

The City Council of the City of Harlem met for their Work Session/Regular Meeting on Thursday, December 21, 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 Barry Fleming.

The Work Session/Regular Council Meeting was opened by Mayor Whitaker at 7:00 p.m.

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

Approval of the Agenda: Mayor Whitaker stated Commissioner Couch was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mayor Whitaker requested to remove from the Agenda the update from Commissioner Alison Couch for District 4 until the January meeting. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the agenda with the requested amendment; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Approval of the Minutes: Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to approve the following Minutes as written:

- Called Meeting; Monday, November 20, 2023
- Work Session; Thursday, November 20, 2023
- Regular Council Meeting; November 27, 2023

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Other: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Update on City Projects – John McClellan, G. B. Turnipseed Engineers: City Engineer John McClellan, of Turnipseed Engineers, gave an update to Council on city projects.

- Verdery Street Drainage Project – The survey has been done for the Verdery Street drainage project. The lines need to be located that is parallel to the sewer line; an easement will possibly be needed at the back of the Dollar General Plus store and Smith Farm Supply to run the drainage line to the corner past Habanero's Restaurant. Three quotes will possibly be needed for the project due to it being a small project.
- New Public Works Building – Mr. McClellan gave an overview of the Public Works project. He is recommending paving the road to the Public Works property because of the heavy equipment that will be used on the road daily. There will be a 50' x 100' building with fourteen parking spaces, one handicap space, and a pole barn, which will be the same dimension as the one they have at the public works shop on New Street now. Mr. McClellan recommended a residential style pump station for the septic tank. The schedule for completion of the design is by January, complete the

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Update on City Projects – John McClellan, G. B. Turnipseed Engineers (cont'd):

- New Public Works Building (cont'd): soil and erosion in March, advertise in March, start construction in May and finish in December. There was discussion on whether a fire hydrant is needed for the property, the size of the pole barn and the price of the project. Mr. McClellan explained he had a conversation with Public Work Director Robert Fields and Mr. Fields is going to speak with the Fire Chief regarding the need for a fire hydrant. Mayor Pro tem Stokes suggested for the pole barn to be large enough to place all the equipment under and for future use. Mayor Pro tem Stokes feels if the equipment is left out in the weather it shortens the life of the equipment. Mr. McClellan stated he could not give a price on the project until it went to bid. Mayor Whitaker asked Public Works Director Fields if they would be ready to move out of the shop by April or May; Mr. Fields responded they are working on the move, and he had a conversation with Kyle McCloud with Back Paddle Brewery. Mr. McCloud will be working in phases for the Brewery and is willing to work with public works for the use of storage for the public works equipment.
- Multi-purpose Park (formerly North Harlem Elementary School property): Mr. McClellan explained we are looking at a date of June 2025 for the completion of the park. Mr. McClellan stated there are possibly opportunities to shorten the date possibly by six months.
- Peachtree Street paving project: The preliminary project cost estimate for the Peachtree Street paving improvements is \$69,000.00.
- Bowdre Street Townhomes: Inspections are being done on the townhomes on Bowdre Street.
- Harlem Self Storage addition: Inspections are being done for the Harlem Self Storage project on W. Milledgeville Road.
- Walking Trail Phase II: There is still an opportunity to move forward with Phase II of the walking trails if the Council desires.
- Clary Cut Road/Old Union Road Realignment Project: The preliminary alignment has been done; preliminary grading has been done to purchase easements. City Manager Moore stated there is a meeting on January 11, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall with Columbia County on the Realignment Project. Mr. McClellan was asked to attend.

Consider Agreement for Engineering Services for Multipurpose Park Project – Action: Mayor Whitaker asked Council to consider the agreement for engineering services for the multipurpose park project with Turnipseed Engineers. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the agreement for engineering services for the multipurpose park project with Turnipseed Engineers; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. DISCUSSION: Councilmember Thigpen commented this is a standard agreement for engineering services for the multipurpose park. Mr. McClellan stated this agreement is to define the concept between the City and Turnipseed Engineers. Councilmember Bellavance feels like there needs to be another engineering firm to look at the concept. After no further discussion, the motion carried with Councilmembers Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. Councilmember Bellavance opposed.

