanta, GA; Total exp. \$106,774.00

Ricky Gladney, Buyer I, discussed information (copy on file) regarding the request to approve design services.

Discussion included the wide range of costs and vetting vendors to ensure that requirements are met with Mr. Gladney speaking affirmatively regarding the matter, adding that he has no reservations for doing the design work. Mayor Dorough asked for a copy of the proposals.

- d. Bucket Truck; (1) F550 model Bucket Truck - Altec, Inc.; Total exp. \$189,653.00

Joshua Williams, Procurement Manager, discussed information (copy on file) and asked for approval. There were no questions/comments on this item.

- e. Timekeeping Software Upgrade; Kronos; Total exp. \$142,534.85

John Dawson, TAC Director, discussed information (copy on file) and asked for approval.

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

In reply to Mayor Dorough, Mr. Dawson said a list of approval software, services, updates, etc. with Mr. Williams stating that the information will be provided. Mayor Dorough asked for all contracts that were approved.

- f. Internet Services; Accelecom - Total annual expenditure: \$107,424.48; three-year total cost: \$322,273.44

Using a power point presentation (copy on file), Mr. Dawson provided a project and budget overview and discussed the vendor selection process.

In reply to Commissioner Young, Mr. Dawson explained that the City is also a customer of the Telecom Department and bandwidth, and internet is purchased for the city. Commissioner Young asked for the pdf version of the coverage map with discussion including internet growth and an increase in customer volume.

Mayor Dorough questioned the competitive rate with Taanya French, Telecom Manager, advising that the information will be provided. Discussion continued regarding prior and current residential rates.

The next item was pulled from the agenda.

- g. Flock Safety Cameras; Flock Group, Inc.; Total exp. \$210,900.00
- 2. Grants
 - a. Governor's Office of Highway Safety Grant

APD Chief M. Persley discussed information regarding the grant (copy on file) and asked for approval.

Commissioner Young commented on traffic enforcement with Chief Persley explaining that three officers are assigned to do traffic accidents and traffic enforcement, adding that beat officers also do traffic enforcement in between calls for service, etc.

Mayor Dorough noted page 75 with Chief Persley providing additional information regarding federal funding and reduction in funding each year as noted. He explained the reimbursement for a fulltime officer who is assigned to the unit. Discussion continued regarding certifications, child safety seats, and training, with the State of Georgia 100% responsible for the cost of equipment.

- b. Homeownership Incentivization Plan

Yvette Fields, Asst. City Manager, discussed information regarding discussion at the spring retreat pertaining to ARPA Funds and advised that the committee recommended option 2 as noted, with additional information distributed (copy on file).

Commissioner Howard clarified that the \$2 million will go to the Land bank. Ms. Fields explained that the option includes several areas to use funding, including the Medical Housing district, et al, including

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

the Holloway, Driskill, Henderson areas, adding that there are no restrictions and housing could go into any area of Albany where funds have already been invested. Discussion continued regarding the number of homes that can be built, the perimeter whereby the City has invested funds already, Landbank requiring properties, using properties already in place with a focus on building and encouraging construction on city investments. Mr. Forgey advised that additional information is on the website and will be provided.

Commissioner Young questioned where the monies will be spent and if some of it will be spent in Community Development revitalization areas. John Hawthorne, CED Director, discussed properties that were acquired by Community Development (assets include property in S. Albany [River Road area], Holloway and Odom, Ragsdale [Mary Young Cummings Park], infill lots in S. Albany, properties in the Enterprise Community, next to the medical district, but no significant properties in E. Albany. He explained that the \$1.2 million the City anticipates will be through an infrastructure grant for the medical district, adding that there is a need to spend \$1.2 million with or without the grant. The Lang Bank's mortgage structure was discussed, with Mr. Forgey advising of the process regarding funding as required by state law guidelines with rules that will be put in place, whether more staffing will be needed with the potential to hire a general contractor with most work being done inhouse.

