

**CITY OF METTER
PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024
5:15 P.M.**

A public hearing was held on Monday, February 12, at 5:15 p.m. in the council chambers at city hall.

Attending the hearing were the following officials:

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

Attending the hearing were the following guests:

Juan Taylor – Metter Fire Department
Brad Jones – Candler County Commissioner
Jessica Szilagyi – The Georgia Virtue
Representative from GMC Architects

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Mayor Boyd called the hearing to order and welcomed everyone.

PURPOSE

The City of Metter is applying to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a loan to build a new fire station.

The purpose of this hearing is to give the citizens an opportunity to become acquainted with the project and to comment on different items.

COMMENTS

Chief Douglas informed everyone that the Fire Department will be sticking with the existing plans that we have had for two years. The only significant change was the color change adopted by council.

Mr. Jones asked what is the budget for this project? Mr. Crawford commented \$4.5 million. Mr. Jones asked how many square feet is the building? Chief Douglas said almost 15,000 square feet. Mr. Jones said \$300 a square foot. Then he asked if the city plans to use a Contract Manager (CM) or a General Contractor (GC)? He said are you going through a general contractor or put it out for the construction manager to do a construction management on this project. Chief Douglas said that we are considering using a general contractor.

Mr. Jones asked why would you choose a General Contractor over a Construction Manager? Chief Douglas said that is what we were advised that would be our best bet. Public Works Director Cliff Hendrix said that we have always used a general contractor on all our projects. Mr. Jones said, "so you do not know if a construction manager would work or not." Mr. Hendrix said that we have never done a construction Manager. Mr. Jones said that most of the stuff that the Board of Education in Candler County does is with a construction manager. They go through the contract manager process where you choose a construction manager. That construction manager works hand in hand with the owner. Most people have good luck out of a construction manager. Mr. Jones said it is more of a personal feel than having a general contractor in my opinion. Mayor Boyd asked is it cost effective? Mr. Jones and Mr. Crawford both agreed that it can be through a construction manager. Chief Douglas said that we are not so far along that we would not explore that option. Mr. Crawford said we had a very capable group come in the other day and talked to me about it.

Mr. Jones said that you would select three to four general contractors to present you with a construction management plan on what they are going to offer you and what their fee is going to be. He said to him you get a lot more negotiations with a construction manager than you would with a general contractor. Mr. Crawford said that is an option we can certainly look at.

Mr. Hendrix said that you still would have to follow public works law to bid it out. Mr. Jones said that you would choose a construction manager and, in that case, send out invitations to two or three construction managers. They would solicit their construction management package to you. Then the board would choose a construction manager. It is like a bidding process. The general contractors go through a bidding process with the owner through a construction management package. At that point, the construction manager puts it out as a bid. Then at the bid opening they bring all the bids back to the table to the owner. Then the owner can look at the bids and decide which path they want to navigate to get the best bang for the buck. Mr. Hendrix said as long as this meets Georgia Public Works law. Mr. Crawford said that it will. You request for proposals and they will handle all your construction maintenance. The one he talked with was very qualified. They have built several fire stations.

Mr. Jones said that your architect will be at the general contractor bid opening and they will give you recommendations of who they have worked with in the past. Mayor Boyd said that sounds good, like a smart option.

Mr. Jones said that if the bids go over \$4.5 million then they will come back and work with you to get it back down to your budget. Mayor Boyd said that this sounds like it gives you a lot more options. Mr. Jones said that this option is more transparent to the owner.

Mr. Jones asked what is the time schedule on this project? Mayor Boyd said that we are waiting to find out about the USDA loan. As quick as they can give us approval, we are ready to go out for bid. Chief Douglas said that it has been a very lengthy process with USDA. Mayor Boyd said that this public hearing is one of the steps required by USDA. We have had the Department of Transportation that had it held up for 60 days. Mr. Crawford said that it has been through several

environmental groups. Mr. Jones asked if the city is borrowing the whole \$4.5 million from USDA? Mr. Crawford said that the city will be borrowing \$3.5 million from USDA. He said that the last interest quote was 3.5%. Mr. Jones asked for how many years? Mr. Crawford said, probably looking at 25 years.

Mr. Jones asked if the other million was coming from SPLOST funds. Mr. Crawford said yes from the current SPLOST and the past. He said that we will have to pay interest on a construction loan first. USDA gives the loan money after you finish construction. We will have to get a construction loan then permanent financing. We will try to get a construction loan from a local bank. Mr. Crawford said we are saying \$4.5 million but we must have a final number.

Mr. Jones asked how long have we been working on the fire station project? Councilwoman Kilcrease said that she has been here for twenty plus years, and we have been talking about it ever since.

Councilman Stewart said that when you get prices like these, they are usually only good for 90 days. Things are so crazy now that it is hard to estimate. Mr. Jones said it will be tough to build that building for \$4.5 million. Councilman Stewart said that he has not looked that closely at the plans. That is what I tell a lot of people when I work directly with these projects. that sometimes you just have to go get your budget numbers and a lot of times that is what helps design the project because you can see what you can and cannot afford. Then you make changes after that. That is why it is constantly evolving. It is hard to shoot from the hip because if you tell somebody it is okay and it is going to be this number here then that number sticks in their mind. Then you have to go back and make compromises.

Mr. Jones asked if was not the fire station bid out in 2003 and got all the way to council and then they did not go through with it? Mayor Boyd said yes at that point it was around \$1.5 million. Mr. Jones asked if was not it over budget then? Mayor Boyd said that it was over budget, and it was nothing like this one. It was very modest compared to this. At that time, we had an all-volunteer fire department.

Mayor Boyd thanked Mr. Jones for his comments. Mr. Jones thanked Mayor Boyd for letting him make the comments.

ADJOURNMENT

After no further comments, Mayor Boyd closed the hearing at 5:30 p.m.

Angie Conner, City Clerk