

**CITY OF METTER
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024
5:30 P.M.**

A regular meeting of the city council was held on Monday, May 13, 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 Victoria Gaitten
Councilwoman Chyrileen Kilcrease
Councilman Gregg Stewart
Councilman James McKie
City Manager Carter Crawford
City Clerk Angie Conner
Public Works Director Cliff Hendrix
Police Chief Robert Shore
Director of Economic Development Heidi Jeffers
Planning Director Teresa Concannon
HR/Purchasing Manager Missy Edenfield
Fire Chief Jason Douglas
Finance Manager Cindy Collins

Councilwoman Taylor was not present for the meeting.

Attending the meeting were the following guests:

Jeff Register - Resident
Jana C. Sasser - Resident
Roberta Graham – Communities in Schools
Jessica Gonzalez – Communities in Schools
Juan Taylor – Metter Fire Department
Dustin Durden – Candler County Industrial Authority
Richard Deal – Lanier, Deal, Proctor, and Bloser CPA's

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

Councilman McKie made a motion to approve the following minutes:

- a) Regular Meeting, Monday, April 8, 2024, 5:30 p.m.
- b) Public Hearing, Monday, April 22, 2024, 5:00 p.m.
- c) Called Meeting, Monday, April 22, 2024, 5:35 p.m.

Councilwoman Kilcrease seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

PRESENTATIONS

FY 2023 Audit Report

Mr. Richard Deal with Lanier, Deal, Proctor, and Bloser CPAs presented the FY 2023 audit report.

Communities in Schools Program

Jessica Gonzalez and Roberta Graham with the Communities in Schools Program gave a presentation on the purpose of the Communities in Schools Program. In FY 24 the city contributed \$6,600.00 towards the program. This year they are asking for \$10,000.00 which is a \$2,400.00 increase.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Noise Ordinance Amendment

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve an ordinance amending the City of Metter Noise Ordinance in the Metter Municipal Code. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous. This is the second reading.

Vehicle and Traffic Ordinance Amendment

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve an ordinance amending the City of Metter Vehicle and Traffic Ordinance in the Metter Municipal Code. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Ordinance Amendment – Short -Term Rentals

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve an ordinance amending Title 3 (Revenue and Finance) to create Section 3.18 (Short -Term Rentals) in the Metter Municipal Code. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous. This is the second reading.

Ordinance Amendment – Definition of Family

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve an ordinance amending Appendix A. Article II, Section 2.25 the Definition of Family in the Metter Municipal Code. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous. This is the second reading. Reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission.

Resolution Certified City of Ethics

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve a Resolution certifying the City of Metter as a Certified City of Ethics. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Resolution Reappointing Angela Mims to Metter Housing Authority Board

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve a Resolution reappointing Ms. Angela Mims as Resident Member of the Metter Housing Authority for a one-year term, beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Resolution Reappointing Juanita Lott to Metter Housing Authority Board

Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to approve a Resolution reappointing Ms. Juanita Lott to the Housing Authority Board for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2029. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Voting Delegate for GMA Annual Meeting

Councilman McKie made a motion to appoint Councilwoman Chyrileen Kilcrease to serve as the voting delegate to represent the City of Metter at the 2024 Annual Business Meeting of the Georgia Municipal Association. Councilwoman Gaitten seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Waiving Fees for New Residential, Commercial and Industrial Construction

Mr. Crawford informed mayor and council that staff has discussed the residential, commercial, and industrial incentive programs.

Mr. Crawford gave the recommendations to the council for their consideration. He said that we want to encourage residential growth. We talked about twenty percent density bonus. In modern times if you can reduce the density and increase the number of housing units that is a good thing. He asked the council to review the recommendations for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Crawford said that the recommendation for commercial incentives is to leave as is. We have a good commercial development incentive program. Separate from this, we give them a free business license for the first year and reduce inspection fees for new businesses. Councilwoman Gaitten asked what about businesses that are expanding in Metter? Mr. Crawford said it would also be covered. It talks about renovation and adding on to existing buildings.

Mr. Crawford said that the last one is industrial. The City, County, Board of Education, and the Industrial Authority are currently joined by a resolution that governs the incentives. The current resolution is good for two more years. Councilwoman Gaitten and Councilman McKie had some concerns about adhering to this resolution for two more years.

