

City of Donalsonville
Council Meeting-March 7, 2023

Official Minutes

Mayor Ron Johnson, Jr. called the Council Meeting to order at 6:00 PM at the Beall Center. After which Mayor Ron Johnson, Jr. gave the invocation, then all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America. Councilmembers present for the meeting included, Mayor Ron Johnson, Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Ed Bond, CP Mitch Blanks, CP Mitzy Moye, CP Travis Brooks, CP Lindsay Register, and CP Flossie Smith. Staff present were Interim City Manager/Communications Director Jeffrey Hatcher, City Clerk Christina Corvers, Interim Police Chief Kem Pugh, Public Works Superintendent Bert Adams, and City Attorney Billy Grantham. Fire Chief Dean King was absent.

Approval of the Agenda: Mayor Johnson requested a motion to amend the Agenda by moving items (8) and (9) under "Old Business" to be discussed in executive session at the appropriate time to discuss personnel matters, and to add under "New Business" the submission of congressionally designated funding projects. CP Blanks made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended, with CP Smith seconding. Motion carried. Next, the approval of the minutes from the February 7, 2023, Council Meeting. CP Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 7, 2023, Council Meeting, pending the addition of the information given by John Buckhalter with Burke, Worsham & Harrell and City Attorney Billy Grantham regarding the FY 2021-2022 Audited Financial Reports. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded; motion carried.

APPEARANCES: David Maxwell with BetterWay thanked the Mayor and Council for their continued support and requested the road closure of Woolfork Avenue on May 13, 2023 from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM for the Firehouse kick-off fundraiser. CP Blanks made a motion to approve the road closure request of Woolfork Avenue on May 13, 2023 from 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM for the Firehouse kick-off fundraiser, with CP Bond seconding. Motion passed.

Next, Chamber of Commerce President Sarah Avery gave an update on the Chamber of Commerce's recent activities and presented the following:

- Introduction of Youth Leadership Student.
- Scheduling a meeting for the "Litter Committee" within the coming week.
- Requested the Council consider purchasing additional Christmas Light Pole decorations to be placed along Highway 84 as they are on sale for \$299.00 each. CP Blanks made a motion to purchase eight additional Christmas decorations to be placed along Highway 84. CP Register seconded; motion carried.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Director Tori Gravlee then gave an update on the Board's recent and upcoming activities to include the following:

- Heather Sharpe with the Department of Community Affairs recently visited and toured the downtown area and was excited about the renovations of the Clarke Building and the Osceola Event Center. Also, Chris Higdon, Community Development Manager with GA Cities, is planning a visit of the Osceola Event Center to determine funding eligibility.
- The DDA Board members would like to schedule a meeting with the Mayor and Council to discuss the use of ARPA Funds.
- Making progress with the creation of a website that will be the central location for upcoming events and news, as well as promoting the downtown businesses and providing directories along with information on the Rural Grant and the Georgia Cities Loan.
- The Rodeo Cantina and Mexican Grille is set to open on or before May 1, 2023.
- Emily Davenport, Member Service Consultant with the Georgia Municipal Association, will also be visiting in the near future to tour of the downtown area.

PERMITS & LICENSING

PERMITS & LICENSING: Interim City Manager Hatcher presented an application for an On-Premises Liquor, Wine and Malt Beverage License to be issued to Erick William Gallegas Barajas, DBA The Rodeo Cantina and Grill, LLC located at 105 South Tennille Avenue Donalsonville, GA 39845. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the department was working on some additional

documentation and requested the item be tabled until the next regular Council meeting in April. CP Blanks made a motion to table the On-Premises Liquor, Wine and Malt Beverage License. CP Brooks seconded; motion carried.

INTERNAL BUSINESS

INTERNAL BUSINESS: The Financial Statements for January 2023 were presented and reviewed with comments made by Interim City Manager Hatcher on the current status, along with discussion on the three-month analysis.

OLD BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS: Interim City Manager Hatcher presented Resolution 03-07-23, City of Ethics Recertification. Interim City Manager Hatcher noted that the Mayor and Council will need to appoint board members to serve on the Ethic Board. After some discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to approve Resolution 03-07-23, City of Ethics Recertification; with CP Brooks seconding. Motion passed.

Next, Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the Mayor and Council had previously approved \$3,900.00 for the Betterway "Tree Project" in front of the Firehouse Gallery and Museum project. The total invoice for the project was \$4,775.00 which was \$875.00 more than what David Maxwell estimated. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that David Maxwell has requested the Mayor and Council approve the additional amount payable to Ebersole Concrete. CP Moye made a motion to approve the additional expenses for the BetterWay "Tree Project", with CP Blanks seconding. Motion carried.

Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that after a recent meeting with Motorola regarding the project for the radio upgrades, it was discovered that the City of Donalsonville will need a frequency and coverage map, a new antenna system, and some electrical work at the 7th Street site. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the items needed are in addition to the amount previously approved for the radio upgrades and unfortunately, the new radios will not work properly until the additional items are installed. Interim City Manager Hatcher spoke with RDC about the funds designated for radios, but it is unsure whether the costs would be reimbursable after purchase since Federal funds usually are not allowed as a reimbursement. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that plans are to continue working with Motorola in trying to negotiate the amount of the contract since this was not an anticipated expense and recommends tabling the water tank antenna system contract with Motorola until further information could be obtained. CP Smith made a motion to table the water tank antenna system contract with Motorola until further information could be obtained. CP Bond seconded; motion carried.

