

A meeting of all committees of the City of Gray, Georgia was held on Monday, April 17, 2023, in the conference room at City Hall located at 109 James Street

Present: Mayor Ed Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem James Collins, Council Members Terrell Fulford and David Tufts, City Attorney John Newberry, City Superintendent Cheyenne Morgan, Public Works Manager Chris Neal, Police Chief Adam Lowe, Fire Chief Keith Eisele, Main Street Director Ashley Roberson, City Clerk Cindy Yancey, and Assistant City Clerk Heather Brown.

Guests: Julie King, Bradley Carroll, Brian Jackson, Scott Jackson, Krystal Hubbard, Haley Watson, Debbie Lurie-Smith, *The Jones County News*,

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Finance/Tax Committee:

- Financial Update –
98.22% of the 2022 property tax has been collected, leaving an unpaid balance of \$18,937.69.
- Julie King with the Jones County library
 - Mrs. King came to give a brief update of what is going on at the library and to also thank city council for supporting the library with the \$2,000.00 which was spent on a Roku Tv for the community meeting room, a fridge/ freezer for the storage of the perishable items used within their programs and the rest of the money will go to buy stream kits. Mrs. King stated the library has 200- 150 people a day coming into the library and last year 25,285 people visited the library. Mrs. King stated the library now has a sensitive subject area for people suffering from anxiety and depression. The library will also be building an outdoor reading park with their splost funds which will have 3 tables one with electricity. Mrs. King stated they also started a new program for special needs adults 22+ years of age they have 18-25 adults so far involved in this program. The library also started a play card program which allows students to use their lunch number to check out 5 books at a time and the program is fines free for children's books if they are not returned on time. On Wednesdays they also have a program called Wiggle Worms which is for 0-5-year-olds. To find out all the activities the library offers visit the Jones County Library website.

Water/Sewer Committee:

- Bradley Carroll – Sewer availability
 - Mr. Carroll with Vantage Development spoke with council about their interest to build 45 single family homes on the vacant property owned by Brian Jackson at the end of Dixie St. Mr. Carroll stated they are looking to obtain a water sewer availability letter, a zoning letter, and the GICH letter.
 - Councilman Tufts stated he was aware with issues with people who paid for housing and properties but deeds were not issued as they should have been. Mr. Carroll updated that he is aware of this issue and if moved forward he would quit claim it to the people living on the property and not bother them otherwise.
 - Mr. Carroll stated they do not plan to begin construction until the 3rd quarter of next year 2024 and from his understanding the WWTP project will be finished by then.
 - Chief Lowe asked what type housing this would be. Mr. Carroll responded that this is affordable housing with the federal and state tax credits that will be rental homes with property management. The property is required to be rental homes for 15 years before the homes can be sold. Mr. Carroll stated they have completed several similar projects in Milledgeville, Swainsboro, Albany, and Augusta.
 - Councilman Tufts asked how the property would be managed. Mr. Carroll stated there will be an onsite manager with office hours every day.

- City council asked for Mr. Carroll to provide name and number references from the other properties Vantage Development built. It was the consensus of city council to look over the material and continue discussions.
- Storm Drainage
 - Councilman Tufts stated that everyone should have a letter from Matt Smith with Carter and Sloope about the storm drainage project.
 - City Superintendent Cheyenne requested that Mayor and Council allow an exception to the bidding policy for the Dolly Street project due to this being the area that the LMIG funds will be utilized. Mr. Morgan stated that the project needs to be completed before the resurfacing of the road. Mr. Morgan stated that the planned completion date for the drainage project is October 1st and the LMIG project needs to be invoiced and completed this year.
 - Councilman Tufts stated he understood from the letter no materials have been ordered. Mr. Morgan stated that they have specs and plans and that a few minor changes need to be made. Once the changes have been made the project can be started if the exception to the city's bid policy is allowed.
 - Councilman Tufts made the request to add the exception request to the May council meeting agenda.

Plan Committee:

- Mayor Pro Tem Collins asked Main Street Director Ashley Roberson to give a report of the Hometown Spring Festival. Mrs. Roberson reported that the festival had over 65 vendors including the storefront businesses, food trucks, and vendors set up on the street. Mrs. Roberson updated that at the concert that night Main Street sold over 605 wristbands. Chevys, Bent Axle, and Agave all sold 318 cups for the beer and wine sales and main street gets \$2.00 for each cup sold so main street will be collecting \$636.00 to go back into future events.
- Councilman Tufts stated he thoroughly enjoyed the event and that it was a nice family atmosphere.
- Mayor Pro Tem Collins stated he received nothing but positive feedback and is looking forward to the next one.
- Mayor Pro Tem Collins spoke about the yearly cleanup day which will be held on May 20th from 8am-12pm. He is hoping to get a good team together from the city and have everyone come out for some good food and great fellowship.

Personnel Committee:

Streets/Sanitation Committee:

- Garbage Rates –
 - City Clerk Cindy Yancey stated that she wanted Mayor and Council that the city pays out over \$8,000 more a month than what the city is collecting due to Waste Management's rate increase.
 - Councilman Tufts stated an additional look at the contract is determined to see if we can maybe re bid to receive a better rates or numbers.
 - City Attorney John Newberry asked if the city is being charged outside of the contracted rates. City Clerk Yancey stated she has had and is still having problems with them charging us different rates for the same size containers and she has asked them to correct it via email.
 - City Clerk Yancey stated she also sent an email and that she copied all of council because Waste Management started charging additional fees for excessive trash pickup and she didn't feel it is the city's responsibility to collect fees that implemented by Waste Management. She stated that she feels that fees charged above the city's normal charges should be collected by Waste Management.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins asked City Attorney Newberry if he could get with Cindy to send a bulleted letter of issues the city is having and allow them to provide an answer to each bulleted point.

- City Clerk Yancey stated in her opinion that since inside the city trash pickup is required, but outside of the city is voluntary that Council look at increasing the outside of the city garbage rates a little more so that the inside the city rates don't have to increase as much.
- Councilman Tufts stated to see the results received from the letter and a decision will be made from there.

City Property:**Public Safety Police/Fire:**

- Bid Opening – 3 patrol Ford Explorer Interceptors, 2 Ford Explorers, and a seized drug car. Jimmy Brit out of Dublin had the highest bids on all five cars. 2014 Explorer police car \$5,000, Black Ford Explorer \$12,000, 2016 Explorer Police Car \$8,500, 2016 Explorer Police Car -\$10,000, 2017 White Ford Explorer-\$15,000, and Seized Volkswagen \$16,000.
- Fire Chief Keith Eisele stated that they currently have the smoke alarm program active so if anyone needs a smoke alarm to reach out.

Miscellaneous:

- Haley Watson – Rural Development Institute is in Valdosta. Ms. Watson stated this is a program that partners with Valdosta State University center, and they work with economic and community development professionals to work on different things your community might find of interest. They have a mentor, and you partner with your mentor so she would like a county commissioner, city council member, member from DDA, and the chamber to all attend this event. They will help come up with projects to implement in the community and resources and grants that only apply to rural communities. The conference is \$2500.00 and DDA will be paying the Tuition but any member who decides to come will be responsible for room and any meals not included in the conference. The Conference is June 13th-15th. Main Street Director Ashley Roberson will be attending for Main Street, Councilman Tufts will be attending to represent for DDA. City Council will look over schedules and determine who will go for the city by the 26th.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Assistant City Clerk