Mayor Dorough asked how the decision was made to give \$1.2 million to the Medical District and \$2.0 million to the Land Bank. Referring to the \$1.2 million, Ms. Fields explained that it was due to the grant application for the Medical District. Mayor Dorough asked if it can be divided 50/50 with two-three houses being built simultaneously and if the \$2.0 million can be allocated to the Land Bank so that the Commission is no longer involved at that point. Ms. Fields agreed and mentioned an MOU between the Commission and Land Bank. Mayor Dorough expressed concern about Ragsdale and suggested that putting modular homes in will discourage conventional stick built. Ms. Fields stated that modular homes can be built quicker and at a lower cost, adding that Mr. Hawthorne has tried to bid stick-built homes, but the price come in two-three times higher than what has been budgeted.

Commissioner Warbington mentioned the MOU with \$2.0 million in funding to the Land Bank to come back later with clear details, i.e., within 12 months, six houses will be constructed and rather than 'city-owned assets' they should be named Phoebe, Driskill Park, Story Road, ., with approval next week of option 1 or 2. Mr. Brown explained the process of bringing information back to the Commission for additional approval once the option is selected. Discussion continued regarding having a list of properties the Land Bank can use with a strategic plan in place for housing with a map being provided of properties being looked at.

Commissioner Young asked to have a mix of revitalization areas that Community Development is looking at and mentioned tax allocation district inclusive of investments. Discussion continued regarding putting houses on the tax digest, decrease crime and other impacts on the communities. Mayor Dorough again asked to reallocate the funds, mentioning a great need for City-owned properties and whether the Land Bank Authority will be a lender or finance mortgages with an advantage to assist homeowners and/or have a mixture of opportunities regarding finances. Ms. Fields explained that the Land Bank will not be the mortgage holders and that other entities can be used for mortgage financing.

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

Commissioner Warbington mentioned a class taken at the GMA summer conference and how the information fits in with the mission of the Land Bank Authority.

c. Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant

Rob Griffin, Interim Director of Engineering, discussed information (copy on file) and asked for approval.

Commissioner Howard questioned the bridge being across railroad tracks. Commissioner Warbington commended staff for searching for grants and having a plan to cross the railroad tracks.

Mayor Dorough asked the cost to retain a consultant with Mr. Griffin stating that it will be at least 10%. The feasibility study was mentioned, with Mayor Dorough asking the junction point on the E. side of the river. Mr. Griffin advised that this does not go to the river and includes just the railroad tracks.

MEMBER COMMENTS/ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commission Howard:

- Asked if utilities could go to Tompkins Ave. in E. Albany, to see what is going on with the light bills being current or in arrears
- Mentioned cats in the area
- Mentioned a blind spot in front of the Chamber due to oak trees blocking traffic going west at the intersection of Broad and Jackson.

Commissioner Warbington mentioned a multi-family housing inspection program, recalling Code closing one/two apartment complexes due to sewer issues a year or so ago and stated that Charles Abbott and Associates, who conducts City inspections, have a program in a city they serve and asked if this can be revisited (Mr. Brown and Mr. Forgey was asked to provide information).

Mayor Dorough mentioned:

- The conference call with re: option 1-2 at Henderson Gym, with Option 1 no longer on the table and advised that it will not be six months before a vote can be taken and the City Attorney will be providing information on this matter
- Gortatowsky Park maintenance and whether stumps can be ground and lights working properly on the front of the building.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS/UPDATES

Mr. Brown discussed:

- Recognition of APD being Star Business of the Week
- Conditional items on the 8/27 meeting:

AUGUST 20, 2024
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING
ROOM. 100

- Driskill Park/concession building/pool house and the bid for the pool with concession being at a cost of \$45K with staff's concurrence
- Aretes security payment

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Litigation, Cyber Security, Real Estate)

At 11:32 a.m., Commissioner Howard moved to enter executive session, seconded by Commissioner Gaines, the roll call unanimously carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	absent
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	absent
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

At 12:55 p.m., Commissioner Warbington moved to exit executive session, seconded by Commissioner Young, the roll call unanimously carried as follows:

Ward I	yes
Ward II	absent
Ward III	yes
Ward IV	yes
Ward V	absent
Ward VI	yes
Mayor	yes

At 12:56 p.m.. Mayor Dorough advised that no decision was made in executive session regarding the matters discussed and adjourned the meeting.

Sonja Tolbert
City Clerk