The City Council of the City of Harlem, Georgia met for their Regular Council Meeting on Monday, March 27, 2023, at the Public Safety Building at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Roxanne Whitaker presiding.

Present: COUNCIL: Mayor Roxanne Whitaker, Mayor Pro tem Gregg Stokes, Councilmember Daniel Bellavance, Councilmember Al Reeves, and Councilmember John Thigpen; STAFF: City Manager Debra Moore, City Clerk Leona Holley, and City Attorney Tom Watkins; MEDIA: Stephanie Hill, The Augusta Press.

The meeting was opened by Mayor Whitaker at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Whitaker asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of those that was devastated in Nashville, Tennessee today.

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance was given and led by City Attorney Watkins.

Approval of the Agenda: Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to approve the Agenda as presented; Councilmember Thigpen asked for Item #10, Columbia County Government Efficiency and Functionality Study, under New Business be removed from the agenda; Mayor Pro tem Stokes amended his motion with the removal of Item #10; 2nd by Councilmember Thigpen. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Approval of the Minutes: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the minutes for the following meetings as written:
- City Open House; Thursday, February 16, 2023
- Work Session & Executive Session; Thursday, February 23, 2023
- Council Quarterly Work Session; Friday, February 24, 2023
- Regular Council Meeting; Monday, February 27, 2023

The motion was 2nd by Councilmember Bellavance. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

Consider Award of Bid – Oliver Hardy Court Paving Project – Action: City Manager Moore reported she received a letter of recommendation and a breakdown of the bid for the Oliver Hardy Court Paving project from City Engineer John McClellan; the recommendation is to award the bid to LEP Construction, LLC for the Oliver Hardy Court Paving project. Ms. Moore explained the total cost of the project is $531,000 and she is recommending the funding be paid out of the 2022-2023 LMIG and the SPLOST funds. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the award of bid for the Oliver Hardy Court Paving Project to LEP Construction, LLC total project Part A and B funding from the 2022-2023 LMIG and SPLOST funds; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Variance Application VAR-2023-03-01 For An Accessory Building - Action: City Manager Moore explained Variance Application VAR-2023-03-01 is for an accessory building to be located at 275 Recreation
NEW BUSINESS (cont’d):

Consider Variance Application VAR-2023-03-01 For An Accessory Building – Action (cont’d): Drive. The Variance application went before the Planning Commission; the recommendation from the Planning Commission is for approval with conditions. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve VAR-2023-03-01 for an accessory building; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Conditional Use Application CU-2023-03-01 For A Softball Training Facility Operation - Action: City Manager Moore explained Conditional Use Application CU-2023-03-01 is for a softball training facility operation to be located at 275 Recreation Drive. The Conditional Use Application went before the Planning Commission; the recommendation from the Planning Commission is for approval with conditions. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Conditional Use Application CU-2023-03-01 for a softball training facility operation; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Draft Lease Agreement for the Harlem Civic Center - Action: City Manager Moore stated after discussion at the Work Session Meeting on Thursday, March 23rd, herself, and City Attorney Watkins made minor adjustments to section #4 Sublease and Assignment, and section #5 Repairs of the lease agreement for the Harlem Civic Center. Ms. Moore received a few comments from Mr. Wallace on section #5 of the lease agreement. Ms. Moore stated she is in discussion with City Attorney Watkins on the comments and there might be a few more minor adjustments to section #5. Ms. Moore stated the lease agreement will allow the city to receive payment of $500 per month for the use of the whole building. Councilmember Reeves stated the lease agreement does not have verbiage on a late date or penalty. Ms. Moore will speak with the City Attorney to add the verbiage to the lease agreement on the late date and penalty. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the lease agreement and for City Manager Moore to add verbiage for the late date and penalty for the Harlem Civic Center; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Resolution No. 2023-03 A Resolution Recognizing April 23-29, 2023 as City Government Week - Action: Resolution 2023-03 is a resolution to recognize the week of April 23-29, 2023 as Georgia Cities Week. Mayor Whitaker stated herself and council appreciates all the city workers, everything they do and the city has a lot to be proud of. Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-03 a resolution recognizing April 23-29, 2023, as City Government Week; 2nd by Councilmember Thigpen. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Resolution No. 2023-04 A Resolution Pledging to Practice and Promote Civility - Action: Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-04 a resolution pledging to practice and promote civility; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.
NEW BUSINESS (cont’d):

**Consider Resolution No. 2023-05 A Resolution to Approve FYE 12-31-2022 Interdepartmental Budget Amendments & Additional Budget Amendment - Action:** Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-05 a resolution to approve FYE 12-31-2022 Interdepartmental Budget Amendment and Additional Budget Amendment; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

**Consider Resolution No. 2023-06 A Resolution for the Acceptance of Streets for LMIG Purposes - Action:** Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-06 a resolution for the acceptance of streets in Cornerstone Subdivision Section III and IV, Hickory Woods Subdivision and West Forrest Street Subdivision for LMIG purposes; 2nd by Councilmember Bellavance. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

**Consider Proclamation – Arbor Day April 28, 2023 In the City of Harlem - Action:** The City of Harlem is recognizing, Friday, April 28, 2023 as Arbor Day in the city. Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to approve the Arbor Day Proclamation; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

**Public Comment:**

David Moss – 302 Grady Drive – representing the HOA for West Forrest Street subdivision - comments pertained to two overgrown detention ponds in West Forrest subdivision. Mr. Moss met with three contractors, and after inspecting the detention ponds it was discovered one of the rear walls is washing away. The estimates he received to do repairs and maintain the detention ponds is between $13,000 - $14,000. Mr. Moss asked if the city could clean out the detention ponds, the HOA does not have the money to do the initial clean out.

Mayor Whitaker responded the City Manager will have to look to see if there is anything that can be done.

**Reports:**

- **Council Reports:** Mayor Pro tem Stokes reported the landscaping that public works has done downtown and at city hall is looking great. Public works has done a great job on this; Councilmember Thigpen commented Harlem is a nice community to live in. A parade was organized for a child recently, and everyone came together for this.
- **Mayor Report:** Mayor Whitaker reported there was a great turnout for the Shamrock & Roll golf cart parade and the Small Business Expo that was held recently. Saturday approximately fifty people from the Yelp organization came to Harlem to visit. They visited and reviewed the businesses in Harlem.
- **Department Reports:** City Manager Moore reported the Museum and Library will be holding an Easter Egg hunt tomorrow, March 28th on the Library lawn starting at 7:00 p.m.
Announcements:

Mayor Whitaker announced Saturday, April 2nd the Easter Bunny will be at Main Street Treats if anyone would like to stop in and have pictures taken with the Easter Bunny. On April 8th at 11:00 a.m. Impact Church will be having their Harlem Hoppenings Easter Egg Hunt at North Harlem Elementary School. April 8th the Swinging Medallions will be doing a free concert at the library plaza. Mimosas on Main will be on May 8th.

April 11    Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting; 6:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building
April 12    Urban Redevelopment Agency Meeting; 9:00 a.m.; City Hall
April 13    Historic Preservation Commission Meeting; 6:30 p.m.; Public Safety Building
April 20    GMA Spring Listening Session; 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; Depot in Thomson
April 20    City Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building
April 24    City Council Regular Meeting; 7:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building

Executive Session: N/A

With there being no further business before Council, Councilmember Bellavance made the motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Councilmember Reeves. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley
City Clerk