

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester
City Council Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers
Tuesday, September 16, 2024
Call to Order 6:00 p.m.

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

Call to Order: Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

Invocation/Pledge: Dr. Willie Mae Marlin

Agenda Amendment/Approval

Upon motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the agenda gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, J and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, Minutes for August 19, 2024 – Regular Meeting, August 21, 2024 – Special Called Meeting and September 3, 2024 – Regular Meeting gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Speakers Appearance:

Mr. Stephen Rakestraw, Carter & Sloope Consulting Engineering

Mr. Rakestraw provided a status report for the Mayor and Council, reporting various projects currently underway for the City of Sylvester.

Unfinished Business

A. Road Abandonment: Davis and Brooks Streets

In a previous council meeting, the request to begin the abandonment was tabled, with the request to ensure no utilities were present at the location of Davis and Brooks Streets. Mr. Davis confirmed no utilities are present and verified no easements, at the Davis and Brooks Street location for future abandonment.

Upon motion by Councilman Carter, seconded by Councilman Powell, the road abandonment process for Davis and Brooks Streets gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

B. Agreement: Best Friends Humane Society

Details were provided from the meeting held with Best Friends Humane Society's President, Jason Orr and city staff. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from 2019, the current contract, responsibility of citation writing, annual compensation, company startup costs, city donation, monthly reports were all discussed. This item was tabled for a future council meeting, upon receipt of accurate documentation. No action was taken.

New Business

A. Municipal Court Judge

Mr. Chris Davis offered details concerning the need to amend the city charter, in relation to the Municipal Court and the appointment of a Deputy Judge. Mr. Gregory Williams has agreed to the position, should Judge Erika Johnson be absent, at \$750 per appearance.

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, with a second by Councilman Carter, Mr. Gregory Williams was appointed as Deputy Judge of the Sylvester Municipal Court. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

B. Resolution No. 2024-11 Safe Streets Action Plan

Ms. Tanita Norris, Assistant City Manager advised of the resolution required to be adopted by the Mayor and Council as a requirement of the SS4A Grant. Vehicle accidents, injuries and deaths at zero were all discussed. The Engineering study for the sidewalks and red lights at the Police Department were also mentioned.

Upon motion from Councilman Powell, with second by Councilman Jackson, the proposal Resolution No. 2024-11 gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Reports/Remarks

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor discussed the concern for the credit card fee of 3.5% versus the \$3.00 in the past; a bill insert or Facebook post would be a great way to explain the charges and cost the city absorbs. The software company charges \$15 - \$20 per transaction and there are other ways to pay like check, money order or cash.

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell stated recognition by plaque or retirement party should have been held for Judge Willie Weaver

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson was not present.

Councilman J. Mark Giddens, Ward 3 – Councilman Giddens had no report.

Councilman Earnest Carter Jr., Ward 4 – Councilman Carter had no report.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow was not present.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis had no report.

Executive Session

Councilman Giddens moved to convene an Executive Session to discuss personnel, seconded by Councilman Carter. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The vote passed 4-0.

Executive Session: 6:39 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened: 6:58 p.m.

Councilman Carter and Giddens simultaneously motioned to accept the minutes, as read, in Executive Session, seconded by Councilman Carter. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The vote passed 4-0.

Upon return from Executive Session, Councilman Giddens motioned to reconvene the regular meeting, with a second by Councilman Carter. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The vote passed 4-0.

Announcements:

Mr. Davis informed of the bill insert mailed in error to citizens with misinformation advising of the reconnect fee on the cut-off list and not disconnected, which was also posted to social media in August incorrectly. This error was at no fault of the Mayor and Council or city staff, and the misunderstanding came from our third party billing company, Incode. Cycles 1 and 2 were affected by this mix-up, and the Customer Service Team will reach out to citizens affected by this, with a statement posted to the social media and website.

Adjournment

With all agenda items covered, Councilman Carter motioned to adjourn, with a second by Councilman Giddens. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, and Powell. The vote passed 4-0.

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK