

City of Donalsonville
Council Meeting-November 2, 2021

Official Minutes

Mayor Ron Johnson, Jr. called the Council Meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. 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 Travis Brooks, CP Lindsay Register, and CP Moses James, Jr. CP Flossie Smith was absent. Staff present were City Manager Steve Hicks, City Clerk Christina Corvers, Fire Chief Dean King, Police Chief Woodrow Blue, Communications Director Jeffrey Hatcher, Public Works Superintendent Bert Adams, and City Attorney Billy Grantham.

Approval of the Agenda: Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to approve the Agenda, with CP Blanks seconding. Motion passed. Next, the approval of the minutes from the October 5, 2021, Council Meeting. CP Brooks made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2021, Council Meeting, with CP James seconding. Motion carried.

APPEARANCES: Sarah Avery spoke on behalf of the DDA and requested street closure on 2nd Street for the Annual Christmas Parade to be held on December 2, 2021. CP Blanks made a motion to approve the request to close 2nd Street for the Annual Christmas Parade to be held on December 2, 2021, pending coordination with Police Chief Blue. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded; motion passed.

Next Sarah Avery spoke on behalf of the Betterway Initiative and requested street closure on 2nd Street for the Annual Veteran's Day parade to be held on November 11, 2021, at 10:00 AM. Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to approve the request to close 2nd Street for the Annual Veteran's Day parade to be held on November 11, 2021, at 10:00 AM, pending coordination with Police Chief Blue. CP Register seconded; motion carried.

Chamber of Commerce President Sarah Avery then gave an update on the Chamber's recent activities, to include the recent construction of the downtown pop-up park. Chamber President Avery requested assistance from the City of Donalsonville with the installation of the Christmas Lights in the downtown area. Lastly, Chamber President Avery requested discussion with the City Council, City Manager, and Public Works Superintendent on adding additional electricity/water to Woolfork Avenue, Cherry Street, and 2nd Street.

Next, Winston Ferris requested permission to place a Mobile Home on a lot located on Constitution Avenue. City Manager Hicks stated that there are no existing Mobile Homes on Constitution Avenue or in the immediate surrounding area. The area is zoned R-B (general residential district). Recommendation is made to table the request for consideration at the next regular Council Meeting after the request is properly advertised in the local newspaper. CP Register made a motion to table the request until the next regular Council Meeting, after the request is properly advertised in the local newspaper. CP James seconded. AYES: CP Register, CP James, CP Brooks, and CP Bond. ABSTAIN: CP Blanks. Motion carried.

Rosa Perry Jones then requested permission to place a Mobile Home on 505/507 East Chason Street. City Manager Hicks stated that there are existing Mobile Homes on East Chason Street and in the surrounding area. The area is zoned R-B (general residential district). City Manager Hicks recommended to table the request for consideration at the next regular Council Meeting after the request is properly advertised in the local newspaper, and after Mrs. Jones provides proof of ownership. After some discussion, CP Register made a motion to table the request until the next regular Council Meeting, after the request is properly advertised and for Mrs. Jones to work with the City Manager and City Attorney to provide proof of ownership. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded; motion carried.

Next, Roshelle Leonard requested permission to place a Mobile Home on 1588 Rucus Ridge Road. City Manager Hicks stated that there are existing mobile homes on Rucus Ridge Road. The area is zoned R-B (general residential district). Recommendation is made to table the request for consideration at the next regular Council Meeting after the request is properly advertised in the local newspaper. CP Register made a motion to table the request until the next regular Council

Meeting, after the request is properly advertised in the local newspaper. CP Blanks seconded; motion carried.

Jonathan Pollard then requested permission to hold a 5K Run, Walk, and Bike Event in hopes to bring awareness to the community the benefits on having a healthy and active lifestyle. The event will include bouncy houses, food trucks, and vendors. The scheduled date is November 20, 2021 from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM. After some discussion, CP Register made a motion to approve Jonathan Pollard's request to hold a 5K Run, Walk, and Bike Event on November 20, 2021 starting at 8:30 AM, pending coordination with Police Chief Blue. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded; motion passed.

