



**Cleveland City Council
Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, May 8, 2023 - 6:30 P.M.
Cleveland Community Center/Police Department
342 Campbell Street, Cleveland, GA**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Turner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mayor Josh Turner, Council Members Rebecca Yardley (Mayor Pro Tem), Jeremy McClure, and C.J. McDonald

Council Member Bowen was not in attendance.

Also present were City Administrator Kevin Harris, City Attorney Keith Whitaker, and City Clerk Lisa Ritchie

- 2. Invocation – Dr. Phillip Weaver, Cleveland First Baptist Church & White County Ministerial Alliance**
- 3. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 4. Approve Agenda**

Motion by Council Member McDonald, seconded by Council Member McClure, and voted, unanimously, to approve the agenda with the following amendments:

- Postpone the Minutes of the May 1, 2023 Meeting
- Add pending litigation and real estate to Executive Session

PUBLIC HEARINGS

5. Second Public Hearing – 2023-09 – Leak Protection

Mr. Harris addressed the Mayor and Council Members. He stated that a leak protection program will provide guidance and minimize risks. He said the program will only be for residential customers.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Turner closed the Public Hearing.

6. First Public Hearing – 2023-11 -Amendment to the Personnel Policy

- Utilization of Technologies Policy
- Wireless Mobile Device Agreement

Mr. Harris stated that the policies were written by the city's insurance company.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Turner closed the Public Hearing.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

7. Economic Development and Planning– Director Tom O'Bryant

- ~~March~~ April 2023 Report

Mr. O'Bryant addressed the Mayor and Council Members. He reported the following April items:

- Occupational Licenses – 3 (Woodland Resort, IT Computer Repair, North GA Reign Gymnastics)
- Building Permits – 4 (Atlantic Billboards, residential remodels)
- Sign Permits – 5 (Cabin Rental of Helen, Atlantic Billboards, IT Computer Repair, Great Therapy)
- Building Inspections – 22 (Yonah Shadows, Jackson Downs, Parkside Downtown, signs)
- Plan Review – 2 (Oak Springs Cottages, Waffle House GDOT utility)
- Current Commercial Activity – 4 (Apex Banks, Atlantic Billboards, Waffle House, Scooters Coffee)
- Development Inquiries – 7 (Haines Gipson Engineers, Norton Commercial, Cook Communities, Santiago -Truist, John Simpson Sugar Oak LLC, Summitt Investment Properties)
- Grant Applications
 - Appalachian Regional Grant full application is currently under review by ARC in Washington, DC.
 - GDOT Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant application for preliminary engineering for sidewalk and crosswalks connecting Freedom Park and City Park. Held kick-off meeting, steps and process identified.

- Infrastructure and Planning
 - London Land Surveying is drawing up a plat with the proposed easement for the gravity flow sewer line at the Head Street lift station.
 - The new well draw down test results have been submitted to Georgia EPD for review.
 - DDA meeting. Downtown housing discussion, expansion of city square commercial area, grant status update, downtown activities reported by Chamber.
 - Hulsey Road Culvert/Bridge replacement. Water line is on, testing passed. Sewer gravity completed on NOK side of road. Sewer force main partial and plugged for now.

8. Finance Department – City Administrator Kevin Harris

- ~~March~~ April 2023 Report

Mr. Harris addressed the Mayor and Council Members. He reported the following April items:

- Revenues and expenditures were down in comparison to this time last year
- Net income increased over last year's
- At this time last year, the city had spent 84% of the budget, this year only 77% of the budget has been spent

9. Fire Department – Chief Ricky Pruitt

- ~~March~~ April 2023 Report

Firefighter Mark Gunter addressed the Mayor and Council Members. He reported the following April items:

- Total of 113 Calls: 63 inside the city and 50 in the County
- White County Fire Department responded 5 times in the city

10. Police Department - Chief Jeff Shoemaker

- ~~March~~ April 2023 Report

Chief Shoemaker addressed the Mayor and Council Members. He reported the following April items:

- Total occurrences – 1,950
- Total 2023 occurrences – 7,260

- Public assists - 407
- Premise checks – 949
- Field interviews - 24
- Incident reports - 49
- Accident reports - 21
- Investigative/supplemental - 60
- Citations Issued - 142
- Warnings - 287
- Warrants - 11
- Juveniles – 0
- Citations
 - Misdemeanor, non-traffic - 6
 - DUI, Alcohol, & serious offenses - 3
 - Driver’s license, Registration, & Insurance - 17
 - Moving violations, traffic control, etc. - 88
 - Equipment, seatbelt, etc. - 28

11. Public Works Department – Assistant Public Works Director Ricky Hunt

- ~~March~~ April 2023 Report

Mr. Hunt addressed the Mayor and Council Members. He reported the following April items:

- Inside New Water Cut-In & Sewer - 7
- Water Quality - 1
- Meter Change Outs – 14
- City Hall Maintenance - 2
- Sewer Backup – 2
- Miscellaneous – 2
- Check for Leaks – 4
- Police Car Repairs - 1
- Final Reading Do Not Lock - 12
- Garbage Request – 18
- Hydrant Service – 2
- Police Department - 1
- Cut Off and lock meter - non-payment – 12
- Garbage request change - 4
- Meeting with customer – 3
- Snowbird – 3
- Final Read and Lock Meter- 8
- Payment Agreement - 1

- Street Repair – 2
- Meter Inspections – 8
- Residential Cut On - 1
- Residential Turn On – 11
- Commercial Turn On – 4
- City Park repairs/Maintenance – 2
- After Hours Work – 6
- City Park Repairs/Maintenance - 1
- Monthly Meter Readings – 2,244
- Monthly Meter Re-Reads – 18
- Utility Locates – 114

CITY ADMINISTRATOR KEVIN HARRIS

Mr. Harris addressed the Mayor and Council Members.

