



Minutes

City Council Meeting

October 15th, 2024

6:30pm

Baldwin Courtroom, 155 Willingham Avenue, Baldwin, GA 30511

Mayor Stephanie Almagno, Council member Erik Keith (via phone), Council member Kerri Davis, Council member Maarten Venter, and Council member Alice Venter were all in attendance.

Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Almagno called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Invocation and Pledge

Mayor Almagno listed all members present at the meeting for those watching the Facebook live stream.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes: Council Meeting 9/23/24 and Work Session 10/8/24.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the consent agenda as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

Public Comments

Stacey Naddor of 113 Lakeview Walk said that the proposed millage rate shows a 16% increase for Habersham residents and a 53% increase for Banks residents and wanted to understand the difference in numbers.

CAO Emily Woodmaster explained that while there is one set millage rate for the whole city, Banks County has the LOST offset that reduces the Banks County millage (which the City is legally required to follow). Therefore, the Banks County percentage increase or decrease will never match the Habersham percentage whenever the millage rate is proposed.

Public Hearings

Millage Rate - Public Hearing 2 of 3

Legal Counsel Jack Samuels introduced the public hearing for the second of three required hearings. Samuels opened the hearing at 6:42 pm.

Andrea Harper of 501 Willingham Avenue asked if the collections from the increased millage were designated for any specific uses. Almagno and Council member Maarten Venter explained how the collections are utilized to balance the City's budget, and that the City is not immune to the changes in the economy that everyone is experiencing. Costs like staffing, additional personnel, paying utility bills, insurance, and fuel have increased for the City as well, but property taxes account for 25% of the City's budget, and alternative funding methods are used for the remaining 75%.

Samuels opened the floor for anyone else who wished to address the Council regarding the millage rate. No one came forward. Samuels closed the public hearing at 6:52 pm.

Reports

Old Business

1. Consideration/Approval of 1st Reading of Water & Sewer Use Ordinance #2024-10152

Woodmaster explained that the current Water and Sewer Use Ordinance has been repeatedly amended over the last 50 years, and the last two years has been spent with City Engineer Fletcher Holliday to determine what was needed to modernize the document and to meet the City's current needs. The overall layout and structure of the document was cleaned up in order to ensure the most necessary information relevant to the end user is readily available. The proposed new ordinance has been reduced to 34 pages from the previous 150 and has been reviewed by the Water Group Committee.

Council member Alice Venter also confirmed with Woodmaster that the new ordinance relieves the burden of the few users who are not connected to the City sewer but are currently required to pay for sewer.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the first reading of the Water & Sewer Use Ordinance #2024-10152 as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

2. Consideration/Approval of LACI Fire Service Mutual Aid Agreement

Woodmaster reviewed the updated fire service mutual aid agreement with Lee Arrendale Correctional Institute (LACI) discussed at the October work session. The only modification to the agreement is removing the guarantee that the apparatus will be utilized when responding to calls. Council had no further questions or concerns.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the LACI Fire Service Mutual Aid Agreement and to authorize Chief Roy to execute the agreement as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

3. Consideration/Approval of Scag Mower - Water Treatment Facility

Woodmaster reviewed the purchase requests discussed at the October work session for replacing 15-year-old mowers at both the Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities. Both mowers are budgeted for their respective department but exceed the \$5,000 limit and therefore, must be approved by Council. Council had no further questions or concerns.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the purchase of a Scag Mower for the Water Treatment Facility as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 4-0.

4. Consideration/Approval of Scag Mower - Wastewater Treatment Facility

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the purchase of a Scag Mower for the Wastewater Treatment Facility as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 4-0.

New Business

5. Consideration/Approval of Award for Banks Co. Road Paving Project Resolution #2024-10153R

Woodmaster apologized for the error on the agenda and explained this resolution is actually for paving Habersham County roads, specifically Batson Street, Davis Drive, and Homer Drive. After the bid opening, it is recommended that Council award the project to Ryals Brothers out of Clermont, Georgia for \$135,022.60. Funding will be split between LMIG (approximately \$42,000) and SPLOST VII (approximately \$93,000). Council had no further questions or concerns.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve Resolution #2024-10153R as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

6. Consideration/Approval of Collection System Pump Replacement Request

Woodmaster presented a quote from MPE Services for the removal of the current pump and installation of a new pump at the Regency lift station for \$47,790.00 (includes parts and labor). One pump at the station was successfully replaced last year and it is now necessary to replace the other.