Next, Interim City Manager Hatcher gave an update on the Farmers Market Property, stating that the appraisal was moving forward and that the State Properties Commission hopes to have a value back to the City of Donalsonville by the next council meeting. Lastly, Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the City of Donalsonville has submitted a request for funding for this property to Senator Jon Ossoff's office and will be submitting the same to Congressman Sanford Bishop's office.

Interim City Manager Hatcher then gave an update on the overnight parking issues along CSX's right-of way on 1st Street. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that some of the business owners have already made the necessary parking arrangements and that the City of Donalsonville is currently working with the remaining business owners to bring usage into compliance. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that CSX has "No Trespassing" signs posted and recommends the City of Donalsonville also post signs as a deterrent for overnight parking.

Next, Mayor Johnson discussed the sketch he presented to the Council at last month's meeting on utilization of the vacant fairground property. After some discussion, CP Blanks made a motion to apply for the congressionally designated parks and recreational funds for a park located at the Crawford Street vacant fairground property. CP Smith seconded; motion carried.

Mayor Johnson then discussed dates to schedule a Council Work Session/Retreat. After some discussion, all were in favor of holding a Council Work Session/Retreat on May 6, 2023, from 12:00-4:00 PM.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS: Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the City of Donalsonville appointed three members to the Historical Preservation Commission a few years back but never followed through with the process. The City of Donalsonville can reduce the interest payments on revolving loan funds for downtown development if there is a building declared by the Historical Preservation Commission. Interim City Manager Hatcher requested direction from the Mayor and Council on the re-establishment of the Historical Preservation Commission. After some discussion, the Mayor and Council authorized Interim City Manager Hatcher to check with the previous board members to see if they are interested in serving and if not to work with Downtown Development Authority Director Gravlee for recommendations.

Interim City Manager Hatcher provided an update for the Communications Department. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that he was in the process of working with a company to review telecommunications bills and find areas for cost savings for the City of Donalsonville. Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the process should be completed in April, at which time implementation for Communications changes would be recommended.

Next, Interim Police Chief Pugh stated that he had nothing new to report at this time.

Public Works Superintendent Adams then stated that he had nothing new to report on at this time.

Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the City of Donalsonville had received emails from Senator Ossoff and from Representative Bishop requesting projects for the next Fiscal Year budget. These projects would be Congressionally Designated requests similar to the one approved for eDonalsonville. After sending a survey to the Council, Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that the consensus was to request funding for the State Farmer's Market project and the Fairgrounds Recreation project. After some discussion, CP Blanks made a motion authorizing Interim City Manager Hatcher to apply for Congressionally Designated Funds for the Farmers Market project. CP Register seconded; Motion passed.

Interim City Manager Hatcher then gave an update on the following:

- (1) Waiving Permit Fees: Interim City Manager Hatcher stated that there has been discussion of waiving the permit fees for downtown businesses making building improvements/renovations of \$10,000 or higher. The interested downtown businesses would first need to submit a request to the Downtown Development Authority Board for approval. CP Blanks made a motion to waive permit fees for downtown businesses making building improvements/renovations of \$10,000 or higher with prior approval from the Downtown Development Authority Board. CP Brooks seconded; motion passed.
- (2) Municipal Court: Municipal Court Judge Bell has decided to hold the monthly Municipal Court every other month, until the Municipal tickets/court cases begin to increase.
- (3) Event License-Alcoholic Beverages: City Attorney Grantham has been reviewing the adoption of an events ordinance which would allow for the licensing of non-eating establishments to offer complementary alcoholic beverages. City Attorney Grantham requested direction from the Mayor and Council on whether he should draft an ordinance for the Council to consider. After some discussion, the Mayor and Council all agreed to authorize City Attorney Grantham to move forward with drafting an events ordinance.
- (4) Police Officer Training Costs: The Seminole County Manager and County Attorney has requested further information regarding the invoiced training costs. Scheduling a meeting with the County to discuss all additional information requested. CP Brooks and CP Bond both agreed to meet with the County to discuss the additional requested information.
- (5) Georgia Cities Week: 2023 Georgia Cities Week will be observed April 23 – April 29, 2023. Interim City Manager Hatcher presented ideas for the Mayor and Council to consider at next month's meeting, to include a Resolution to recognize Georgia Cities Week and encourage all citizens to support the celebration and corresponding activities.

(6) Lead Testing-Pipes: The Federal Government has passed a requirement for all City owned water mains to be surveyed and tested for lead. The City of Donalsonville has been contacted by a consulting firm who will assist with the survey at no cost to the City of Donalsonville.

At 7:03 PM, CP Blanks made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded; motion carried.

At 7:35 PM Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to come out of Executive Session, with CP Smith seconding. Motion passed.

CP Smith made a motion to appoint Interim Police Chief Kem Pugh as Police Chief. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded. AYES: CP Smith, CP Bond, CP Brooks, and CP Register. NAYS: CP Moye. ABSTAIN: CP Blanks. Motion carried.

CP Smith then made a motion to adopt Resolution 03-07-23 A, to establish a compensation increase for the Mayor and Council. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded. AYES: CP Smith, CP Bond, CP Brooks, CP Blanks, and CP Register. NAYS: CP Moye. Motion passed.

With there being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, at 7:38 PM, CP Smith made a motion to adjourn, with CP Blanks making a second; and the motion carried.

ADJOURNED

City of Donalsonville



Ron Johnson, Jr., Mayor

Attest and Certification:

I, Christina Corvers, do here Attest and Certify that the above written is a true and correct representation of the business and actions conducted during the March 7, 2023 meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Donalsonville.



Christina Corvers, City Clerk