12. Package Store Application Update

Mr. Harris stated that his intentions are to put the application out on Friday. Once the application is available, there will be a 30-day time period in which applicants may apply. The city will have 60 days to review. If there are more than three qualified applicants, Bates Carter will assist with a lottery.

13. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Reporting Update

Mr. Harris stated that the reporting due date was April 30. The city is currently experiencing substantial problems with the IT platform. The Federal Government recognizes that there is a problem and has given the city a 60-day grace period.

14. Job Postings

Mr. Harris stated that, currently, there are two job postings at this time; 1) Finance Director, and 2) Water Treatment/Distribution Operator

CITY ATTORNEY KEITH WHITAKER

Mr. Whitaker did not have any items to report.

NEW BUSINESS

15. GMA District 2 Officers Nominations for 2023-2024

Motion by Council Member Yardley, seconded by Council Member McClure, and voted, unanimously, in favor of the Georgia Municipal Association’s (GMA) nominating committee’s nominations for GMA’s District 2 Officers for 2023-2024 as follows:

- President – Robert (Buddy) Moore, Councilmember, Blairsville

- First Vice President – JoAnne Taylor, Mayor, Dahlonega
- Second Vice President – Matt Fields, Councilmember, Royston
- Third Vice President – Mark C. Reed, Commissioner, Cornelia

16. Highway 115-Cemetery Street Line Replacement (Phase I)

Mr. Harris stated that there will be two phases of water line replacement. The first phase will be going from United Community Bank to the cemetery. He stated that Appalachian Grading will begin Phase I for \$57,000. He said this is a SPLOST V project.

Mr. Harris stated that Phase II will be discussed further at a later time.

Motion by Council Member McDonald, seconded by Council Member McClure, and voted, unanimously, to approve phase I bid as submitted.

17. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- May 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Approval of the May 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes was postponed during the approval of the agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

18. Employee benefits

Ms. Ritchie addressed the Mayor and Council Members. She stated that on both level-funded plans and community-rated health plans the insurance carriers either declined to quote or did not have rates competitive with Georgia Municipal Association.

UPCOMING CALENDAR ITEMS

Ms. Ritchie provided the upcoming calendar item.

- 19. City of Cleveland Offices will be closed on Monday, May 29, in observance of Memorial Day**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Judy Lovell, 341 W. Kytile Street, addressed the Mayor and Council Members. She discussed Neil Gap Bus Line that ran through Cleveland between 1946 and 1947.

Ms. Gloria Sutton, 81 Ebony Lane, addressed the Mayor and Council Members regarding Yonah Cemetery. Ms. Sutton also requested an explanation regarding the Mayor and Council's decision to sell the talon property.

Mayor Turner stated that the current building quotes are considerably higher than they were when the project was planned. He stated that they are looking into other options and they do not want to put a financial burden on the future of the city.

Council Member Yardley asked how many people were from Ward 2. Nine citizens raised their hands. Council Member Yardley asked those Ward 2 citizens that object to the sale of the property raise their hands. Eight citizens from Ward 2 raised their hands.

Ms. Annie Sutton addressed the Mayor and Council Members expressing her opposition to the sale of the talon property.

Ms. Henrietta Sutton addressed the Mayor and Council Members expressing her opposition to the sale of the talon property.

Council Member McClure stated that he wishes to return the Police Department building back to the community and to the children.

Council Member McDonald stated that they are looking to find a solution that will not indebt citizens for the next 30 or 40 years. He said building an \$18,000,000 facility to be financed by our grandchildren was not the answer.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Council Member McClure, seconded by Council Member McDonald and voted, unanimously, to enter an Executive Session at 7:50 p.m.

20. Discussion regarding personnel, pending litigation, and real estate

Pending litigation and real estate were discussion topics added during the amendment of the regular meeting.

Motion by Council Member Yardley, seconded by Council Member McClure and voted, unanimously, to adjourn the Executive Session and return to the City Council Meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Council Member McDonald opened the door to allow citizens to return to the regular meeting. There were no citizens waiting to return to the meeting.

ADJOURN

Motion by Council Member Yardley, seconded by Council Member McClure and voted, unanimously, to adjourn the City Council Meeting of May 8, 2023, at 9:28 p.m.

Josh Turner

Josh Turner

Mayor

Jeremy McClure

Jeremy McClure

Council Member
Ward 3

Nan Bowen

Nan Bowen

Council Member
Ward 1

C.J. McDonald

C.J. McDonald

Council Member
Ward 4

Rebecca L. Yardley

Rebecca Yardley

Council Member
Ward 2
Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:
Lisa A. Ritchie

Lisa A. Ritchie

City Clerk