

The City Council of the City of Harlem, Georgia met for their monthly Work Session on Thursday, February 22, 2024, 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, and Councilmember John Thigpen; STAFF: City Manager Debra Moore, City Clerk Leona Holley, and City Attorney Tom Watkins; ABSENT: Councilmember Al Reeves.

The Work Session was opened by Mayor Whitaker at 7:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Whitaker stated an item will be added to the Agenda under Other for an HPC (Historic Preservation Commission) appointment and an Executive Session will be held after the Work Session.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

**Consider Ordinance 2401 An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 16 Historic Preservation; Sec. 106-25(c)(3) Regarding Terms of Office and Sec. 106-29 (e) Terms of Appointment – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading & Action:** City Manager Moore explained after discussion at the Council Quarterly meeting changes has been made to what was put before Council for the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Ordinance 2401 amending the terms of office for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Members shall serve one-year terms from January to December. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms a Member may serve. Terms shall begin on the first day of January and end upon the swearing-in of the individual assuming that Member's seat the subsequent year. The current Members shall serve out the full remainder of their term, even where such a remaining term exceeds one year in length. There are a couple of Members whose term will end in June, at this time the Mayor and Council may reappoint the Member to a six-month term to serve out the remainder of the year, until an appointment is made in January for a Member to serve a one-year term. One member was reappointed in June 2023 and their term will end June 2026; Mayor and Council may reappoint the Member for a six-month term to serve out the remainder year. City Manager Moore stated Mayor Whitaker has submitted a name for the vacant position on the HPC and this will be added to the Agenda under Other for an HPC appointment. This Member will serve from the appointment to the end of this year.

**Other:** N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

**Consider Approval of Encroachment Agreement for 375 N Louisville Street; Map & Parcel H02 036 with Lee Ann Meyer:** City Manager Moore explained after reviewing and preparing to surplus the City Property located at 375 N. Louisville Street staff found the building on the property is encroaching on the property at 365 N. Louisville Street, owned by Ms. Lee Ann Meyer. In order to proceed with the possible sale of the property and to have a clear title, an Encroachment Easement/Agreement is being proposed. City Manager Moore stated if the property is sold the encroachment will go with the property, if the building is altered

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd)

**Consider Approval of Encroachment Agreement for 375 N Louisville Street; Map & Parcel H02 036 with Lee Ann Meyer (cont'd):** the encroachment will go away. City Manager Moore commented that Ms. Meyer is in attendance tonight if there are any questions. There were no questions from Council. Ms. Meyer stated she had her lawyer to handle the paperwork.

**Consider Temporary Alcohol Permit – Harlem Merchant’s Association – Shamrock & Roll Special Event – March 16, 2024:** City Manager Moore explained staff received a Temporary Alcohol Permit Application from the Harlem Merchant’s Association (HMA) for the Shamrock & Roll Event to be held on March 16, 2024. This event will only be allowed to have beer and wine; the beer and wine must be served in cups. This year’s event will be held on the Harlem Library Lawn. There have been no complaints or issues from previous HMA ‘s Shamrock & Roll events. Mayor Whitaker stated there will be food trucks for the event that will be utilizing the front parking lot. Mayor Whitaker commented in the application the Library is requesting to leave the parking lots open for a group that will be using a meeting room in the library; City Manager Moore explained the parking lot that is being requested to leave open is located on Cook Street, not in the event area.

**Consider Temporary Alcohol Permit – Harlem High School Alumni Association – Legend’s on the Lawn Event – April 27, 2024:** City Manager Moore explained the Harlem High School Alumni Association is requesting a Temporary Alcohol Permit for a fundraiser that will be held on April 27, 2024, on the Harlem Library Lawn. The Harlem High School Alumni Association is a 501(c)(3) and eligible for a permit and a special event permit from the state. They will have a cocktail hour, followed by dinner, speeches, and awards. The fundraiser will help with educational opportunities and scholarships for Harlem High School. Discussion was given on whether the Museum could be used to set up and stage the food; Mayor Whitaker will have someone reach out to City Manager Moore to discuss if the Museum could be used.

**Consider Resolution 2024-01 A Resolution to Amend the City Personnel Policy Sec. 16 Holidays Item (c) and Item (d) Regarding Hours Paid:** City Manager Moore explained there were discussion at the Council Quarterly meeting regarding an amendment to consider the holiday pay for the employees. This amendment affects the Public Safety Employees (Police and Fire). This resolution is amending the policy stating if an employee is required to work on a holiday, they shall be paid one hour of holiday straight time in addition to their regular pay for every hour worked on the holiday. The Public Safety Employees (Police and Fire) who work shifts will observe the approved holidays on the actual calendar holiday. If the employees who work shifts and are not scheduled to work on the actual calendar holiday will receive pay equal to 8 (eight) hours of regular pay. All other Public Safety (Police and Fire) employees who work a Monday-Friday schedule will observe the approved holidays on the observed calendar holiday.

**Consider Resolution 2024-02 A Resolution to Approve the Surplus of City Equipment – Fire Department:** Resolution 2024-02 is for the surplus of the following Fire Department Equipment:

- Sceptar 2 Pagers and Chargers (14) and a Motorola Minitor 2 pager and Charger that are still operational and can be donated to other fire departments (Schedule “A”)
- Sceptar 2 Pagers (5) and Chargers (8) that are no longer operational and will be destroyed (Schedule “A”)

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd)

**Consider Resolution 2024-02 A Resolution to Approve the Surplus of City Equipment – Fire Department (cont'd):**

- Out of Service Turn Out Gear to include Coats, Pants, and Boots and will be donated to the Evans High School Firefighter Pathway Program (Schedule “B”)

Fire Chief Lonergan explained there is a possibility of donating some of the working pagers. Discussion was given on the out of service Turn Out Gear to change the donation from Evans High School Firefighter Pathway Program to Columbia County Board of Education (CCBOE) Firefighter Pathway Program, this will allow for the Turn Out Gear to be donated to any school in Columbia County that has the Firefighter Pathway Program.

**Consider Resolution 2024-03 A Resolution to Approve the Reimbursement of the Balance in the Revolving Loan Fund to the State of Georgia Department of Community Affairs:**

City Manager Moore explained she received notification from the Department of Community Affairs that the Revolving Loan Fund balance was not in compliance. At the Quarterly Council meeting, there was discussion on the balance reimbursement in the Revolving Loan Fund. In 2009, the City of Harlem applied and was approved for an Employment Incentive Program Grant thru the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The funds were for an economic development project for financing equipment purchased by Luckey Lady Pecans, Gifts & More that resulted in the employment of 20 low- and moderate-income people. All proceeds of the loan were reimbursed to the City. A portion of the funds was approved to be spent on redevelopment projects to address removal of blighted property. To keep the Revolving Loan Fund in compliance with the Policy and Procedure Guide, the City is required to make a loan at least once every five years which we are out of compliance. The City does not have a current funding request; to come into compliance, we must make a loan immediately or the fund will need to be closed and all funds returned to the Department of Community Affairs. City Manager Moore is proposing for all funds be reimbursed to the Department of Community Affairs to bring the City back into compliance. The balance in the fund as of January 31, 2024, was \$112,510.47, and additional interest will be added through February 29, 2024.

**Consider Approval of the Harlem City Park Policies & Procedures, Fee Schedule, Rental Form, etc. –**

**Effective March 1, 2024:** City Manager Moore reported there was discussion at the Council Quarterly Meeting on the policies and procedures, fee schedule, rental form, etc. for the Harlem City Park. City Manager Moore presented the Field/Facility Rental Policies and Procedures for the Harlem City Park, this includes the rental amounts for the ballfields with and without lights, the pavilion, and the tennis court. City Manager Moore commented that she asked City Attorney Nelson to provide a waiver for the park. City Attorney Nelson provided a waiver that Putnam County uses, but it was more for a participate in an activity. City Manager Moore stated this afternoon she received from City Attorney Nelson another waiver for rental facilities, but she has not had a chance to review it. City Manager Moore explained we are looking at starting the rental of the park as of March 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff have reached out to the company that handles the Cities website to see about a recreation program for the website. Mayor Whitaker asked how we will regulate who has use of the fields; City Manager Moore stated we will issue a permit/receipt to whoever has rented the fields to show as proof.

NEW BUSINESS (cont'd):

**Consider Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement – Renewal – Effective March 1, 2024 to March 1, 2028:** The Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement expires on March 1, 2024. This is for a four-year agreement, the last agreement was approved in December 2019 for the term of March 1, 2020 to March 1, 2024. This agreement is a renewal of what is in place now; there are no changes at this time. If there were storms, or disasters the City would work with Columbia County and GEMA (Georgia Emergency Management Agency). Staff is recommending approval of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency Statewide Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement for a four-year period, ending March 1, 2028.

**Other:**

**Historic Preservation Commission Appointment:** Mayor Whitaker recommended Brett Rogers to fill the vacant seat of Scott Eremus on the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Rogers has been a resident of Harlem since July 2018 and is a history teacher.

**Department Head Report:** Fire Chief Lonergan reported a firefighter has been hired for the 2nd shift and staff are in the process of hiring someone for the 3rd shift. Chief Lonergan stated the Firefighter for the 2<sup>nd</sup> shift will go through the EMT class once the class is started. There was discussion regarding if an employee with the Fire Department goes through training and receives their certification paid by the City whether they would be required to sign an agreement or contract stating they would be required to stay with the Fire Department for two years or pay all funds back to the City. City Manager Moore explained there is something in the personnel policy stating whenever someone gets a certification through the City, they may be required to sign an agreement stating they will be with the City for two years. Chief Lonergan stated part of the EMT training is online and in house, there is some cost for books and overtime. The EMT classes will be held on Tuesday, Thursday, and every other Saturday.

**Reports by Department Heads:** Discussion was given whether Department Heads need to attend the Work Session/Council Meetings. After Council reviews their monthly Council packet if there are questions for the Department Heads City Manager Moore can contact the Department Heads and ask them to attend the meeting or if the Department Head needs to address Council, they can attend the meeting.

**Executive Session:** Councilmember Thigpen made the motion to go into Executive Session; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mayor Pro tem Stokes. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. Executive Session opened at 7:35 p.m.

Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to come out of Executive Session; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilmember Thigpen. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. Executive Session closed at 8:34 p.m.

City Attorney Watkins reported that there was one legal matter and one personnel matter discussed and no final action was taken. Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the Affidavit affirming this report; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilmember Thigpen. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative.

Mayor Whitaker commented that she received the Columbia County Consolidation Corporation Report, and she will forward it to the Council.

With there being nothing further before Council for discussion, Mayor Pro tem Stokes made the motion to adjourn the meeting; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Councilmember Thigpen. The motion carried with Councilmembers Bellavance, Stokes, and Thigpen voting in the affirmative. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona H. Holley  
City Clerk