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Designation & Approval of LMIG Project for FYE 2024 – Action (cont'd): City Manager Moore explained the city is scheduled to receive \$53,775.84 for the 2024 LMIG grant. This project is to repave Peachtree Street. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve the LMIG project for FYE 2024; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. DISCUSSION: City Manager Moore stated the cost estimate for the Peachtree Street paving improvements is \$69,000.00 with a requirement of a 10% match of funds from the city. The funds will come from T-SPLOST. After no further discussion, the motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Conditional Use CU-2023-12-01; Parcel H03 139A; 380 W Milledgeville Road for a Drive Thru per Commercial Overlay District Requirements – Action: Councilmember Reeves recused himself due to a personal interest. He left the Council area and moved to the Citizens area. A conditional use application has been received from Joseph Christie to operate a drive-thru window at 380 W. Milledgeville Road for a coffee shop. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Conditional Use CU-2023-12-01, Parcel H03 139A, 380 W. Milledgeville Road for a Drive-Thru per Commercial Overlay District Requirements; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. DISCUSSION: Councilmember Thigpen asked where will the drive-thru be located and what type of speaker will be used; Community Development Director David Jenkins explained the drive-thru will be from W. Milledgeville Road entrance and there will not be a “squawk box”, orders will be taken at the window. Mr. Jenkins commented there will be a wooden fence placed on the north side of the property. After no further discussion, the motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. Councilmember Reeves returned to the Council area at this time.

Consider Resolution 2023-17 A Resolution for the Surplus of City Equipment – Public Works & Fire Department – Action: The following item have been requested for surplus for the Public Works Department:

- Bobcat S-250 Attachments

The following items have been requested for surplus for the Fire Department:

- Various tools and items are no longer serviceable. These items are not considered capital items but should be surpluses before disposal. Some of the items are original to Fire Truck I (Ladder Truck) that have been replaced.

Councilmember Reeves made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-17 A Resolution for the Surplus of City Equipment for Public Works and the Fire Department; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. DISCUSSION: Councilmember Thigpen asked if the Fire Department still uses the items; Mayor Pro tem Stokes stated he was informed the items were 30+ years old. After no further discussion, the motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Resolution 2023-18 A Resolution to Amend the City of Harlem Personnel Policy; Section 16 Holidays; Item (b) Holidays Observed – Action: City Manager Moore explained there was discussion at the Council Budget Work Session regarding recognizing Juneteenth as a city holiday. This Resolution is to add Juneteenth as a city holiday to the Personnel Policy and Procedure Handbook. Councilmember

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

Consider Resolution 2023-18 A Resolution to Amend the City of Harlem Personnel Policy; Section 16 Holidays; Item (b) Holidays Observed – Action (cont'd): Thigpen made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-18 A Resolution to Amend the City of Harlem Personnel Policy, Section 16 Holidays, item (b) Holidays Observed; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. DISCUSSION: Juneteenth is being added as an additional holiday; no holidays were taken away. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Consider Resolution 2023-19 A Resolution to Approve the Amendment of the Garbage Fee Schedule Effective for 2024 – Action: Resolution 2023-19 is a resolution to adopt the garbage fee schedule for 2024. Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to approve Resolution 2023-19 a Resolution to approve the Amendment of the Garbage Fee Schedule Effective for 2024; 2nd by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. DISCUSSION: City Manager Moore explained this will be an 11% increase for services provided. The last rate increase was in 2018. Notices will be placed in the monthly newsletter before the increase takes effect. After no further discussion, the motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Public Comment: None.

Reports:

- **Council:** Councilmember Bellavance wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Councilmember Thigpen thanked the Public Works Department for repairing the holes in the road on South Fairview Drive.
- **Mayor:** Mayor Whitaker reported the Christmas festival and parade was very well attended. The vendors were pleased with the festival. Mayor Whitaker commented Community Development Director David Jenkins is retiring with the city at the end of December. Mayor Whitaker expressed her appreciation for his work and time with the city. Mr. Jenkins expressed his gratitude to the Mayor and Council for their dedication to Harlem and for trying to keep Harlem, Harlem. Mayor Whitaker announced this will be City Attorney Fleming's last meeting with the city. He has been appointed Columbia County Superior Court Judge. Mayor Whitaker thanked City Attorney Fleming for everything he has done for the city.
- **Department Reports:** City Manager Moore reported she is working on the paperwork to submit for the LMIG grant. She reported everything went well with the closing for the Project Funding.

Announcements:

December 22	Employee Luncheon; 12:00 p.m.; The Whitaker home
December 25- 26	City Offices closed in observance of Christmas
January 1	City Offices closed to observe New Year's Day
January 2	*Canceled* - Planning Commission Meeting
January 10	Urban Redevelopment Agency Meeting; 9:00 a.m.; City Hall
January 11	Historic Preservation Commission Meeting; 6:30 p.m.; Public Safety Building
January 15	City Offices closed to observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Announcements (cont'd):

January 18 City Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building
January 22 City Council Regular Meeting; 7:00 p.m.; Public Safety Building

Other: City Manager Moore stated Mayor Pro tem Stokes will be receiving a certificate from GMA and needs to know if he would like to attend the luncheon in Atlanta.

Executive Session: N/A

Mayor Whitaker wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With there being nothing further for discussion, Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd by Councilmember Bellavance. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Reeves, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley
City Clerk