To fund this project, Woodmaster presented a threefold request for items #6 and #7 and provided a breakdown of System Connection Fees and the O&M reserve fund. Two years ago, Council authorized \$100,000 to be allocated from System Connection Fees to the solids handling building project, which has not been completed at this time. If the funds remain where they are currently allocated, neither the Regency repairs nor the raw water pump repairs (item #7) could be completed. Therefore, Woodmaster requested that the \$100,000 commitment from System Connection Fees be moved to the O&M fund since the solids handling building will not be completed in the next three months. Within the next quarter, the difference will be replenished. By reallocating these funds, the Regency repairs can be paid for out of O&M and the raw water intake pumps from System Connection Fees, therefore funding all three projects with appropriate funds. The first request is for Council to authorize reallocating the money and the second will be to authorize the purchases necessary for the Regency lift station and the raw water pumps.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve reallocating \$100,000 committed from System Connection Fees for the Solids Handling Building and commit funds from the O&M Reserve Fund with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to authorize the purchase of a replacement pump at the Regency Lift Station with a cost not to exceed \$47,800 to be expensed from the O&M Reserve Fund with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

7. Consideration/Approval of Raw Water Intake Pump Repairs Request

Holliday presented a request for Goforth Williamson to travel to the Baldwin raw water station, utilize a large crane to pull the raw water intake pumps, and then each pump and motor be rebuilt. At the end of the process, they will be like new without the cost

of a brand-new pump. Without these pumps, water cannot be transported from the Chattahoochee to the water treatment plant to be ultimately delivered to the end customer.

The quoted costs for removal and repair of each pump are \$52,800 and \$58,425 and are based on the expected repairs. Holliday said if additional funds beyond tonight's request are needed for the repairs, O&M funds in the current budget could be utilized.

Depending on the amount of necessary work, turnaround is estimated to be 60 days. One pump will be pulled and returned once the work is completed and then the second pump will follow, so expenses will not be incurred at the same time. At Maarten Venter's inquiry, Holliday estimated a brand-new pump to cost \$175,000-\$200,000 per pump. The recent rain events have also exacerbated the issue to the point that Holliday wishes to be proactive in addressing the issue instead of reactive.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the repair costs for pump #1 and pump #2 at the Raw Water Intake with a cost not to exceed \$111,225 and to be expensed from System Connection Fees with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 4-0.

8. Consideration/Approval of Serv Pro Agreement for Community Room Repairs

Woodmaster presented an agreement from Serv Pro to remediate the mold that has collected in the community room from when the City Hall roof leaked several months ago. Serv Pro detailed everything that they plan to do (including cleaning the HVAC system) and how much it will cost. This Limit of Liability Agreement simply states that while Serv Pro will fully clean and remediate the mold to the best of their ability, there is no way of guaranteeing 100% of the mold will be removed. The total cost is quoted to be \$2,998.97 and to be expensed from O&M funds. Repairs to the sheetrock and closet door will be done in-house by Public Works. Legal counsel has reviewed the agreement and had no concerns.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the Serve Pro Agreement for repairs to the Community Room and to authorize the CAO to execute the agreement as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

Executive Session

Announcements


- a. The 7th Annual Baldwin Fall Festival will be on October 19th from 12:00 pm - 8:00 pm at the Baldwin Farmers Market and Downtown City Park. Enjoy live music, local crafters and vendors, a wide variety of food trucks, and a closing fireworks show. As always, admission and all activities are FREE! The Maggie Valley Band and Katie Deal will be performing.
- b. Join us for the final 2024 Movie in the Market on October 25th starting at 8:30 pm.. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets and join us for a FREE night of fun at the Farmers' Market at 110 Airport Road. This month we are showing "Kangaroo Jack." Concessions will be available, with all proceeds going to Shop with a Hero.
- c. The City of Baldwin is holding a Fall Amnesty Day on November 7th. Baldwin Public

Works will pick up and dispose of trash that would normally need to be taken to the landfill. We will accept scrap metal, paint cans, furniture, and old appliances. Tires and batteries will not be picked up. All items must be placed at the curb no later than 8:00 am on November 7th. Call City Hall at 706-778-6341 by 4:30 pm on November 4th to get your name on the list!

- d. Mayor Almagno encouraged residents to get out and vote. Voting information for both Habersham and Banks County Baldwin residents is available at City Hall.
- e. Council member Alice Venter reminded those present of the initiative to gather supplies to provide aid for the Hurricane Helene victims facing cold weather. Propane, kerosene, and lamp oil are especially needed, and even empty propane tanks can be exchanged for new ones. Donations can be brought to Baldwin Fire Department.

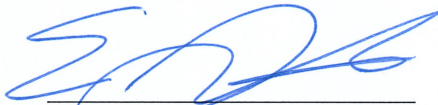
Adjournment

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to adjourn the meeting with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0 at 7:33 pm.



Stephanie Almagno, Mayor

10/28/2024
Date Approved by Council



Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk

