

City of Donalsonville
Council Meeting-February 7, 2023

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 Mitzy Moye, CP Travis Brooks, CP Lindsay Register, and CP Flossie Smith. Staff present were City Attorney/Interim City Manager Billy Grantham, Interim Police Chief Kem Pugh, Fire Chief Dean King, Public Works Superintendent Bert Adams, Communications Director Jeffrey Hatcher. City Clerk Christina Corvers was absent.

Approval of the Agenda: Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to approve the Agenda, with CP Smith seconding. Motion passed. Next, the approval of the minutes from the January 3, 2023, Council Meeting. CP Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 3, 2023, Council Meeting, with CP Blanks seconding. Motion carried.

APPEARANCES: David Maxwell with BetterWay gave an update on the Firehouse kick-off fundraiser to be held Saturday, May 13, 2023, starting at 6:00 PM. Dinner, entertainment, and activities will be available. This event will be to help raise funds to transform the Old Firehouse into an Art Gallery/Museum/Cultural Center/Event Venue.

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

- 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 DDA has developed and approved a logo for the Authority which will be a replica of the Old Police Station.
- The DDA has entered into a lease agreement with Rodeo Cantina and Mexican Grill at the Clarke Building. Opening date set for May 1, 2023.
- Food-Truck-Friday has been very successful. Working on a lease agreement with First Port City Bank for the use of their available lot for the food trucks to park.
- Making progress with the Merchant Applications; on hold until further direction from Council on ARPA Funds.

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

- Request volunteers from the City Council to help form a committee to help address the trash issues around town. CP Blanks and CP Brooks volunteered to be on the committee.
- The Chamber of Commerce is working on a grant to help upgrade the pop-up park with the possibility of moving the current location.
- The Chamber of Commerce is also working on a grant to help freshen up the City Park by adding new items such as: speakers, new walkways, new landscaping, more benches, public art, children games, swing set, and fencing.
- Requested the Council consider purchasing additional Christmas Light Pole decorations as they are on sale until the end of February. No action taken.
- Students with the Youth Leadership Committee will be present at the March 7, 2023, meeting for their March session.

Next, Lorene Bennett requested permission to replace a Single-Wide Mobile Home located at 803 East Carr Street. CP Blanks made a motion to approve the request to replace a Single-Wide Mobile Home located at 803 East Carr Street subject to applicable code requirements. CP Register seconded; motion passed.

PERMITS & LICENSING

PERMITS & LICENSING: City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham presented an application for an Off-Premises Wine and Malt Beverage License to be issued to Chiragkumar Patel, DBA Vedu 2019, LLC located at 201 West 3rd Street Donalsonville, GA 39845. City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham stated that all background requirements had been met. CP Smith made a motion to approve the Off-Premises Wine and Malt Beverage License, with Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconding. AYES: CP Smith, CP Bond, CP Brooks, CP Blanks, CP Smith, and CP Moye. Motion passed.

INTERNAL BUSINESS

INTERNAL BUSINESS: The Financial Statements for December 2022 were presented and reviewed with comments made by City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham on the current status, along with discussion on the three-month analysis.

OLD BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS: John Buckhalter, with Burke, Worsham & Harrell, presented the City of Donalsonville's FY 2021-22 Audited Financial Reports with review of the internal control deficiencies. *The deficiencies discussed during the presentation were as follows:*

- (1) *The absence of segregation of duties in the custody and recording of assets.*
- (2) *Expenditures exceeded the budget in three General Fund departments and the Hotel/Motel Fund.*
- (3) *The City did not accept an annual budget for the ARPA Funds.*

Interim City Manager/City Attorney Grantham stated that deficiency (1) and (2) are common with small governments such as the City of Donalsonville, and correction would require additional staff which would be cost prohibited. Deficiency (3) has been corrected by the adoption of the 2022-2023 Budget. During the presentation, Interim City Manager/City Attorney Grantham advised that the FY 2021-2022 Audit had already been submitted to the State by the required deadline. The submission was done before the Council had approved the 2021-2022 Audit. After some discussion, CP Moye made a motion to approve the FY 2021-22 Audited Financial Reports. CP Smith seconded; motion carried.

Next, City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham presented the second reading of proposed Ordinance 01-03-23, regarding the re-districting for the City Council, along with the proposed map of the new Council Districts that was suggested by the General Assembly Legislative & Reapportionment Office. After some discussion, CP Smith made a motion to adopt proposed Ordinance 01-03-23, regarding the re-districting for the City Council, with CP Register seconded. AYES: CP Smith, CP Register, CP Moye, CP Brooks, and CP Bond. NAYS: CP Blanks. Motion passed.

