

MINUTES OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF WATKINSVILLE
July 13, 2022 @ 6:30 PM

NOTE OF RECORD: These summarize the action at the council meeting. For full discussion at this meeting, a full video recording is available online at www.cityofwatkinsville.com.

PRESENT: Mayor Brodrick, Councilmembers Massey, Campbell, Garrett, Tucker, Attorney Reitman, Manager Dickerson, Chief Brock, and Clerk Klein. Mayor Brodrick opened the in person public and simultaneous online broadcast SuiteOne video meeting of July 13, 2022, at 6:30 PM. In attendance in person at City Hall were 24 citizens.

ABSENT: Councilmember Thomas

WELCOME: At 6:30 PM, Mayor Brodrick opened the meeting.

QUORUM CHECK: At 6:30 PM, Mayor Brodrick acknowledged a quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: At 6:31 PM, Brock family led the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNIZE FORMER MAYOR DAVE'S PASSING: Mario Castro was in attendance. At 6:32 PM, Mayor Brodrick struggled with a loss of words in announcing the passing of former Mayor Dave Shearon. He recognized Dave's husband, Mario Castro who was in attendance. He described how Mayor Dave's impact will continue to be felt throughout Watkinsville. He stated Mayor Dave led from the heart, dreamed big, demanded excellence, and was a man of vision. A short video was played showing Mayor Dave's love for slides and various photos taken over his term as Mayor. Manager Dickerson announced there will be a slide at the Playground of Possibilities that will be named in Mayor Dave's memory and will be funded by the City of Watkinsville employees. State Representative Marcus Wiedower and all Council members provided words of condolence and shared heartfelt memories of their time with Mayor Dave and Mario.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. At 6:44 PM, Tucker moved to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2022, council meeting as presented. Campbell second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 4 to 0.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

At 6:45 PM, Tucker moved to approve agenda with the following changes: Table Item 8 – Potential appropriation for Sewer Line A. Campbell second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 4 to 0.

ADMINISTRATION

Public Input Process: At 6:45 PM, Mayor Brodrick briefed those present about the public input process. Mayor Brodrick explained that if anyone wished to address Mayor and Council then they could do so at the noted times on the agenda or at the discretion of Council. Mayor Brodrick noted City Code Section 2-26(d): comments should be related to items on the agenda, speak from the podium, no more than four minutes per person, and Council does not allow for debate, argument, personal attacks, or irrelevant discussion.

2. Financial Reports – General, Fund Reserve, SPLOST I, II, III, and ARPA funds:

At 6:46 PM, Dickerson provided monthly financial reports including a summary of balances for each fund.

3. Economic Development Reports – Business Licenses, Building Permits:

At 6:47 PM, Dickerson reported 55 building permits for 22 projects were issued and collected \$4,250 in business and alcohol licenses in the month of June 2022, which included South Main Brewing, LLC.

4. Police Department Report:

At 6:50 PM, Chief Brock referenced his report which had been provided to Council and asked if there were any questions. He shared that Mayor Brodrick had requested comparison data for the traffic calming devices, which will be provided next month. He recognized the city's newest patrol officer, Ryan Anglin. Mayor Brodrick delivered the oath of office to Ryan Anglin as Patrol Officer for the City of Watkinsville.

CONSENT AGENDA

Nothing this month.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Input Process: At 6:57 PM, Mayor Brodrick once again noted the public input process, per City Code Section 2-26(d).

5. Public input on potential referendum for 2022 Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) referendum and/or projects

At 6:58 PM, Mayor Brodrick shared information on how funds from a TSPLOST could be used, including for building/improving roads, bridges, and transportation trails, etc.

Dickerson noted that based on negotiations with Oconee County, the city will receive 7.77% of the TSPLOST revenues collected which will be approximately \$4.69 million over five years. She stated that TSPLOST requires that 30% of funds be used to support the Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan and the city will designate those for road resurfacing and rehabilitation.

At 7:02 PM, Mayor Brodrick opened the public hearing. Chairman Daniell explained after TSPLOST failing to pass last year, citizens approached him to try again. The county should receive \$52 million. If TSPLOST passes, the county will rollback one mill on property taxes. He shared that Bogart and Bishop had both already approved the intergovernmental agreement with Oconee County to participate in TSPLOST and North High Shoals would be considering it on Monday, July 18.

Wyler Hecht, 38 Barnett Shoals Road, asked for an explanation on what a one mill offset means and how long does TSPLOST last. Chairman Daniell explained it would last for five years regardless of the amount collected. The one mill offset means property owners will see a one mill reduction in property taxes from the current 6.5 millage rate charged by the County.

At 7:08 PM, Mayor Brodrick closed the public hearing.

APPEARANCES

6. Architectural Renderings of Oconee County Library – Watkinsville Branch @ Wire Park

At 7:08 PM, the library's architect, Ponder & Ponder of 3000 Lankford Road, Peachtree Corners, GA, provided renderings and discussed the plans for the new library.

Tucker expressed concerns that there was not a bathroom close to the children's section at the back of the library. Carmen Ponder explained a bathroom in the children's section was discussed at length, but the cost was prohibitive as it would require an 8-inch cut in the concrete slab to accommodate the plumbing.

Kathleen McQuiston, 13 South Barnett Shoals Road, asked why the children's section was located at the back of the building instead of near the front where the bathrooms were. Carmen Ponder explained that library staff insisted the children's section be located away from the front doors.

Tucker asked if a "wish list" would be being created which might create opportunities for sponsors, or donors to fund some of the items desired but not within the current budget. Rob Ponder responded that a list would be created. Tucker added she would love to see some naming opportunities.

Mayor Brodrick commented that the library will be here for 30 plus years, so it may be worth spending money to get bathrooms on the children's side.

OLD BUSINESS

7. **ORDINANCE: Adopt Hotel-Motel Excise Tax and RESOLUTION to adopt fee schedule**

At 7:28 PM, Dickerson provided a summary of the Hotel-Motel Excise Tax Ordinance. Dickerson explained that this tax is already being collected by the County; however, approval of this ordinance will allow the city to receive the taxes. She noted a portion of these taxes will be used to support tourism, tradeshow, and conventions. Dickerson stated that the "Marketplace Innkeeper" will be responsible for collecting and paying the taxes to the city and not the property owner.

At 7:37 PM, Tucker moved to adopt the Hotel-Motel Excise Tax ORDINANCE that sets and levies an excise tax of five percent of the charge for the furnishing for value to the public of any room or rooms, lodgings, or accommodations facilitated or furnished by an Innkeeper, per OCGA 48-13-51(a)(1)(A)(3) and to approve the RESOLUTION to adopt the fee schedule. Campbell second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 3 to 1. Garrett opposed.

8. **Potential appropriation for Sewer Line A.**

Tabled during approval of agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

9. **Rocket Field Update**

At 7:37PM, Mayor Brodrick provided a presentation of proposed renovations to Rocket Field in which private Oconee County citizen, Kelly Mahoney has graciously agreed to sponsor all costs, except for trees, gazebo, and lights. Mayor Brodrick noted the proposed plan will place Home plate back in its original location, close to OCAF. Brodrick announced two opportunities for public input would be held on August 2 at 6 PM and August 9 at 6 PM in City Hall.

Tucker saw this as an amazing opportunity and appreciated that the renovations will make Rocket Field more historically accurate. She encouraged everyone to tell their friends to provide input on the plans.

Garrett noted that this has been a dream for a long time and this opportunity will cost the city little.

Massey expressed concerns about moving home base back to where it used to be, noting she understood Home plate was moved because of the sun's position later in the day and where the bleachers are proposed will also get all the afternoon sun and may not afford a great view of the field. Mayor Brodrick made a note for the architects to look into those concerns.

Campbell agreed that what has been proposed is a great opportunity for the city and appreciated Mahoney's generous contribution.

Laura Rose, 104 White Street, thanked Tucker for adding the suggestion of a petanque court. She added that senior adults like to do things other than walking and suggested Council think a little more about what can be done for older adults.

Kathleen McQuiston, 13 South Barnett Shoals Road, introduced two gentlemen from Athens that play petanque with her husband on a gravel lot in Athens. She shared that a petanque court would only require a 50-foot by 80-foot space and a couple of benches and it would not be expensive to install a court over by the proposed gazebo which could provide shade. She offered to help with the design and plan.

Jerry Gale, 10 South Strathford (Athens), stated that he takes UGA students to play petanque and would love to bring them to Watkinsville to play and spend their money.

Kathleen McQuiston asked who would be responsible for maintenance of the new facility and grounds. Mayor Brodrick stated the city will be having conversations with Little League and other teams about use of the field and new facilities and anticipates having them jointly provide maintenance.

Charlie Blair, 22 School Street, noted the grass gets cut but the lot does not get taken care of (fence, etc.). He questioned how it will be taken care of after renovations. He stated he and his wife, Dana were happy with the proposed plans. Mayor Brodrick stated that when there is more use of a facility, it is often better maintained, but noted the city would be working with groups to oversee and ensure the proper maintenance of the new facility.

At 7:59 PM, Tucker moved to proceed with conversations with Mahoney. Campbell second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 4 to 0.

10. Discuss potential referendum for 2022 Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) 2022 and/or projects

Dickerson shared the proposed project budgets and reminded Council if they decided to provide specific projects for the TSPLOST referendum, they would need to provide the County with the breakdown.

Tucker expressed some hesitancy in assigning a specific percentage of funds to project categories with no particular projects in mind.

Mayor Brodrick noted there will likely be the need for matching funds for anticipated but unknown projects where these funds could be leveraged.

Tucker commented that she would prefer more flexibility on the budget proposed.

11. Consider RESOLUTION authorizing Intergovernmental Agreement with Oconee County for 2022 TSPLOST

At 8:08 PM, Garrett moved to approve the RESOLUTION with Exhibit A which provides specific categories with designated funding amounts. Campbell second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 4 to 0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

MAYOR'S REPORT

At 8:08 PM, Mayor Brodrick provided an update that included construction of a new ADA compliant sidewalk at City Hall. He thanked Chairman Daniell and Oconee County for their help with moving the water meter during the project and noted that landscaping would be done in the fall.

Brodrick was pleased with the great submissions during the city's recent July 4th "Turn Watkinsville Red, White, and Blue" campaign and thanked Councilman Thomas for his continued efforts on that.

He encouraged everyone to get engaged with the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Update and noted that the survey is available online (city website) thru September 1, 2022.

Brodrick announced that the Braves World Series Trophy Tour will make a stop at Wire Park on August 20 from 10 AM to 2 PM.

He wished a Happy Birthday (July 21) to Council member, Christine Tucker.

Dickerson surprised Mayor Brodrick with a slide showcasing his son Aaron's 2nd place finish in the 2-mile run at the Nike Outdoor Nationals at Heyward Field in Eugene, Oregon. She also snuck in a slide of Aaron and the Mayor

at the recent Peachtree Road Race on July 4th where they finished with times of 34:54- and 44:42, respectively. Aaron placed a very respectable 79th overall out of more than 50,000 runners.

COUNCIL REPORTS

12. Chuck Garrett: At 8:12 PM, nothing to report.

13. Connie Massey: At 8:12 PM, vehicles turning off Main Street are slowing down more.

14. Brett Thomas: Absent. No report.

15. Christine Tucker: At 8:13 PM, Tucker shared that she had the opportunity to attend the GMA Conference in Savannah to learn about activating the city's Downtown Development Authority. She noted that there was an entire section on having an Historic Preservation District and stated that she would like to see the city move forward with establishing one. She also referenced that tax incentives and grants are available.

16. Jeff Campbell: At 8:14 PM, nothing to report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:14 PM, Tucker moved to leave regular session and go into executive session for discussing real estate and threatened/pending litigation. Campbell second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 4 to 0.

At 9:01 PM, Tucker moved to leave executive session and return to regular session. Garrett second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 4 to 0.

ADJOURN

At 9:02 PM, Tucker moved to adjourn. Campbell second. *Opportunity for discussion.* Motion carried 4 to 0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

JULIE A. KLEIN, CMC