

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester
City Council Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers
Monday, August 5, 2024
Call to Order 6:00 p.m.

Attendees: Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.
Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1
Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2
Councilman Mark Giddens, Ward 3
Mayor Pro-Tem Earnest Carter, Jr., Ward 4
Interim City Manager Tanita Norris
City Attorney Lester Castellow
City Clerk Markesha Bivens

Call to Order: Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

Invocation/Pledge: Dr. Willie Mae Marlin

Opening Remarks:

Mayor Proctor welcomed newly appointed City Manager Chris Davis to his first City Council Meeting officially hired for the City of Sylvester.

Approval of Agenda:

Upon request to remove New Business item B, Camp Sylvester Summer 2024 Report, with a motion from Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the agenda gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Speakers Appearance: None

Presentation:

Mrs. Karen Singletary, Main Street Director

Mrs. Karen Singletary, Main Street Director, informed Mayor and Council of the annual historic project required to stay in compliance with downtown standards. This year several pieces of coal were found under the train depot, during the Scavenger Hunt. Holloway Jewelers engraved five (5) pieces of coal, with a stamp of the train and ward of the City for the Mayor and Council, in exchange for sponsorship privileges.

Additionally, with the well-attended success of the one (1) night only haunted alley, last year on Halloween night, Mrs. Singletary requested to use the depot to make the event bigger and better this year. After further discussion, Mrs. Singletary will provide cost details for the event and present to the panel at a future council meeting.

New Business:

A. CareConnect Health Letter of Support

Dr. Ajay Gehlot, Mrs. Bridgett Mosely, and Mrs. Lauren Faulk, representatives from CareConnect Health, spoke before Mayor and Council, in hopes to gain support for a new health center in Sylvester, with grant funding. Citizens currently travel to any one of their 45 offices, because CareConnect provides primary care for children and adults of all ages, who need any range of medical care on a sliding scale, based on income. They have offices open 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, for the insured and uninsured. All insurances are accepted, with discounted co-pays, prescriptions and labs. They have plans to open in the old Pizza Hut location, at 615 E. Franklin Street.

Upon motion from Councilman Powell, seconded by Councilman Jackson, providing a letter of support to CareConnect Health for the HRSA Grant gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

B. GEFA Closeout Request

Ms. Norris, informed the Mayor and Council of details of the GEFA closeout request. It was requested to submit a letter closing out the existing loans, in order to utilize other funding for the upcoming Clean Water and Drinking Water projects for the City. Staff recommends allowing Mayor Proctor consent to execute the letter.

Upon motion from Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Giddens, execution of the GEFA Close Letter was approved. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

C. Revolving Loan Recommendation

Ms. Norris summarized to the Mayor and Council, the revolving loan application process, which began in April, for E & T Porky Bites. The committee reviewed the business plan, with application, and staff recommends Mayor and Council to approve the \$50,000 revolving loan. This federal loan would grant a local business with money for expansion and hiring more employees. An interest rate of 5%, a current and active business license, proper zoning requirements, service location and utilities inside city limits and monthly payment plan of \$916 monthly, for five (5) years were all mentioned.

After further discussion, it was determined more research is required for approval. Mr. Davis, Ms. Norris and Mr. Castellow will review, draft a repayment plan and provide findings at a future council meeting. As a result, this agenda item will be tabled until August 19, 2024, with no action taken.

Report/Remarks:

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor reminded of the importance of the review of minutes and agenda before approving. If there are errors and changes necessary, it is best to contact the City Clerk for better recollection as soon as possible. This will ensure any over looked items are corrected in a timely manner.

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell voiced concerns, on the record, about canal maintenance; this area is prone to flooding and with vegetation in the middle of the creek, and sand needs clearing. Ms. Norris informed of some issues, but reassures Public Works is familiar and this is being addressed, especially the South Livingston area. A rotating schedule is in the works, with a checklist to verify progress.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson reminded of issues with equipment, weather and limited overtime all playing a factor in canal maintenance. A meeting with Sylvester Housing Authority (SHA), Chief Ronald Jackson (SPD) and the Drug Taskforce, will be invited to meet soon, regarding drugs, violence and safety in Ward 2. He requests support from the entire council, when this meeting is scheduled.

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3 – Councilman Giddens also confirmed maintenance in canals at Price and Main Streets, and at the new South Georgia Bank location, with overgrowth near Ashburn and Cordele Highways.

Councilman Earnest Carter, Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter spoke on the investigation into the minutes and consent agendas, discussed at the previous meeting. He will review Mr. Castellow’s response and revisit this topic the next meeting. He also reports attention needed around Pope Park Ball Field, behind the park near the fence, Welch Street, near the Water Tank. At Rose Bud Lane, near Floyd Street, he has talked with the owner and discussed rock placement in the past; will contact Mr. Davis with concerns.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow reports the package store hearing in Superior Court is Tuesday, August 13, 2024, time to be confirmed, at the Worth County Courthouse.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis extended thanks to the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to serve Sylvester. The first staff meeting took place earlier today and went well. Staff has worked diligently to address issues and provide solutions, from budgeting to procedures; all changes will be for the betterment of the City.

Executive Session: None

Adjournment:

With all agenda items being met, Councilman Jackson motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Carter. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

ATTEST:

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK