

CITY OF THOMSON
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 12, 2023

6:00PM

Thomson-McDuffie Government Center

Present:

Kenneth Usry, Mayor
Alton Belton, Councilmember
Keryl Corley, Councilmember
Elaine Johnson, Councilmember
John Smalley, Councilmember
Scott Whittle, Councilmember
John Waller, City Administrator
Lucretia Ferguson, City Clerk
Jimmy Plunkett, City Attorney

Also Present:

Chief Courtney Gale, TPD
Jason Smith, Community Relations
Josh Heath, McDuffie Progress
3 Interested Citizens

At 6:00pm, Mayor Usry called the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to order and City Attorney Plunkett gave the invocation, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag.

CITIZEN INPUT:

Eugene Bird spoke on a Gala to be presented by Mad Andy 14:30 for those with special needs in McDuffie and Richmond Counties. It will be held at the Sweetwater Park Gymnasium on December 16th at 4:00pm for up to 300 – 400 guests. Mr. Bird asked for any help that the City would be able to provide. The Council asked questions and thanked Mr. Bird for having this event.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the agenda as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- a. Council Meeting, September 14, 2023. A motion was made by Councilmember Corley and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the minutes. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.
- b. Three 2023 Millage Rate Public Hearings:
September 7, 2023; 9:00am. A motion was made by Councilmember Smalley and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the minutes as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.
- c. September 7, 2023; 3:00pm. A motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the minutes as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.
- d. September 14, 2023; 6:00pm. A motion was made by Councilmember Whittle and seconded by Councilmember Belton to approve the minutes as written. A vote of 5-0 in favor was taken.

BUSINESS:

- a. Resolution 06-2023: 180 Day Moratorium on Receipt and Processing of Alcohol Licenses: City Attorney Plunkett explained that this Resolution would allow the City time to re-examine the placement and distance between establishments that sell alcohol. This resolution does not restrict acceptance and approval of One-Day Alcohol Licenses for special events. Councilmember Belton said that neighborhoods should have a voice as to what is located in their area. A motion was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to approve the Resolution. A vote of 5-0 was taken in favor.
- b. Thomson-McDuffie Recreation Department Request for Road Closure: TMRD will be hosting a Trunk or Treat on Halloween (October 31st) from 4:00pm – 7:00pm. They are asking that all access to Railroad Street from Main Street to Greenway Street be blocked. A motion to approve the request was made by Councilmember Belton and seconded by Councilmember Johnson. A 5-0 vote in favor was taken.
- c. Chamber of Commerce Request for Road Closure: In order to maintain the safety of visitors during the Camellia City Festival on October 21st and accommodate the early arrival of vendors on October 20th, the Chamber is asking permission to close Railroad Street from Greenway Street to O'Neal Street and Greenway Street from Railroad Street to Whiteoak Street from 4:30pm on the October 20th until the Festival is cleared out on October 21st. There will be a police presence at all times during the closure. The Chamber also asked for permission to erect two banners advertising the Festival. A motion was made by Councilmember Johnson to approve the request and was seconded by Councilmember Corley. A vote of 5-0 passed the motion.
- d. Fall Trash Amnesty Day: McDuffie County has chosen October 28th as the Fall Trash Amnesty Day. The City will have manned roll-off containers on Pitt Street, Martin Luther King, Jr Street, and in the IGA parking lot on Warrenton Highway.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Council Report: Councilmember Johnson requested that the grass be cut at Pitt Street Park. Councilmember Corley questioned if the City has taken care of its responsibility for the lights at the tennis courts. CA Waller explained that the ground remains wet in that area and the large bucket truck will sink. He stated that a solution has been found and the lights will be taken care of soon.

City Administrator Report: CA Waller informed the Council that the City has six vehicles to sell through Sunset Auction on Saturday, October 14th. These are not economically feasible to repair. He spoke about employee insurance and the 10% jump in the premium with our current provider and getting quotes from private firms that may bring the premium increase down to as low as \$90,000. He has been in touch with Piedmont-McDuffie Hospital to negotiate a better rate for the care of detainees going to the emergency room for care. An elected official retreat is being explored with the University of Georgia's Carl Vincent Institute of Government sometime in January-March 2024. The First Avenue Stormwater Project required Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) before selection of engineering

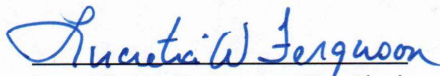
firms for the project. Review of three engineer firms' proposals will be conducted Monday morning, October 16th. Several other projects were touched on, including Community Development Block Grant 2024, UGA students helping with the Dearing Land Application System (LAS) new design and location, speed hump traffic studies, restoration of the breakroom at the Barn, City assistance with a sewer line extension in support of Empire Distributors at the Industrial Park to be funded by the Industrial Development Authority, 2024 Budget preparation, and employee recognition in November.

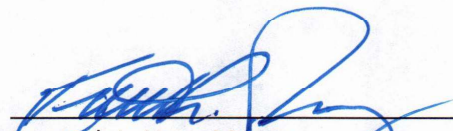
Mayor: Mayor Usry noted that the meter replacement project continues as potential problems are uncovered and solved. The Utility Billing Department recently had the envelope "stuffing" equipment quit and everyone pitched in to help get the mailing out. City and County employees all worked together. CA Waller is researching an alternate method of utility bill distribution. Jason Smith briefed the Council in on the status of the Animal Shelter which has reopened; two animals already adopted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

Having no other public business, a motion to adjourn was tendered by Councilmember Alton Belton and seconded by Councilmember John Smalley. A vote of 5-0 ended the meeting at 7:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Lucretia W. Ferguson, City Clerk


Kenneth L. Usry, Mayor

