

Minutes

City Council Meeting

October 28th, 2024

6:30pm

Baldwin Courtroom, 155 Willingham Avenue, Baldwin, GA 30511

Mayor Stephanie Almagno, Council member Erik Keith, 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 those present at the meeting for those watching the Facebook live stream.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes: Council Meeting 10/15/2024.

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

Public Comments

No one came forward.

Mayor Almagno read an email (see attached) Charlotte Horvath of 555 Park Ave regarding two speed limit signs, one of which needs to be replaced. Ms. Horvath also shared her recent experiences with people speeding. CAO Woodmaster said City staff will investigate replacing the sign and reach back out to the resident.

Public Hearings

Millage Rate - Public Hearing 3 of 3

Jack Samuels introduced the third and final public hearing on the 2024 millage rate.

Samuels opened the public hearing at 6:36 pm. No one came forward.

Mayor Almagno read an email (see attached) from Joe Elam of 200 Sappling Place regarding the millage rate, as he could not be present for the meeting. Elam stated that the millage increase would be a 24% increase in his taxes and provided a spreadsheet of the valuations, millages, and taxes of his property over the last few years.

Council member Alice Venter responded that former Mayor Elam is intimately aware of the City's budget, the budgetary process, and what it takes to provide proximate and substantial services in exchange for property taxes (which only contribute 25% to the total general fund budget). Venter stated that neither the budget nor the millage rate are ever easy or frivolous decisions to make.

No one came forward. Samuels closed the public hearing at 6:40 pm.

Reports

Police Department - Chief Chris Jones

Chief Jones reviewed the September 2024 report (see attached report) and provided other updates from the month of October.

Old Business

1. Consideration/Approval of 2nd Reading of Water Sewer Use Ordinance #2024-10152

Woodmaster reviewed the Water Sewer Use Ordinance previously addressed at the October 15th meeting for the First Reading. Woodmaster pointed out that there are four words missing under Section 1.13(e), where it will now state that those with contiguous properties are required to apply for annexation, but annexation itself is no longer mandated.

The Ordinance attachments refer to the relative fees and are formatted so that fees can be updated as necessary without amending the Ordinance itself.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the second reading of the Water & Sewer Use Ordinance #2024-10152, with modification to Section 1.13(e) as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 4-0.

2. Consideration/Approval of 2024 Millage Rate Resolution #2024-10154R

Now that all three required public hearings are closed, the millage rate is ready for a vote from Council. The 2024 millage for Habersham is 9.170 and for Banks 4.728 (with LOST). Woodmaster shared that the property tax calculator is now live on the City's website, providing a breakdown of the entire budget and how many tax dollars go to what service based off percentage. Each department's percentage of the total budget is also broken down, showing that public safety is the highest expenditure, per the requests of the residents.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the 2024 Millage Rate Adoption Resolution #2024-10154R as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. In favor: 3 (Keith, Davis, A. Venter). In opposition: 1 (M. Venter). Motion Carried 3-1.

New Business

3. Consideration/Approval of Pace Scheduler Agreement

Chief Jones presented an agreement with Pace Scheduler, a software that specializes in creating schedules for public safety officers. By implementing the Pace Scheduler, Chief Jones and Captain Ferguson would save hours a month penciling a pre-planned schedule to accommodate PTO and training requests. Pace also has an app that would provide schedule access to everyone on and off duty.

The proposed agreement is for both the Police and Fire Departments at a cost of \$2,240 (after a \$500 deduction of the setup fee) for up to 35 users. Baldwin currently has 26 users from both Police and Fire, including part-time employees.

Samuels said there was a minor concern regarding the agreement's confidentiality section and what proprietary information is subject to the Open Records Act. Samuels said that if

Pace were to file a Trade Secrets Affidavit, it would not be necessary to delay approving the agreement.

Action: A motion was made by Marten Venter to approve the Pace Scheduler Agreement, subject to the proper filing of trade secrets as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 4-0.


Executive Session

Announcements

- a. The City of Baldwin encourages its residents to exercise their right to vote! 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.
- b. Fall Amnesty Day is approaching quickly on November 7th, so reserve your spot today! Baldwin Public Works will pick up and dispose of scrap metal, paint cans, furniture, and appliances that would normally need to go to the landfill. 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 on November 4th to get your house on the list!
- c. The 3rd Annual Baldwin Thanksgiving Community Potluck Dinner will be on November 28th 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.
- d. The Baldwin Christmas Tree Lighting will be on Friday, December 6th 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!
- e. Council Member Alice Venter announced that items for the hurricane relief effort are still being collected with no foreseen deadline at this time. The biggest needs are for building materials/tools, generators, and propane, as there are several pockets of locations that will likely not have power restored for as long as a year. Woodmaster stated that the full list of items needed will be shared on the City's page.

Adjournment

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to adjourn the meeting with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 4-0 at 7:28 pm.


Stephanie Almagno, Mayor

11/12/2024
Date Approved by Council


Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk

