

MINUTES
CITY OF MCDONOUGH
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
CITY HALL – APRIL 27, 2020
6:00 PM - “Live Streamed”

The Special Called Meeting of the City of McDonough City Council was held on Monday, April 27, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Copeland called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The City Clerk Ms. Janis Price called roll for the meeting, as follows:

Mayor Billy Copeland	Present
Mayor Pro Tem Craig Elrod	Present
Councilmember Benjamin Pruett	Present
Councilmember Roger Pruitt	Present
Councilmember Rufus Stewart	Present
Councilmember Kamali Varner	Present (via telephone)
Councilmember Sandra Vincent	Present (via telephone)

Others in attendance were: City Clerk, Ms. Janis Price; City Attorney, Mr. Jim Elliott; Fire Chief, Mr. Steve Morgan; Finance Director, Mr. Mike Clark; Human Resources Director, Ms. Carla Tuck; Technology Services Director, Mr. Steve Sikes; and Network Administrator, Mr. Brian Linton.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Agenda with the removal of Item 6E and Item 6G to be postponed until the next Council Meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 18, 2020. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Councilmember Stewart led the Pledge to the Flag and Councilmember Pruett gave the Invocation.

6. Consent Agenda Items:

- A. Approval to allow Hetterman Enterprises LLC. to make an emergency stormwater drainage system repair to excavate and remove 140’ of existing metal pipe and replace with HDPE pipe on King Blvd. at a cost of \$26,300.00 which will be paid from the Stormwater Budget.
- B. Approval to purchase six SCAG Tiger Cat II EFI mowers from Vansant’s Lawnmower Sales and Service at a cost of \$ 44,694.00 which will be paid from the Street Department Budget. (Insurance check has been received from the accident causing this circumstance).
- C. Approval to purchase a 2020 Ford F250 4x4 Super cab short bed truck at a cost of \$33,658.00 which will be paid from the Street Department Budget.

- (Insurance check has been received from the accident causing this circumstance).
- D. Approval to purchase of (3) new 2020 Chevrolet Tahoe's for Police use:
2020 Chevrolet Tahoe (White) \$37,925.00
2020 Chevrolet Tahoe (Satin Steel) \$37,120.00
2020 Chevrolet Tahoe (Sliver Ice) \$37,120.00
Cost of \$116,280.00 paid from the Drug Task Force. (No city funds).
 - E. Ratify the payment to Butler Snow of \$10,538.05 for additional legal services incurred in the month of March, 2020. This will be paid from the Legal Department Budget.
 - F. Adopt a Resolution amending Resolution 20-03-30 to assist local businesses created by COVID-19 pandemic; changes include repayment of loans and businesses remain open on a full or part-time basis during this emergency period.
 - G. Ratify agreement between the City of McDonough and Keck & Wood Inc. for professional services for the Community Development Department which will be paid from this department's budget at the cost established in the agreement effective January 22, 2020.
 - H. Ratify an agreement between The City of McDonough and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of the City of McDonough to administer the City of McDonough COVID -19 Pandemic Employee Retention Loan Program for the benefit of business entities within the City of McDonough experiencing financial hardships due to the pandemic.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, with the removal of Item 6E and Item 6G to be postponed until the next Council Meeting, tentatively scheduled for May 18, 2020. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

**7. Executive Session (if needed) for: Litigation O.C.G.A. 50-14-2
Real Estate O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(1)
Personnel O.C.G.A. 50-14-3 (b)(2)**

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel, O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(2). Councilmember Stewart motioned and Councilmember Pruett seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

Mayor Copeland called for a motion to go back into the Special Called Meeting. Councilmember Stewart motioned and Councilmember Pruitt seconded. The vote was seven in favor.

There was one action item to report from executive Session.

Councilmember Pruitt motioned for the City to offer the position of City Administrator to Preston Dorsey with a start date of May 1, and with compensation of up to \$125,000; and Councilmember Pruett seconded.

Prior to the vote, Councilmember Varner stated for the record that in her opinion this process was not completed in the proper manner, and that in the future she believes that dismissing the application process and making further decisions would be a better approach.

Councilmember Vincent shared her great respect for Chief Dorsey, and she said that she values him greatly both personally and professionally as the City's Police Chief. However, she said that her concern is that the Council indicated its desire to hire someone with City Administrator experience, and that the other candidate who was considered for the position has a stellar reputation as well as City Administrator and Deputy Administrator experience. Further, she agreed with Councilmember Varner that in her opinion the process was flawed, and she believes it has been a disservice to two honorable and professional individuals.