Impact Fees for New Construction

Mr. Crawford said that Teresa Concannon put together a summary of DCA requirements for impact fees. It is not an easy thing to just enact. We will have to go through a whole series of actions to be able to put together impact fees. He asked the council to review the summary.

Councilwoman Gaitten asked if the city had talked to the Industrial Authority about us looking into this? Mr. Crawford said no, he had not. Councilwoman Gaitten said the IDA is a partner that would have to be included when we are talking about this, right? Mrs. Concannon said yes, the IDA is one of the recommended stakeholders as well as the Board of Education and other entities. Mayor Boyd said that impact fees would impact projects that are not necessarily through the IDA also.

Mr. Crawford said that impact fees are usually on residential projects. DCA requires that we have a steering committee and representatives from the IDA should be on that committee. A certain number of members would need to be developers.

Councilwoman Gaitten asked so what is the next step. Mr. Crawford said that the next step would be to decide if we want to move ahead with it and hire a consultant to help us through the process. That is the recommendation from planning. Mayor Boyd said that he thinks the first thing we would need to do is find out where these fifty participants are located. Mrs. Concannon said that there is a map showing where they are, not many in this part of the state. It is really the coastal region and the Atlanta region. Effingham has them but they do not actually collect the fees. They dropped collection in 2011 during the housing crash. That is a county that is growing fast but not collecting impact fees.

Councilman McKie said that the City of Rincon was collecting them but just had to reimburse a lot. They did not do it the right way. Mayor Boyd said that the fees must impact the property that is being developed. Mrs. Concannon said that there was a US Supreme Court decision that will make the consultants much more careful. We can do this, but we must be very careful.

Councilwoman Gaitten said that she does not think we realized this would be more for residential. She thinks that the council thought when we first initially started talking about it that it would be some help from the industrial businesses coming in since they would get those tax incentives and since we are waiving all the permit fees. She said that she does not think the council thought it would be residential. She said that she does not know if it is worth going after a consultant. Mr. Crawford said that he thinks there might be something down the road but right now we are trying to entice residential developments here. We do not want to slap them with impact fees at this point and time. Councilwoman Gaitten agreed because they would be paying all the permit fees.

Mr. Crawford said that with impact fees you can charge them a fee for public safety services and other things. Councilwoman Gaitten said the fees for public safety is what caught her attention.

Mrs. Concannon said that this is a tough process to go through and requires staffing for the administration. There are annual reporting requirements. There is a lot of oversight and administration that goes into it.

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 said that he had some good news to report. A Canadian firm called Organzo has announced that they would be a strategic partner at the innovation center. They contract with local farmers to grow mostly Asian fruits and vegetables. This could be very promising for our area. He said that he is just surprised at how well our innovation center is known. These folks are out of Canada, but they do have an American branch.

After announcing the good news, Mr. Crawford reported the following:

1. The city will be sending out the following RFP's:
 - Construction manager for new fire department construction.
 - City Auditor for a three-year period.

2. There were no audit findings for FY 2023. There have been no audit findings in two straight years. The City Clerk and staff are to be commended for their attention to details in handling the city's financials.
3. The 2023 audit shows a continued increase in the unrestricted general fund balance.

2019	\$407,537
2020	\$751,990
2021	\$1,133,418
2022	\$1,504,001
2023	\$1,725,864

Thank you to the administrative department, department heads, employees, and the Mayor and Council for making this fund balance possible. A healthy fund reserve is required to maintain a ninety-day fund reserve for catastrophic events.

4. Supplied the council with copies of the 2024 city budget year-to-date third quarter financial statements.
5. The city will be sending a letter to the Candler County Commission requesting that the Candler County Building Authority to be the funding conduit for the construction of the new city fire department. The County Administrator has asked Mr. Crawford to send him a letter for him to start the process.

Mr. Crawford explained that the county has a building authority that was used to fund the jail with revenue bonds and this authority was started in 2006. In their scope of what they can do is they can also provide funding to the city. The bonding attorney that is handling both the school and the jail contacted our city attorney and said that this would save us a lot of money for our citizens to go this route instead of going through USDA. It would also be cheaper than going through the GMA program. Basically, what they will do is issue revenue bonds for the construction of our fire department, but the city will be responsible for paying for the bonds. The Candler County Building Authority will have no financial involvement and are not liable. Councilwoman Taylor serves on that board. We will be starting this process to see if we can get some funding.

