

City Council Meeting Minutes

City of Sylvester
City Council Regular Meeting
City Hall Council Chambers
Tuesday, November 4, 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
City Clerk Markesha Bivens

Call to Order: Mayor Harold Proctor, Jr.

Invocation/Pledge: Dr. Willie Mae Marlin

Agenda Amendment/Approval

With a request to remove the Executive Session, upon motion by Mayor Proctor, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the Council Meeting 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 Carter, minutes for the October 21, 2024 – Regular Meeting gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Speakers Appearance: None

Public Hearing

Street Abandonment for Brooks and Davis Streets

The Public Hearing was called to order at 6:03 p.m., by Mayor Proctor, via unanimous vote, with no objection. Attorney Lester Castellow, provided details of the request. As discussed in a previous council meeting, the potential abandonment of a public road notice letter was sent to area property owners via certified mail and placed in the Sylvester Local Newspaper as required by law. A map with documentation was provided for the panel. There was no public comment.

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson, seconded by Councilman Giddens, the Public Hearing adjourned. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

Public Hearing adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

There was no action taken upon returning to Regular Session.

Attorney Castellow informed the next step in pursuing the 308 West Franklin Street property abandonment is to run a two-week advertisement, with a 30-day notice. This item will be discussed in the January 2025 Council Meeting.

New Business

A. Event Application/Road Closure Request: Veterans Day Parade

Mr. Joe Hamsley, Commander of American Legion Post 335, offered details for the 2nd Annual Veterans Day Parade. This newly installed event will take place on the traditional parade route, closing Isabella, Front, Pope and Main Streets. This event is open to the public and will be November 11, 2024, from 6:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Mrs. Karen Singletary will help with the applications, participants and this group plans to promote on social media, has help from the Chamber of Commerce, flyers and school involvement will all take place for a bigger event this year.

Upon a motion by Councilman Powell, with a second by Councilman Jackson, the request to close streets application for the Veterans Day Parade gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

B. Sylvester – Worth County Recreation Authority

Attorney Castellow reflected on several years on the Sylvester-Worth County Recreation Authority and plans to move forward with an act for the board. There was mention of the review of neighboring communities, their improvements and challenges and how it will be an overall benefit to Worth County youth. City and county attorneys drafted the reenactment bill which was provided to the Mayor and Council. Staff recommends approval of this document, providing it to the Worth County Board of Commissioners; then begin to appoint members to the board, hold public meetings, hold staff accountable and gain citizen involvement.

Upon motion by Councilman Jackson and second by Councilman Giddens, the Sylvester-Worth County Recreation Authority Board Act gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

C. Georgia Peanut Festival Committee

Mrs. Jessica Grannis, Chair of the Georgia Peanut Festival Committee, expressed gratitude to the City of Sylvester Mayor, Council, Public Works and staff for continued support toward the success of the 60th Annual Peanut Festival. She and her team gifted a locally made, handcrafted, peanut clock to display at City Hall as a token of appreciation.

Mayor and Council thanked the committee for their hard work each year, year round, and commended Mrs. Karen Rackley and her staff of the success of the festival, in her last year before officially retiring from the Chamber.

Reports/Remarks

Councilman Melvin Powell, Ward 1 – Councilman Powell requested monthly financial reports from staff; Mr. Davis informed the reports will be available next month.

Councilman Isaac Jackson, Jr., Ward 2 – Councilman Jackson thanked Ward 2 citizens for their attendance at the meeting.

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 reminded of the Community Worth of a Meal organization planning to set up, cook and prepare meals at the Pedestrian Mall. They have partnered with Sweet Caroline's, a local restaurant located next door from City Hall, at 123 Front Street, to cook and prepare food inside. Usage of the Pedestrian Mall for visibility, is requested for this event, the Saturday before Thanksgiving, November 23, 2024.

Upon motion by Mayor Proctor, seconded by Councilman Carter, usage of the Pedestrian Mall on the mentioned day for the community meals gained approval. Voting yes were Mayor Proctor, Councilmen Carter, Giddens, Jackson and Powell. The vote passed 5-0.

City Attorney Lester Castellow – Attorney Castellow had no report.

City Manager Chris Davis – Mr. Davis provided updates for two grants to the panel:

- 1) Community Home Investment Program (CHIP) Grant – the current grant originally started with finances awarded in 2020. The project was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and contractor labor issues. Allocated funds must be half utilized by January 31, 2025, in order to qualify for the upcoming grant window. The city will not be eligible due to this project's end date pending the current project completion after Jan. 2025. For clarity, funds are not given to the city in hand, however approval from Department of Community Affairs (DCA) occurs and funds are placed in the city's account, then dispersed via drawdown accordingly. In summary, there is no new grant for CHIP at this time. Permits have been secured for the two (2) homes selected (109 Kourtney Street and 319 Hobson Street) as the project moves forward.
- 2) Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG): Unbeknownst to staff, the LMIG awarded in 2023 for 2024, those funds have not been spent. This results in a hold on LMIG project funding for the next couple years. LMIG Projects verified at the previous meeting will have to be moved to 2026 and streets for 2024 will have to be verified for completion.

City Manager Chris Davis continued – Mr. Davis informed on City Hall’s closing for Veterans Day, Monday, November 11 and participation in the Veterans Day Parade requested. The employee Thanksgiving luncheon will be held on Friday, November 22 at 12 noon at the Train Depot for employees only. The Mayor and Council are invited to attend City Hall will be closed for Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29. The Electric Cities of Georgia is holding the annual meeting December 8-11 at Lake Oconee, a head count of participants for Mayor and Council is needed.

Executive Session: None

Adjournment

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

Mayor Proctor duly adjourned the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL
SYLVESTER, GEORGIA

HAROLD PROCTOR, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARKESHA BIVENS, CITY CLERK