

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester
City Council Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers
Tuesday, October 21, 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
Assistant City Manager Richie Childers
Assistant City Manager Tanita Norris
City Attorney Lester Castellow
Deputy City Clerk Teneisha Cushion

Call to Order: Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

Invocation/Pledge: Deacon John L. Green

Agenda Amendment/Approval

With a request to add New Business Item G: Peanut Festival Weekend Update, upon motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Carter, the agenda gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Giddens, Minutes for the October 2, 2024 - Millage Rate Public Hearing and Millage Rate Adoption Meeting and October 7, 2024 - Regular Meeting gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Speakers Appearance

Mrs. Vickie Roberts-Drayton, Sylvester Resident at 208 E. Lee Street, approached Mayor and Council concerning the street lights near her home. Street light purpose, obsolete parts, LED upgrades throughout the city, citizen safety and similar complaints were discussed.

New Business

A. Beer, Wine and Alcohol License Application and Renewals

- i. Mrs. Tenneisha Cushion, Deputy City Clerk, offered details of the application for DJ’s Game Room & Event Center. The application, on premise consumption and distance requirements were all discussed, for this agenda item that was tabled from the October 21, 2024 Council Meeting.

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, with a second by Councilman Powell, the beer, wine and alcohol license application for DJ’s Game Room & Event Center gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

- ii. In order to continue operation, area businesses are required to pay necessary fees and provide updated documentation for their beer, wine and alcohol licensing. The following businesses submitted a renewal packet for approval:

E-Z Corner #1	Handy Express	Sylvester Express	Walmart #7245
Harry’s Food Mart	E-Z Corner#33	Joe’s Food Mart	

Upon motion by Councilman Powell, with a second by Councilman Giddens, the beer, wine and alcohol license renewals for the said businesses were approved. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

B. Event Road Closure Applications

Mrs. Glenice Stephens, Community Development Director, offered details for the following proposed events:

- Coats of Kindness at Jeffords Park, October 26, 2024, 10 am – 4 pm.
- Unity Baptist Block Party at Gervaise-Lawhorne Park (Duck Pond), 3 pm – 9 pm also October 26, 2024.
- First Baptist Church Fall Festival at Gervaise-Lawhorne Park (Duck Pond), October 30, 2024, from 5 pm – 6 pm.

These events are all open to the public, for community outreach with fun and entertainment and Coats of Kindness will be collecting coats for the less fortunate. The faith based events are annual, with road closure requests for First Baptist submitted accordingly. Clean-up committees from each group are designated, per the applications.

Upon a motion by Councilman Jackson, with a second by Councilman Giddens, the event application requests for three organizations, Coats of Kindness, Unity Baptist Church and First Baptist Church gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

C. Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG) Natural Gas Release

Mr. Davis advised the Mayor and Council of MGAG Natural Gas capacity, reserve and option to sell or release the overage to other cities. If the city foresees a need to reacquire the gas released, as with the Birdsong Peanut Expansion or a large new business in the future, there would be no change in the rate, should the city decide to buy back. In attempts to reduce cost and recover funds, staff recommends releasing the gas for a savings of \$23,535 this year.

Upon motion by Councilman Powell, seconded by Councilman Jackson, the release of natural gas to MGAG gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

D. Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) Streets Confirmation

Mr. Davis confirmed the list of streets provided by the city council, noted by ward to be resurfaced with LMIG Project funds. Mayor Proctor's street requests will also be submitted. The following streets were provided:

- Ward 1: Pecan St. South Sumner Ln., East Crockett St., Jefferson St. from Dewey St. to Pine St., Dewey St. to S. Livingston St.
- Ward 2: Pinson St., Walnut St., North Henderson St., Warren St., Washington St.
- Ward 3: Price St., Oak St., and Wallace St.
- Ward 4: Pecan St. State St. Sumner Ln., Sumner St. from Westbury to Darlington Rd., Willingham St. from Westberry St. to East St. East St. from Franklin St. to Wallace St.

