

**CITY OF EUHARLEE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 01, 2023**

Mayor Craig Guyton called the meeting to order. City Manager James Stephens said a prayer, followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following were present: Mayor Craig Guyton, Council Members Tim Abbott, Greg Free, David Duncan, Joe Turner, City Manager James Stephens, and Attorney Boyd Pettit.

Council Member Tim Abbott motioned to amend the agenda to add item #6 for Resolution Grant Request. Council Member Greg Free seconded the motion. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

Approval of Minutes

Council Member David Duncan motioned to approve the minutes for the Called City Council Meeting, 07.11.23. Council Member Greg Free seconded the motion. The motion was carried with all voting in favor.

UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

Package License Application – Dustin Smith

Dustin Smith, owner, and business partner Lonnie Payne presented an application to open a package store in the city of Euharlee. Mr. Smith is a 15-year resident of Euharlee being raised in Cartersville, Georgia. He is excited to serve the city of Euharlee opening the package store. He believes he will provide great service that will make the city proud. He also stated it would allow citizens to make purchases and not have to go outside of the city. This will also bring revenue into the city. Mr. Smith thanked the city council for the opportunity. Mayor Craig Guyton asked if the application was in order. James Stephens, City Manager stated everything was in order, staff recommendation for approval, and the fees have been paid. Council Member Joe Turner motioned to approve the application. Council Member Greg Free seconded the motion. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

2nd Reading Stormwater Post Construction Ordinance - James Stephens

James Stephens, City Manager stated the stormwater program document the council had before them is the 2nd reading. It is logistics and if it is not passed the stormwater program is not officially approved. The ordinance has to be passed to be totally in compliance with the regulations for the stormwater management program. Council Member Joe Turner motioned to accept the ordinance as presented. Council Member David Duncan seconded the motion. The motion passed with all voting in favor.

Traffic Study – EXP Engineers

City Manager, James Stephens stated this was the firm he met with about the traffic study for four different locations in the city in addition to locations the police department need for their radar recertification.

Higgins, traffic engineer with EXP Engineers, was present to discuss with the council what goes on in the traffic study. Mr. Higgins explained the study is to find out what is going on at the intersection when businesses are coming in and what is going to happen at these intersections adjacent to it. The starting point is always the traffic counts, get a count of the roadways that are in front of these locations of the business and the adjacent intersections. They start with the simplest and least expensive control which is usually a two way stop and then they move to 4 way stops; sometimes they look at signals that generally you do not want to do. The company performs processes to review stop signs, turn lanes, and roundabouts. They provide general processes and recommendations of what is needed based on what is out there and additional roadways.

Mayor Craig Guyton asked if they included residential growth. Mr. Higgins said they look at growth, they will look at the city's growth over the last 10 to 15 years and determine a standard growth rate and build the background growth for the traffic. They will look at businesses coming into the area when, where and will add separately to the intersections which is a one-time thing.

James Stephens, City Manager stated there is a large business located two miles from the city limits on Euharlee Road that is not being built currently and would not show up in the current count. How would that be approached within the process. Mr. Higgins stated they have several resources to access to find out what is being added. They will research the sources as well as speak with the clients to get feedback.

Council Member Joe Turner mentioned several roadways with possible growth to be included in the study and asked how they would present the final product. Mr. Higgins said they will present however the council desires.

Council Member Tim Abbott asked if the study could identify maxed capacity. Mr. Higgins said they are able to provide such information.

Council Member Free asked if the tag readers can be included to provide numbers and Mr. Stephens said yes. Mr. Stephens also shared that the traffic study included four intersections and to be completed individually not to exceed \$10,000 per location for a total of \$40,000. The roads include Cliff Nelson, Milam Bridge, Hardin Bridge, and the Euharlee corridor in front of the mobile homes.

Council Member David Duncan motioned to accept the proposal for the traffic study. Council Member Tim Abbott seconded the motion. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

Campfire Trail Resurfacing – EXP Engineers

Ryan Higgins, EXP engineer stated the surfaces were reviewed and found two different asphalts. The recommendation would be to build up and resurface the entire roadway. The approximate cost would be between \$25,000 - \$30,000 for the administration work for bidding and selecting the contractor. Mayor Craig Guyton said to add the item to the next work session.

Millage Rate – James Stephens

James Stephens, City Manager stated that the digest from the Bartow County Tax Assessors office was used to calculate the roll back to 1.72 mills. If the council recalls last year, the city tax levy was 2 mills. If the council approves the roll back, it is not required to advertise a tax increase and the total revenue would equal to \$293,611. The 2 mills would have to be advertised and the total would be \$339,631. The next work session the audit will be presented, but unrestricted fund balance at year end FY22 is \$1,347,189 and equates to 6.2 months of reserved fund balance.

Council Member Greg Free asked what year the city first adopted a millage rate. Mr. Stephens stated it was 2017, 2018, 2019 and then rolled back to zero. The city rolled back to zero based on the policy in place at that time; once reached six months roll back to zero, and the city reached the six months of revenue. The city added 2 mills back in 2022. The policy was updated to 2 million instead of the 6-month threshold and the city currently have 1.3 million of fund balance.

Resident Ron Hartman asked what the total tax the millage rate was based on. Mr. Stephens stated a mill of tax on the current digest equates to \$169,815,518. He explained the growth in the digest will yield a larger tax levy than the previous year. Council Member Tim Abbott stated the increase in Bartow County school tax will equate to an increase in taxes. The council discussed the different measures that affects the tax digest at the county level to help understand how the millage rate is calculated.

Mr. Hartman asked what the risk would be to roll back to zero. Mayor Guyton stated the risk would be using so much of the fund balance could require a higher tax rate of possibly 3 mills or more in the future to compensate.

Mr. Hartman shared his thoughts on current and incoming revenue; the fund balance, the RV camp, the tax digest from Cherry Glen subdivision, and new businesses, granted they do not bring in that much. The purpose is to use the general funds and why not give the citizens a tax break. Mayor Guyton added the Cherry Glen subdivision is not going to be built out and will not bring the mentioned digest next year and the same with the RV park which are projections.

Mayor Guyton stated for this year he was in favor of rolling the millage rate back to 1.729, but to roll to zero would not be conservative in his opinion to keep the city in the good financial state Mr. Hartman just mentioned. Mr. Hartman suggested a roll back less than the 1.729 so there is no tax increase for citizens regardless of the appraisal.

Mayor Guyton stated the 1.729 is a conservative figure and if the things mentioned comes to fruition, it would be a hope to roll it back significantly but for now keep the city in good standing.

Council Member Greg Free added, considering when the city had to implement a tax, as well as the LOST negotiation to decrease every ten years and already a \$130,000 decrease over the next ten years.

Guyton stated the auditors will be at the next meeting. The presentation and public comments will be allowed prior to the council voting on the millage rate. City Manager James Stephens stated the 1.3 million he mentioned in fund balance was received from the auditor.

Mayor Guyton stated that a vote was not needed, and it will be on agenda at the August 15th at a called meeting. Mr. Stephens stated he needed instructions to advertise the 5-year digest and the rate of 1.729 would not be considered a tax increase.

Resolution Authorizing Applications Under MPDG – James Stephens

James Stephens, City Manager stated it is a resolution Bartow County ask to be passed to apply for a federal grant in conjunction with Floyd County on joint application at the federal level. This is in hopes to keep the Euharlee bridge on schedule. Council Member Greg Free motioned to adopt the resolution. Council Member Tim Abbott seconded the motion.

Public Comments

Steve Gray mentioned Phase I of Osborne Park plan and had several questions about the settlement pond and the bid price. James Stephens, City Manager stated there is a settlement pond near the small ballfield and was included in the bids that were opened. Mr. Gray shared pictures of amphitheatres from other cities. He shared the cities that used sod and turf, loved their amphitheater. He continued sharing specifications he received. He also shared his recommendations in detail to build the amphitheater at a low cost and recommended signage in the city.

Crystal Brown commented in reference to Osborne Park and was concerned about the playground and nothing for kids to do and the safety of the dog park. She was informed the playground would be improved and the dog park would be fenced. The council continued a brief discussion about options for the playground.

Ron Hartman asked for the plans for Osborne Park that went into the RFP even though they are subject for change, to be posted on the website. Mayor Craig Guyton stated they would have the plans posted and noted they are subject for change.

Peter Piliero stated at Food Truck Friday the stage is pretty crowded and that should be a footprint of what they would do with the amphitheater. He did not feel the steps were needed. People bring their kids, and it is a nice atmosphere.

Cat Tull stated she has not seen the plans but loves everything about what the council is doing. She wanted to know if there is anything included or a small spot to represent the veterans. Council Member David Duncan mentioned the memorial for the city's fallen soldiers located downtown.

Council Member David Duncan motioned to go into Executive Session for potential litigation at 8:05pm. Council Member Greg Free seconded the motion. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

The council returned from Executive Session at 8:53 pm. Attorney Boyd Pettit stated the council had been in Executive Session for attorney client involving potential litigation. There were no votes or actions taken in the Executive Session and does not know of any action that needs to be taken by the council following the Executive Session.

Council Member David Duncan motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Greg Free seconded the motion. The motion carried with all voting in favor.

With no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.