City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham stated that the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) has been able to locate the original Ethics Ordinance for the City of Donalsonville. Since discovering that the original Ethics Ordinance was never sent to Municode for codification, it has since been submitted to them to be included in the City's Code of Ordinances. City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham stated that since it was time to re-apply (to GMA) as a City of Ethics, a Resolution will be presented to the Council for adoption at the March Council Meeting to renew the City of Donalsonville's City of Ethics designation which is currently in effect until June 1, 2023.

Mayor Johnson opened discussion on utilization of the vacant fairgrounds property and presented the Council a sketch of a "mini" YMCA to be constructed on that property. Mayor Johnson asked for the Council to review the proposed sketch and consider how the City of Donalsonville could move forward with the project so that the community could utilize that piece of property. No action taken.

NEW BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS: City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham presented Resolution 02-07-23, providing for the establishment of qualifying fees at \$108.00 for the Municipal Election to be held on

November 7, 2023. The qualifying fee is set at 3% of the gross salary of the office paid in the preceding calendar year. City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham stated that Council Positions for District 1 Post 2 and District 2 Post 5 will be up for election. CP Blanks made a motion to adopt Resolution 02-07-23, providing for the establishment of qualifying fees at \$108.00 for the Municipal Election to be held on November 7, 2023. Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconded; motion carried.

Next, City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham opened discussion on the American Rescue Plan Act budget. After some discussion, CP Blanks made a motion to approve the transfer of \$150,000.00 to the Downtown Development Authority to offer grant funding for established businesses. CP Smith seconded; motion carried. CP Blanks then made a motion to transfer \$100,000.00 (the remaining funds out of the originally \$150,000.00 budgeted for economic development) to the Downtown Development Authority for the improvement of the downtown. CP Smith seconded; motion passed.

Communications Director Hatcher then provided an update for the Communications Department. Communications Director Hatcher reported that Congressman Sanford Bishop had presented the City of Donalsonville a sample check during the media event on Friday, February 3, 2023. Communications Director Hatcher stated that the Congressman was very pleased with the work that had been done by the City to provide Internet to residents of Donalsonville and Seminole County. Lastly, Communications Director Hatcher reported that he is continuing to work with Motorola on completion of the Public Safety radio project, with current plans for the system to go live in three months.

Next, Fire Chief King gave an update on the Donalsonville Fire Department, to include the yearly report for 2022. Lastly, Fire Chief King stated that the department was in the final stages for their application to be submitted for a Fire Fighter Grant to be used to replace all fire hoses on the fire engines. The grant will require a 5% match from the City of Donalsonville. More information to come within the coming months.

Interim Police Chief Pugh then gave an update on three new vehicles that have been ordered through the Enterprise Fleet program and is expecting the first one within the coming weeks.

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

City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham then gave an update on the following:

- (1) City Manager Search: The Carl Vinson Institute of Government has promised a contract for the City of Donalsonville to review by the end of this week. The Carl Vinson Institute will then contact each Council member for input in the City Manager search.
- (2) CSX Right of Way: Working on getting information and authority from CSX to notify property owners of no overnight parking, etc. on 1st Street. The City of Donalsonville currently has a lease to maintain the property but there are restrictions that need to be addressed.
- (3) Water Pollution Control Plant: Max Mobley of Poly, Inc. (our engineering consultant) has started the re-bidding process with a deadline of February 28, 2023 @ 10:00 AM. The re-bid allows options for the bidders to quote using clay or concrete to repair the leak.
- (4) Police Officer Training Costs: County Manager Paula Granger has requested further information regarding the invoiced training costs. Currently working on answers to the County's questions.

At 6:58 PM, CP Smith 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.

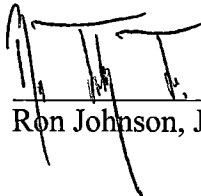
CP Smith made a motion to advertise internally for the Police Chief position. CP Blanks seconded. AYES: CP Smith, CP Blanks, CP Bond, CP Brooks, and CP Register. NAYS: CP Moye. Motion passed.

Mayor Pro Tem Bond then made a motion to appoint Communications Director Jeffrey Hatcher to replace City Attorney/Interim City Manager Grantham as Interim City Manager. CP Smith seconded; motion carried.

With there being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, at 7:40 PM, Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to adjourn, with CP Blanks making a second; and the motion carried.

ADJOURNED

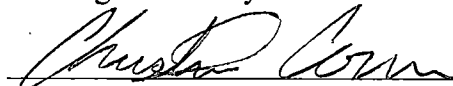
City of Donalsonville



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 February 7, 2023 meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Donalsonville.



Christina Corvers, City Clerk