Next, Phillip Kirkland requested permission to purchase a section of road that was never opened by the City of Donalsonville. The road adjoins his property located at 308 West 10th Street. City Manager Hicks stated that this property is an existing section of road that was never opened and is not currently being utilized by the City of Donalsonville and recommends approving pending receipt of survey and quitclaim deeds at the expense to be paid by property recipients. After City Manager Hicks explained the process of acquiring the property, CP Blanks made a motion authorizing the City Attorney to move forward with the request to abandon the section of road. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded. AYES: CP Blanks, CP Bond, CP James, and CP Brooks. NAYS: CP Register. Motion passed.

INTERNAL BUSINESS

INTERNAL BUSINESS: The Financial Statements for September 2021 were presented and reviewed with comments made by City Manager Hicks on the current status, along with discussion on the three-month analysis.

OLD BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS: City Manager Hicks recommended the adoption of Ordinance 11-02-21, providing for an amendment to the City of Donalsonville's Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) to establish an alternative normal requirement qualification of age 55 with 25 years of credited service on or after November 2, 2021. It also requires all eligible regular employees (but not elected officials) to make employee contributions under the Plan in the amount of 2% of earnings. After some discussion, CP Blanks made a motion to adopt Ordinance 11-02-21, providing for an amendment to the City of Donalsonville's Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) to establish an alternative normal requirement qualification of age 55 with 25 years of credited service on or after November 2, 2021, to include the requirement of all eligible regular employees (but not elected officials) to make employee contributions under the Plan in the amount of 2% of earnings. CP Brooks seconded; motion carried.

Next, City Manager Hicks recommended the adoption of Resolution 11-02-21, providing for the adoption of the ad valorem tax rollback rate of 17.303 mills. The rate is a reduction from the previous year's rate of 17.319 mills but a revenue growth of 2.59% due to increased property values. After some discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to adopt Resolution 11-02-21, providing for the adoption of the ad valorem tax rollback rate of 17.303 mills. CP Register seconded; motion passed.

City Manager Hicks then discussed a proposed ordinance to designate a Festival District that would allow for beer and wine to be served on sidewalk, parking spaces, deck, porch, etc. of a licensed establishment. This would not apply for off-premises consumption. City Manager Hicks stated that the recommended Festival District in the downtown area would run on West 1st Street from South Knox to South Tennille, West 2nd Street from South Knox to South Tennille, South Wiley from US 84 to West 1st Street, Cherry from US 84 to West 2nd Street, and Woolfork Avenue from US 84 to West 2nd Street. City Manager Hicks stated that an exception would be granted to allow for off-premises consumption under the following conditions:

- (1) Application in writing in advance by entity seeking to hold festival, function, or event
- (2) Approved application allows to walk around District. Drinks must be purchased from licensee in District.
- (3) Paper or plastic cup only. One drink at a time. No more than 2 drinks.
- (4) No larger than 16 oz. container

- (5) No cans, bottles, or glass containers
- (6) Allowed only during legal hours of sale

After some discussion, City Manager Hicks stated that any changes would be made for introduction of the Ordinance at the meeting scheduled for December 7, 2021, with the final consideration at the Council Meeting scheduled for January 4, 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS: Mayor Johnson requested that the Council think of ideas to present at a later time regarding Community Enhancement (SPLOST VI).

Next, Communications Director Hatcher gave an update on eDonalsonville activities, along with the system's continued growth. Communications Director Hatcher stated that the department continues to push forward with the upgrade and expansion of the eDonalsonville network. The initial plans for Phase 1 are complete. Coverage will include Donalsonville, the areas west of Donalsonville, and areas in the southwest corner of Seminole County. These will utilize existing towers to provide coverage to residents in those areas. Communications Director Hatcher stated that the upgrade of equipment in Donalsonville will supplement existing coverage providing greater speeds to customers. The next phase of expansion will include more areas of Seminole County to include the Lake Seminole area. These have been identified as areas of little or no service. EDonalsonville is also looking at expansion into neighboring areas with identified needs. Lastly, Communications Director Hatcher stated that eDonalsonville was moving forward with the plans for expansion of the free WiFi downtown and the much-needed upgrades to the City of Donalsonville network. The upgrades will save the City of Donalsonville/EDonalsonville costs as services are merged. It will also provide additional capacity to service our residents. The downtown Wi-Fi project will provide access to Internet for people who do not have access or cannot afford access to Internet services. It has always been eDonalsonville's mission to meet the needs of our residents and we see the Internet as a necessity for education, work, and increasing the living standard of our population.