Councilmember Pruett said that Preston Dorsey is a proven leader who has had a stellar career with the City as the Police Chief; and while there were other very qualified candidates, the City is very fortunate to have the opportunity to consider Mr. Dorsey for this position.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod said that the City has worked on this for months, and he acknowledged that the COVID-19 virus has made the process more difficult. He said the City saw several qualified candidates to try to cast a wide net for the best candidates, and he stated that he disagrees with the comments that the process was flawed. Lastly, he thanked the Human Resources Director, Ms. Carla Tuck for all of her hard work and diligence throughout this process.

Mayor Copeland stated that the idea that this was a cut-and-dried process is completely false and totally erroneous on the part of anyone who would suggest anything along those lines. He said that was not the case for himself, and he is confident that it was not the case with anyone on Council.

After the comments were concluded, Mayor Copeland called for the vote. The vote was five in favor and two opposed. The motion passed. Those voting in favor were Mayor

Copeland, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruitt, Councilmember Pruett and Councilmember Stewart. Councilmembers Varner and Vincent voted in opposition.

Councilmember Vincent discussed the shelter-in-place order and the Governor's recent decision to allow specific businesses to reopen. She shared her concerns over possible hot spots within McDonough, and she asked about the City's plan to ensure the safety of the citizens at this time.

Mayor Copeland expressed his support of the Governor, and he said that the Governor's Executive Order supersedes any local order. He said it is up to the citizens to use common sense, and that it is imperative to restart the economy. Further he said that he has personally visited businesses who have successfully reopened with the social distancing guidelines in place.

Mayor Copeland also commented on the idea of considering a resolution in opposition of the Governor's decision to reopen certain businesses, and he stressed that he would not be in support of any such resolution.

Mayor Pro Tem Elrod said that his understanding from the County's Town Hall Meeting is that the shelter-in-place order was never intended to eradicate the virus; however, it was intended to flatten the curve and give hospitals an opportunity to prepare. He said the Governor is using a measured approach to reopen the economy slowly with safeguards in place so that businesses have the opportunity to open under specific guidelines. He also said he would not support a resolution in opposition of the Governor's Order.

Councilmember Vincent stated that she had shared an example of a Resolution that a sister City had put together, but that resolution was not drafted for the City of McDonough. She said that because Mayor and Council have not had any roundtable discussions about its approach to the COVID-19 pandemic, she brought forth the discussion to determine a plan of action to ensure the safety and health of the citizens of McDonough.

She also praised the efforts of the Westbury Nursing Home staff, as there have been no cases of COVID-19 in the facility thus far. She said that she has been trying to gain support for the City Council to provide a meal for the staff to show the City's support; however, she has only gotten a response from two of her fellow councilmembers.

Mayor Copeland said that after several failed attempts to personally reach out to the administrator of Westbury, he has now been in contact with her. He said that the City is working on providing meals for staff on Thursday, but the details have yet to be confirmed. He noted that once everything has been confirmed, councilmembers will be sent all of the details so that they can plan accordingly.

Councilmember Vincent expressed her belief that she and Councilmember Varner are continuously excluded from important conversations concerning the City of McDonough.

Mayor Copeland stressed that everyone is in this together, and he said that he will never make a decision and not inform all of the members of Council when the time is appropriate.

Councilmember Stewart shared his support of providing meals for the Westbury staff. He also said that he has received phone calls about some local businesses that are not following the guidelines; and he asked about how those guidelines will be enforced in the City.

Mayor Copeland stressed that it is up to individuals to follow the guidelines that have been set out by the Governor. He reiterated his support for the Governor's decision to allow some businesses to reopen using a measured approach, and he shared his continued concern for those who are most vulnerable to the virus.

Councilmember Pruitt said he also supports the Governor's decision. He said that common sense is essential at this time, when it is so important to get the economy back up and running.

Councilmember Pruett reminded everyone that there is a distinction between ordering businesses to open and lifting restrictions for businesses to open under specific guidelines; and he shared that he supports the Governor's measured approach in such a critical time.

Councilmember Vincent shared that her continued concerns and said this has less to do with the economy and more to do with the continuing health crisis and its effect on the citizens of McDonough. She asked about the City of McDonough's plan to make sure that citizens are appropriately informed to ensure their health, safety and welfare. She said that she does not want businesses to suffer; however, she is concerned that some businesses may feel forced to open according to the provisions of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) loan agreements if they have applied for assistance.

Councilmember Vincent said that there need to be more conversations, and she noted that other councils are holding discussions prior to their meetings to share information. She said that keeping the public informed needs to be more of a core value than a passive activity.

Mayor Copeland stated that he respectfully disagrees with most of Councilmember Vincent's points; and he called for a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Pruitt motioned and Councilmember Stewart seconded. The vote was five in favor. Those voting in favor were Mayor Copeland, Mayor Pro Tem Elrod, Councilmember Pruett, Councilmember Pruitt and Councilmember Stewart. A vote was not heard from Councilmembers Varner and Councilmember Vincent via the telephone.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Janis E, Price, City Clerk