

CITY OF SYLVESTER, GEORGIA
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 101 N MAIN STREET
MONDAY, JULY 6, 2020 @ 7:00 PM



The Honorable Larry Johnson, Ward 4, Mayor Pro Tem (present)
The Honorable Walter Dupree, III, Ward 1 Councilmember (present)
The Honorable Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 Councilmember (present)
The Honorable Mark Giddens, Ward 3 Councilmember (present)
Autron Hayes, City Manager (present) • Carolyn Williams, City Clerk (present)
Lester Castellow, City Attorney (present)

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER – MAYOR PRO TEM LARRY JOHNSON

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE – DR. WILLIE MAE MARLIN

III. SWEARING IN OF MAYOR – CHARLES JONES

Amid family, friends, and well-wishers, Charles Jones was sworn in as Mayor of the City of Sylvester. He was welcomed in by the Council and took his place on the Board. He thanked everyone and vowed to do a good job for all citizens.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilman Johnson moved to approve the agenda and a second was offered by Councilman Jackson – *Motion Carries*

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Johnson motioned to approve the minutes and was seconded by Councilman Giddens – *Motion Carries*

VI. SPEAKER APPEARANCES

Rickey Shipp of Shipps Construction was present requesting a variance of the minimum set-back from the City for his property on East Pope Street. He was informed that there is a process to be followed; of which he replied, "I am aware of that." He was told proper public advertisements must be done. Councilman Johnson stated that with the railroad setback, this might be hard to do. Ms. Stephens explained the set-back on the property, and the purpose it serves. Mr.

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Shipp asked the City to reduce its minimum setback from 12ft to 6ft, and this would serve his purpose. Ms. Stephens stated that an application for a variance must be done and presented to the Planning Commission. Mr. Shipp said he had been before the Council in 2019 and was told this would not be a problem. Mr. Johnson clarified that statement saying a rezoning request was granted for the entire area, but no variance was decided upon at that time. Attorney Castellow informed Council that nothing could be done regarding this variance because no application had been submitted by Mr. Shipp. Mr. Johnson said we would search the Minutes for this meeting, but Mr. Shipp replied that this was not in the minutes, it was just a conversation. Mayor Jones asked Mr. Shipp to submit an application and the Council will review it, to which he agreed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A) SPEED BUMPS REMOVAL – COUNCILMAN DUPREE

Councilman Dupree stated he was approached by the residents of West Lee Street about removing the speed bumps. He presented a petition with signatures along with addresses. He was informed that he needed 50% of property owners, not renters- **TABLED**

B) C,D,E BEER / WINE APPLICATIONS

Mr. Hayes asked for approval for all beer and wine applications presented to the Council.

Councilman Jackson motioned to approve all Beer and Wine licenses and a second was offered by Councilman Giddens – **Motion Carries**

F) SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRACT AND FIRST AMENDMENT TO GAS SUPPLY CONTRACT

Mr. Hayes stated this was a new gas supply contract portfolio because the prior portfolio is ending December 31, 2020. It has a supplemental contract and is asking for approval which gives the City a supply from the Municipal Gas Authority. The City Attorney has reviewed the contract. Mr. Hayes recommends City not sell gas balance because it is beneficial to the City to retain the excess capacity because there is growth potential.

Councilman Johnson moved to approve the Supplemental Contract and the First Amendment and it was seconded by Councilman Jackson – **Motion Carries**

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G) CHOKE HOLD POLICY

There was much discussion around the hot-button issue of choke holds. Chief Urquhart was asked to expound on the subject. She explained that the policy itself is use deadly force, and that comes many different ways. She cited Ga. law regarding acceptable use of force by officers. There is not a policy on choke hold, but there is a use of force policy mandated through Georgia law. She does not favor a ban because an officer may use it in a life and death situation, and she does not want to handicap officers in doing their job. She suggested that if Resolution is done, allow leeway for deadly force if the officers need to protect themselves. Mr. Hayes remarked that the expectation of the Council is the force be proportionate with the crime. She favors use of tasers, vests are out of date and shortage on cars.

H) LIBRARY BOARD 3-YEAR APPOINTMENT

Councilman Johnson motioned to appoint Mr. Hayes to the Library Board and was seconded by Councilman Dupree – *Motion Carries*

I) ZONING AMENDMENT / PUD REZONING

Ms. Stephens explained that there was discussion around amending subdivision regulations to reflect specific language for developers to be responsible for expenses. There is a PUD (Planned Unit Development) in our zoning ordinance for residential and commercial, and there is no specific language presently in that ordinance either. She recommends amending ordinance to reflect specific language to direct developers to be responsible for expenses before issuance of permits. She also recommends placing a 60-day moratorium on PUD development. Mr. Hayes recommended approval of the zoning amendments and 60-day moratorium.

Councilman Johnson moved to approve the 60-day moratorium on PUD and was seconded by Councilman Giddens – *Motion Carries*

J) RESOLUTION NO: 2020-14-BANKING SIGNATURES

Mr. Hayes expressed to Council that this allows him to look at banking information.

Councilman Johnson moved to approve the Banking Resolution and was seconded by Councilman Jackson – *Motion Carries*

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K) UTILITY COLLECTION AGREEMENTS

Mr. Hayes informed Council that this will allow the City to turn past due bills over to the Collection Agency and begin the process in 6 months. Their fee will be 35% or 25% depending on whether the court is involved, and remit those funds to the City. It is also recommended that the City goes back 3 years and eliminate 2 ID's. Mr. Hayes will bring a policy to Council for approval.

Councilman Johnson motioned to approve the Agreement and was seconded by Councilman Jackson – ***Motion Carries***

L) HOLLEY GYM

Mr. Hayes asked for direction from Council regarding the Holley Gym. Mr. Johnson began by saying the City has a 25-yr lease agreement with the Board but they were getting ready to sell the gym. Mr. Jackson want to keep it because a lot people use the grounds. Mr. Hayes asked for a motion to move forward noting there are SPLOST funds available. Mr. Jones noted it would be costly, but he agreed.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to allow Mr. Hayes to begin discussion with the Board regarding purchasing the properties and was seconded by Councilman Jackson – ***Motion Carries***

M) CHARTER AMENDMENTS

Mr. Hayes would like to amend the charter to allow the City Manager to hire the City Clerk. Secondly, he wants to modify Council salaries. Thirdly, He wants to take City services outside the City limits. Number 1 and 2 can be done by home rule but number 3 goes outside city limits. He said going forward, the City will need an agreement. Attorney Castellow advised that nothing could be done until proper publication and voting at 2 different meetings is accomplished.

Mr. Johnson motioned to start the procedure to amend the charter for the above items and a second was offered by Mr. Dupree- ***Motion Carries***

VIII. CITY MANAGER REPORTS

- Municipal Court is back in session
- Financial Summary for the end of the year, all PO's and checks are listed
- Municipal Court sessions are online

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- Seeking a facilitator and will begin to set goals with Mayor and Council
- Looking forward to working with Mayor Jones. Thanked Mr. Johnson for his leadership while there was no City Manager.

IX. CITY ATTORNEY

- “Welcome aboard” Mayor

X. REMARKS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Councilman Jackson spoke to the Chief about the noise ordinance. Chief Urquhart enlightened the Council on the laws of the State pertaining to fire crackers. The ordinance has not been changed since 1965. Mr. Hayes recommended that Attorney Castellow draft a noise ordinance for the City.

Councilman Giddens has an issue with internet service in his ward. Mr. Hayes is already looking into expanding fiber to the City. He will bring his recommendation on moving forward back to the Council.

Councilman Johnson asked for an update on COVID funds. Mr. Hayes shared with Council that the City received an allocation from the state for COVID of over \$300 thousand dollars, which will go in reserves.

Councilman Johnson motioned for Mayor Jones be assigned to the Chamber Board and Councilman Jackson seconded – ***Motion Carries***

Mr. Hayes briefed the Council about a company called “Retail Coaches.” They look at the footprint of potential retail for cities. The report he presented indicated Sylvester had a potential customer base of about 6000 people. After his research of Walmart traffic the potential base changed to about 40,000 people. Mr. Jones want to keep the appearance of our City refreshed.

Councilman Giddens asked how often DOT does a traffic count.

Mayor Jones remarked that he appreciated the confidence the people of the City had in him, and he would do his best to serve everyone.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION (NONE)

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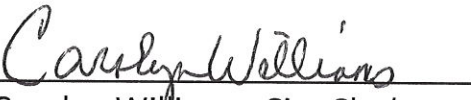
XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jackson motioned to adjourn and a second was offered by Councilman Dupree- ***Motion Carries – Unanimous Consent***

Mayor Jones duly adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.



Charles Jones, Mayor



Carolyn Williams, City Clerk