Fire Chief King then stated that he had nothing new to report at this time

Next, Police Chief Blue gave a brief update on a GIRMA Grant the department recently applied for to help fund the purchase of new body cameras.

Public Works Superintendent Adams then gave an update on the recent scrap tire amnesty event the City of Donalsonville held for residents on October 25-29, 2020. Public Works Superintendent Adams stated that the event went very well and exceeded expectations.

City Manager Hicks then gave an update on the following:

- (1) **Low Income Household Water Assistance Program:** The City of Donalsonville has entered into an agreement with the Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Family and Children Services to participate in a federally funded program to cover and/or reduce past due accounts, rates and fees associated with reconnection or preventions of disconnection of service, and rate reduction to assist low-income households with water and wastewater reconnection services and ongoing services. The program will be administered by the Southwest Georgia Community Action Program with applications submitted to and approved at the agency office in Miller County. For eligible participants, the past due accounts and arrearages will be covered in November and December. Beginning in January, eligible household accounts will be provided monthly payments. Payments will be made directly to the City of Donalsonville for each account.
- (2) **ARPA Funds-State Grant Funds:** Paperwork has been remitted to the State today to request the wireless broadband project funding in the amount of \$235,000. The City of Donalsonville submitted a request for \$225,000 in Local Relief funds last week for the treatment plant pond repairs. The paperwork was completed this week to request funds for the Public Safety Officials and First Responders Supplement Grant from the Governor's office in the amount of \$20,453.50.

- (3) Hydrilla Meeting-USACE: A meeting was held at Lake Seminole with the US Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the treatment of hydrilla at Lake Seminole. Several were in attendance, including Paul Fryer, representing Congressman Bishop's office. The City of Donalsonville has been asked to express support in creating a group to coordinate efforts to address the situation. Paul Fryer then discussed the local project to assist with the Hydrilla infestation on Lake Seminole.
- (4) Joint Comprehensive Plan: Seminole County, City of Donalsonville, and City of Iron City conducted a Public Hearing to update the Seminole County Joint Comprehensive Plan on Thursday October 28, 2021 at 6:00 PM at the Seminole County Courthouse 200 South Knox Avenue in Donalsonville. The current plan will expire on October 31, 2022. In accordance with the Georgia Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (Chapter 110-12-1), each community must conduct a public hearing before the start of the planning process. The purpose the hearing was to brief the community on the process to be used to update the comprehensive plan and offer opportunities for public participation in the development of the plan and obtain input on the proposed planning process. Once public comments have been addressed, the community can begin the process of updating the plan. Questions should be directed to the City of Donalsonville, City of Iron City, and/or the Seminole County Office or call Kay Olubowale, Southwest Georgia Regional Commission, 229.522.3552 ext.112.

Lastly, City Manager Hicks reminded the Council of the following upcoming events:

- Veterans Day Holiday-November 11, 2021
- Thanksgiving Holiday-November 25-26, 2021
- Council Meeting-December 7, 2021, 6:00 PM

With there being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, at 7:18 PM, Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to adjourn, with CP Register making a second; and the motion carried.

ADJOURNED

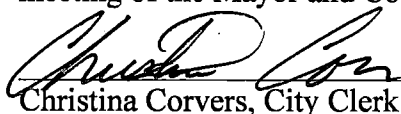
City of Donalsonville



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 November 2, 2021 meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Donalsonville.


Christina Corvers, City Clerk