

A meeting of all committees of the City of Gray, Georgia was held on Monday, November 18, 2024 in the Conference Room inside City Hall.

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

Guests: Sherri Rollins and Debbie Lurie-Smith, *The Jones County News*.

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

Finance/Tax Committee:

- Financial update
 - Councilman Fulford stated that 14.35% of the 2024 property taxes have been collected.
- House Bill 581
 - House Bill 581 grants a statewide homestead exemption that limits the increases in taxable value of homes to no more than the inflation rate that occurred over the prior year,
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins stated that Jones County and the Board of Education had a meeting to discuss HB 581 and both entities plan to opt out of the homestead exemption.
 - If the city chooses to opt out of the statewide exemption there is a process that needs to be followed. The process cannot begin until January 1, 2025 and must be completed by March 1, 2025.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins stated that he would like to have a vote on whether the city chooses to opt out of the statewide homestead exemption at the December council meeting.

Water/Sewer Committee:

- 2025 W/S proposed budget
 - City Superintendent Cheyenne Morgan reviewed the proposed budget with Mayor and Council. This item will be added to the December Council meeting agenda.
- Test well 118 – update
 - Mr. Morgan stated that he should know the production of the test well within the next week.
- Service Line Inventory
 - Mr. Morgan stated the city did not have any lead piping in the water system but there were 363 customers that were affected by galvanized piping. The US Environmental Protection Agency requires the city to notify the affected customers.
 - Mr. Morgan stated that customers have started receiving letters regarding the service lines.
 - Mr. Morgan supplied a customer education pamphlet to Mayor and Council to use as a reference guide in the event that customers contact them.

Main Street/DDA:

- Executive Session – Real Estate Acquisition
 - This item was moved to the end of the agenda.

Plan Committee:

- DRC Appointments
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins stated that they have three people whose terms are ending.
 - Mr. Collins stated Councilman Tufts would like to be reappointed to the committee which leaves two openings. Mayor Pro Tem Collins stated that Sherri Rollins and Vicki Etheridge would like to be appointed to the committee.
 - This item will be added to the December agenda.
- DDA Appointments
 - Main Street Director stated that DDA had two terms ending on 12/31/2024. Ms. Roberson stated that both Sherri Rollins and Rick Childs would like to renew their terms.
 - This item will be added to the December agenda.
- 102 E Clinton Street
 - Ashley Roberson stated that the estimated cost to re-do the building is approximately \$60,000. Ms. Roberson stated that it is mostly cosmetic work that needs to be done.
 - Ms. Roberson stated that they have not had anyone come into the look at the electrical work at this point but could get Middle Georgia Electric to look at the electrical work.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins asked Ms. Roberson to discuss the idea that she has for the use of the building. Ms. Roberson said that she would like to look at moving the Main Street office, Chamber of Commerce office and the Jones County Development Authority office into the building.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins stated that he supports Ms. Roberson's idea to locate the offices in one space.
 - Councilman Favors questioned how many suites that would leave to rent out and stated that he would also like to the current Main Street office rented out if it moved to a new location.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins stated that if the offices were moved to that location, it would leave two or three suites to be leased/rented.
 - Councilman Fulford stated that he feels that since the building is open with no tenants that the roof should be repaired along with the electrical issues. Councilman Tufts agreed.

Personnel Committee:

- Benefit Package (Insurance)
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins discussed the city paying for 50% of a retiree's insurance after they meet the requirements for the 75 Rule Retirement and have at least 20 years of service with the city. He would like to see the retirees be eligible to keep the medical and dental insurance until they reach the age of 65 or obtain other insurance coverage.
 - Mayor Pro Tem Collins would like to see that all employees are eligible to add dependents to the dental insurance at a cost of 50% of the premium.
 - This item will be added to the December agenda.

Streets/Sanitation Committee:

- 2025 LMIG
 - City Superintendent Cheyenne Morgan stated that he will be submitting the application soon and he wanted to confirm that Mayor and Council was still in agreement with putting the grant toward East and West Clinton.
 - Mayor and Council agreed with focusing on East and West Clinton.
- Sanitation Department
 - Mr. Morgan discussed the possibility of the city adding its own sanitation department.
- Truck Route Ordinance
 - Councilman Favors asked City Attorney Newberry about the truck route ordinance that had been discussed.
 - Mr. Newberry stated that he is working on the ordinance.
- Bill Conn Pkwy/18 E lighting
 - Mayor Barbee asked City Superintendent Morgan if he had received an update on the lighting that was supposed to be placed at the location.
 - Mr. Morgan did not have an update.

City Property:

- Surplus Property
 - Mr. Morgan opened the bids that he received.
 - Mr. Morgan will contact the highest bidders.

Public Safety Police/Fire:

- No Report

Miscellaneous:

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

City Clerk