Discussion of inflation, material cost, labor and Public Works evaluating some project details took place. There was no action taken on this agenda item.

E. City Council Meeting Dates: November and December 2024

Mr. Davis confirmed the meeting dates for November and December, mentioning the third meeting close to the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays. After further discussion, it was decided there will be no second meeting in these two months. There will be one (1) meeting, the first Monday, for November and December. The third Monday meeting will not take place.

F. Alley Closure Discussion: Portion of 10' Alley East of 308 West Franklin Street

Mr. Davis informed of a pre-development meeting with Mrs. Stephens and staff, with the site engineer, for the development of a convenience store. This location will be at the corner of Livingston and West Franklin Streets. There has been a request to close a portion of the alley to the east of the property line of 308 West Franklin Street, where the 10' alley intersects with a 20' alley.

The Public Works and Water/Wastewater Departments reviewed the plans and reviewed no utilities for this area. Staff recommends the developer cut and cap the line in the alley, abandoning the whole sewer line.

The city would have no responsibility and the developer is aware of the liability. Mr. Castellow confirmed to the panel, that part of the abandonment process is to inform nearby property owners of the proposed changes.

Upon motion by Councilman Giddens, seconded by Councilman Jackson, consent to initiate the closure process of a 10' alley on the east of the property line of 308 West Franklin gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

G. Peanut Festival Weekend Update

Mrs. Karen Singletary, Main Street Director, summarized the weekend's festivities. The 60th Annual Peanut Festival began with a concert at Jeffords Park, October 18, 2024. Several music arts performed with 150 vendors and Award Winning Artist John Berry closing out the night. A scavenger hunt throughout Worth County provided citizens with cash prizes, if they located the peanuts from the clues provided. Saturday, the parade had a big turn out with thousands attending the Festival at Jeffords Park afterwards. The parade started at 9am, different from past years at 10am, due to the large number of participants.

Additionally, Mrs. Singletary informed that Wednesday, October 23 is the Pink-Out Cancer Awareness Event at the Pedestrian Mall at 12noon. The Pets and Pals parade taking place Thursday, October 24 at 6 pm and the Haunted Depot will happen both Friday, October 25 and Saturday the 26th. This is a free event, from 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm, with a kid friendly area outdoors, but haunted indoors.

Reports/Remarks

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell had no report.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson reported of a wrong way vehicle that entered the parade route during the Peanut Festival Parade and how safety must be a priority.

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

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

Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr. – Mayor Proctor also commented on the Peanut Festival weekend. There was a great turnout and he is looking forward to next year. Worthy of a Meal, an organization aimed to provide meals for the elderly, may attend the next council meeting to inform of their activity for Thanksgiving. They have plans to begin cooking early morning, November 23, 2024 at the Pedestrian Mall, and service plates to the community until 4 pm. Mr. Melvin Jefferson, Jr. is leading this effort.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis gave kudos to the city staff, Public Works, Police Department and other departments, for the work completed during Peanut Festival Weekend. No complaints were received from staff or the community, with a great job cleaning the areas throughout the day or thereafter. The city staff is continually attempting to cut costs and recently inquired on the Sylvester-Worth Recreation Department, meeting with Mr. David Cooper. City Attorney Mr. Castellow and County Attorney Mr. Ralph Powell will soon meet and report, regarding the department’s future. Buildings, funds, separation, new ball fields for tournaments and budget reports were all mentioned. A Safe Streets meeting will be held with community leaders and stakeholders concerning safety of roads and streets in Sylvester. This meeting will take place in City Council Chambers, Tuesday, October 29, 2024 at 5:30 pm. Mr. Davis also shared that the Grant for Phase II of Quail Pines Apartments has also been awarded.

Executive Session: None

Adjournment

With all agenda items covered, Councilman Jackson motioned to adjourn, with a second by Councilman Giddens. 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

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK