

**CITY OF METTER
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024
5:30 P.M.**

A regular meeting of the city council was held on Monday, March 11, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. in the council chambers at City Hall.

Attending the meeting were the following officials:

Mayor Edwin O. Boyd
Councilwoman Rashida Taylor
Councilwoman Chyrileen Kilcrease
Councilwoman Victoria Gaitten
Councilman Gregg Stewart
Councilman James McKie
City Manager Carter Crawford
City Clerk Angie Conner
Public Works Director Cliff Hendrix
Police Chief Robert Shore
Fire Chief Jason Douglas
Planning Director Teresa Concannon
Director of Economic Development Heidi Jeffers

GUESTS

No guests were present.

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Boyd called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilwoman Gaitten led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

City Manager Carter Crawford gave the invocation.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve the following minutes:

- a) Called Meeting, Monday, February 5, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
- b) Public Hearing, Monday, February 12, 2024, 5:15 p.m.
- c) Regular Meeting, Monday, February 12, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Loan for New Fire Station

Councilman McKie made a motion to approve discussion regarding financing options for the new fire station. Councilwoman Kilcrease seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

City Manager Carter Crawford explained that USDA keeps delaying. They have required financial statements and we have sent them three times. They are requiring environmental statements again. The Regional Commission sent them to the wrong place. We have been notified that we must follow the Build Back America guidelines which includes all materials must be American made. They are requiring us to place an elevator in the building. The cost of the elevator is \$160,000.00. The architects are requiring \$26,000.00 to redesign the building to include the elevator and the engineers are requiring \$2,500.00. The USDA loan is at 3.5% interest rate with a 25-year payback.

With the GMA brick and mortar lease purchase program we would not have to get a construction loan. We can get a loan through a local bank if they agree to adhere to the GMA guidelines. We will not have all the requirements as with the USDA loan. We will not have to place an elevator in the building. The interest rate is 4.5 % with a 20-year payback.

The longer it takes the more the price goes up on building materials. Mr. Crawford informed the mayor and council that he would have more information at the April meeting.

Fire Budget Committee Appointment

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to appoint a councilmember to the fire budget committee to work with the Fire Chief and the county appointee to establish the FY 25 fire department budget. Councilwoman Taylor seconded the motion. Councilman Stewart expressed interest in serving on the committee. Councilwoman Kilcrease amended the motion to appoint Councilman Gregg Stewart to the fire budget committee. Councilwoman Taylor amended the second and the vote was unanimous. Councilman Stewart will serve on the fire budget committee for FY 25.

Executive Session

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to go into executive session for future acquisition of real estate pursuant O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(4). Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

After the discussion was complete with no votes taken, Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to close the executive session and go back into open session. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous. The executive session was closed, and the regular meeting reopened at 6:05 p.m.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

The agenda packets contained written reports provided by each department head for the mayor and council to review.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Crawford reported that for years we have been working with the legislature trying to get something done about SDS negotiations. He said that he commended Winder for taking it to court. He said that they had to take it all the way to the Supreme Court. The court ruled in their favor. Mayor Boyd said that this could be a benefit to all the cities in the state.

Mr. Crawford had put together some information for council dealing with future growth. We can use this information to put together a Growth Management Plan. This is going to take more than one year. We will also have to have outside help. Mr. Crawford asked the council to review the information.

The first thing we must do is get the infill development plan finished by the end of June. We will have to have the ARPA funds obligated by December 31, 2024. We had \$350,000.00 for infill development. The rest of the ARPA funds will be used for water and sewer utilities.

We are looking at 150-unit housing inquiries with most of them being duplexes. We do have eleven stick-built houses in the process off the Portal Hwy. They are building the streets for it now. There are one hundred and something units being proposed on the property next to the IDA property. The IDA is collaborating with them to get a workforce housing grant. We have a group that is looking at about thirty-five duplexes at the corner of Hiawatha. They are talking about Phase 2 next year with single family dwellings. We will meet with him one day next week. There is another interest looking at some of the IDA land to put in duplexes.

The auditor said that he would have the audit ready for the next council meeting.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Boyd reported that we have had workforce interviews for DAS. Interviews were done at five separate locations. Candler County saw 254 applicants. 160 were from Candler County. Forty percent were unemployed. They had to fly in recruiters from Alabama to get all the applications done.

Evans County (Claxton) saw seventy-seven applicants. Emanuel County saw 156 applicants. Tattnall County saw sixty-nine folks. Toombs County saw 157 applicants. They saw 713 total applicants. The DAS people were excited and happy about that. This was done through the State of Georgia Quick Start Program.

Before we meet again, we will have the Bloomin Festival. Before the festival we are going to have a cleanup day.

Also, on the Friday before Easter, the Tree Board through the City will be dedicating a live oak tree in the park to Carvy Snell.

Mayor Boyd reported that Main Street is getting a mural put up on the side of the Olliff and Fordham building. It will be the first interactive mural in the state. You will be able to hold your phone up to it and the mural will move. It is an animated mural through your phone.

The 4-Fungi has entered a European food contest. There are two companies in the United States that are in it and 4-Fungi is one of them. They are submitting two of their products.

Mayor Boyd reminded the council that the GMA Convention registration is coming up so be prepared to turn your paperwork into staff so they will be prepared to enter the information on March 27th.

Regular Meeting, March 11, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

After no further discussion, Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Angie Conner, City Clerk