6. Mr. Crawford gave the council a life of law handout that gives the process of developing a law in the state legislature in Georgia.
7. We will be revamping the city's animal control facilities rules and regulations to allow volunteers under the age of eighteen to volunteer at the shelter.
8. Mr. Crawford gave the council some handouts regarding volunteer firefighter minimum training requirements and a volunteer firefighter article.
9. The final 2025 budget workshop is at 5:30 p.m., Monday, May 20, 2024. The budgets to be reviewed are administration, government buildings, streets and lanes, shop, planning, and economic development center and welcome center.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Boyd announced that the State of Georgia part of Economic Development of the Governor's Office has given their endorsement to a new industry support enterprise RISE.

In the morning at 8:00 a.m. at the Board of Education office, there will be a presentation on this program for the Board of Education members. What they are asking from the communities surrounding the Hyundai site (Liberty, Screven, Evans and Candler) essentially what they are doing is they have a four-year program set up to go in and work with existing industries to show them what they need to do to retain their employees so that they can be competitive with the new industries that are coming. This is a four-year deal. Chatham County is funding \$600,000.00 a year. Bulloch, Bryan, and Effingham are committing \$160,000.00 per year. So, they are asking Screven, Evans, and Candler to chip in \$55,000.00 each per year to pay the four employees that are providing these services to our current industries. The IDA is trying to make this as painless as possible by spreading the pain around. This is an invitation from the state. The Department of Economic Development is pushing this. The Board of Education is considering participating, the hospital, IDA and DDA. They are asking the city to fund \$10,000.00 for four years to participate in this economic development enhancement effort the state is actually putting on. With the state you have to pay to play.

Mr. Dustin Durden with the Candler County Industrial Authority was present at the meeting. He said that this is a regional workforce collaborative. The reason the state cannot pay for it is because it is a regional collaborative. With 159 counties in the state, they cannot fund just seven. There is no doubt we have the need. The last check here in Candler County our unemployment rate was 1.8 %. There is some assistance that is needed in Workforce Development. The other great thing about it in his opinion is that we will now be, we have always been on kind of the edge of, are we a coastal county or are we a middle Georgia county. We have always been on the edge not knowing which way we went. To him politically and over the next four years we will be in somewhat of a lockstep with the communities to the east that are growing rapidly. There will be many benefits, he thinks we can gain through that relationship. Mayor Boyd agreed with that. We have always felt a little left out because traditionally we have been part of the coastal region. Savannah is our regional source for almost everything. We have always been connected in that direction. We have been pulled toward Dublin and Augusta. That is not where we travel for our services, recreation, or anything else.

Mr. Durden said that when the IDA down there was originally set up, there was a quote in a news article that said that the industrial corridor pretty much ends at Bulloch County. That was in print so obviously we took some offense to that. Now with the Hyundai plant and our wins here on the Candler County industrial base so now they want us to be included. This is a little bit of a victory in his mind. Mayor Boyd said that it is a victory. We were not supposed to get the plants that we got. They were ere marked for the four counties that were in that industrial park agreement. The fact that we have gotten them to locate here has forced the state's hand in, hopefully helping us with some other things that are gone be needed. That still remains to be seen. This is an important connection to the coastal region that we need to make sure we take advantage of.

Mayor Boyd asked the council to go in the morning at 8:00 a.m. to hear the presentation, if not please study this and ask questions and talk to some other people. We will try to probably get an answer from the council sometime this month on whether or not we are

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willing to participate. Mr. Durden said that it does an excellent job in presenting what this thing is going to be. Anna Chafin is the CEO of Bryan County Development Authority who put together the JDA and the Hyundai deal. She is now CEO of this RISE Organization. Mayor Boyd said that this is an impressive team.

Mayor Boyd informed the council that the city will be receiving a City of Ethics plaque at the GMA Convention. We will need some people there to go up on stage to receive it.

ADJOURNMENT

After no further discussion, Councilwoman Kilcrease made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m. Councilman McKie seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Angie Conner, City Clerk