

## *Minutes*

City Council Work Session

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024

6:30pm

Baldwin Courtroom, 155 Willingham Avenue, Baldwin, GA 30511

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

### ***Call Meeting to Order***

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

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

### ***Public Hearing***

### ***Old Business***

### ***New Business***

#### 1. 2025 Council Meeting Calendar

Woodmaster presented a calendar for the 2025 calendar year, proposing dates for council meetings, work sessions, and events. There are a few meetings that have been moved to either the day before or the day the regularly scheduled date to accommodate a holiday or Election Day. Retreat dates have not yet been confirmed, but Woodmaster hopes to have the dates finalized by the next meeting.

Council was in consensus to bring this forward for a vote at next Tuesday's meeting.

#### 2. ARPA Funds Obligation

The City of Baldwin received \$1.274 million in November 2021 from ARPA and all funds were committed to certain projects. Woodmaster presented a list of the public safety projects to which these funds were committed (p. 4). There is a deadline of December 31, 2024 for all funds to be "obligated," meaning there must be a contract, a purchase order, or agreement in place that services or goods have been negotiated with the City and the vendor.

One project with committed funds was the Wastewater Plant solids handling building (including the screw press), however, the original estimate of \$800,000 from 2021 has been exceeded by the lowest bid of \$1.2 million. Woodmaster proposed using the allotted funds for the screw press, and the focus after the first of the year will be to find funding to get the solids handling building constructed.

Another considerable project was the county-wide E-911 radio system upgrade, which was intended to be live at the end of 2024. Unforeseen issues like tower location and infrastructure installation, however, have significantly delayed the project. When funds were allocated in 2021, Baldwin's portion was just under \$265,000 and that number is still

relatively the same. However, the cities are charged for the radios is dependent on the agreement that the county implements. Woodmaster recommends using SPLOST VII for the radio system, which was the original plan before the ARPA funds were distributed.

In total, the City has \$319,948 to obligate by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Woodmaster has met with department heads to discuss ideal projects to allocate these funds to, but it will be at the discretion of Council of how to proceed:

#### **Water Treatment Plant -**

- Erosion mitigation at the raw water intake: Est. \$24,585 - Includes engineering and pouring concrete to address erosion issues.
- Water Plant interior painting: Est. \$189,000 - This was a bid for reference from a large company. City Engineer Fletcher Holliday expects a lower cost from a local vendor and is researching.

#### **Public Works**

- 2-way radio system: Est. \$18,500 - Includes the install of the antennae and equipment into Public Works vehicles, as well as 12 radios. This estimate is an out of state bid, but Public Works Director Scott Barnhart is researching local vendors.
- CIP Update (\$25,500) - The last Capital Improvement Plan was completed in 2012 and modified in 2018. Several items have been completed. This project would be to go through and update the project list as well as cost estimates, drawings, etc.
- Zone Meter Planning: Est. \$15,000 - For the first phase of the zone meter project, which is the labor-intensive process of identifying locations for meters. The zone meters will allow the City to better locate and isolate leaks in the system to address water loss.
- Pole Barn for Public Works Building: Est. \$35,000 - To house equipment currently stored at the old Public Works building. This item was cut from the original new Public Works building project.
- Air Relief Valves on Force Main: No cost estimate has been established yet, but the project could be done utilizing ARPA funds.

#### **Police and Fire**

- Breathing Air System: Est. \$58,064 - This estimate is a recent quote from the manufacturer. The Fire Department's current system will expire next year, so this expense is inevitable.

#### **General Administration**

- Email conversion: Est. \$8,000 - This project was cut from the current budget. The project would include installing infrastructure at the new Public Works building and converting the City email system from Google to Microsoft.

- Codification: Est. \$20,000 - Codification of City ordinances has been discussed for six years and has been due since 2010 (once the population reached 2,500), but has been delayed as it is an expensive and labor-intensive project. The costs for codification could be split over two budget cycles: half from ARPA and half from next year's budget.

Woodmaster stated that all these projects can be either obligated or completed in full by December 31<sup>st</sup>. City staff requests that the Council make a decision about what projects they wish to obligate the funds to at the next meeting, as the sooner staff can start the process, the better.

Council was in consensus to bring this forward for a vote at next Tuesday's meeting.

***Announcements***


- The City of Baldwin encourages its residents to exercise their right to vote, and tomorrow is Election Day! If you have any questions of where to go for either Advance Voting or on Election Day, please call the Habersham County Elections & Registration Office at 706-839-0170.
- Signups for Fall Amnesty Day have officially closed. If you called City Hall for pick up, please make sure that all items are placed at the curb no later than 8:00 am on November 7<sup>th</sup>.
- City offices will be closed on Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup> in observance of Veterans' Day, and on November 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> for the Thanksgiving holiday.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Baldwin Thanksgiving Community Potluck Dinner will be on November 28<sup>th</sup> starting at 4:30 pm at the Baldwin Fire Department. This potluck is open to all Baldwin residents. We will provide the turkey and ham, and we ask that guests bring a favorite dish to share. Please RSVP to 470-208-9842 with the number of guests and dish details for the menu.
- The Baldwin Christmas Tree Lighting will be on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. Ring in the Christmas season with Christmas carols by Baldwin Elementary School Choir as we light the tree, and enjoy FREE pictures with Santa, FREE cookies and cocoa, and FREE train rides around the park!

***Adjournment***

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to adjourn the meeting with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0 at 7:08 pm.

  
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 Stephanie Almagno, Mayor

11/12/2024  
 Date Approved by Council

  
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 Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk

