



Minutes
City Council Meeting
April 29th, 2024
6:30pm

Baldwin Courtroom, 155 Willingham Avenue, Baldwin, GA 30511

Mayor Stephanie Almagno, Council Member Erik Keith, Council Member Joseph Satterfield, 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 6:32 pm.

Invocation and Pledge

Pastor Samuel Negron of the Four Square Church gave the invocation.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to amend the agenda by modifying New Business item #7 from “Consideration/Approval of Banks County TSPLOST Paving Project” to “Consideration/Approval of LMIG Paving Project” and adding New Business item #9 “Consideration/Approval of Firehouse Subs Grant” with a second by Joseph Satterfield. Motion Carried 5-0.

Police Department Commendation

Police Chief Chris Jones presented commendations to Baldwin Police Corporal Aaron Spivey and Cornelia Police Officer Jackson Cooter for their actions and response to a recent call.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes: Executive Session 3/11/24 and Council Meeting 4/15/24.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the consent agenda as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 5-0.

Public Comments

No one came forward.

Public Hearings

Park Avenue ROW Abandonment

Legal Counsel Jack Samuels reviewed the request for abandonment of an excessive right-of-way on Park Avenue and implementing a quit claim deed for the City of Baldwin to relinquish any rights or ownership of said right-of-way. *Samuels opened the floor at 6:48 pm.*

No one came forward.

Samuels closed the floor at 6:48 pm.

Reports

Police Department – Chris Jones

Chief Jones presented a report to Council reviewing 2023 POST approved training hours. POST requires 20 hours of training to maintain status as an officer, but the current Baldwin policy is a minimum of 50 hours of training. Jones reviewed all officers' training hours achieved during 2023. Jones also presented a yearly activity report, including number of calls, security checks, reports written, patrol mileage, cases assigned to investigations and closed.

Old Business

1. Consideration/Approval of Habersham County Animal Control IGA

CAO Emily Woodmaster recapped Council's request to modify the presented an updated IGA with Habersham County for animal control services. Habersham agreed to modify the language to correctly reflect the actual calculation (to reflect the net value of actual cost less the gross digest percentage). With that calculation, the City owes \$18,455.58, and an additional \$1,800 will be necessary for that line item.

Council had no additional questions or comments.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the Habersham County Animal Control IGA as presented and for the additional \$1,800 to be expensed from fund balance with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 5-0.

2. Consideration/Approval of 2nd Reading of Utility Encroachment Ordinance #2024-04141

Woodmaster recapped the Utility Encroachment Ordinance, requiring utility and communication companies to submit an application and plans to the City for approval prior to working in Baldwin rights-of-way. This Ordinance to prevent conflicting utilities being laid in the same right-of-way and to allow the City to know what lines are being constructed in Baldwin.

Council had no additional questions or comments.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the Utility Encroachment Ordinance #2024-04141 as presented with a second by Joseph Satterfield. Motion Carried 5-0.

3. Consideration/Approval of Park Avenue ROW Abandonment Resolution #2024-04142R

Council had no additional questions or comments.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the Park Avenue Right-of-Way Abandonment Resolution #2024-04142R as presented with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 5-0.

New Business

4. Ratification of Consent Order for Los Cerritos

Samuels reviewed the consent order agreed to by Council at the hearing for Los Cerritos the previous Friday after Los Cerritos had been cited for serving alcohol to an underaged person. The alcohol license is to be reinstated with a fine of \$500, an updated employee handbook enforcing the importance of verifying the age of alcohol customers, and the addition of a managing agent who is local year-round. The \$500 fine is an administrative fine for the alcohol license from the City of Baldwin, not a citation from Baldwin Police Department.

Action: A motion was made by Joseph Satterfield to ratify the consent order for Los Cerritos, as previously approved at the hearing on April 26th, 2024, with a second by Alice Venter. Motion Carried 5-0.

5. Ratification of Executive Session on 4/18/2024

Samuels explained the need to clean up paperwork from the recent spring Council retreat, during which Council announced they would be holding executive session but did not take a formal vote to enter. This motion is to ratify the vote Council implicitly took by entering executive session.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to formally ratify the vote that was implicitly made by entering the April 18th, 2024 executive session with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 5-0.

6. Consideration/Approval of FC Sanitation Contract

Woodmaster presented the proposed FY25 contract with FC Sanitation, which will run from July 1st, 2024 to June 30th, 2025. Last year, FCS informed the City that their rates would be increasing by 24%, but granted the City an incremental increase split between two years. The FY24 rate was increased by 12%, however, the FY25 rate is only increasing by 9%. No other changes have been made to the contract other than the cost for services. This increase will be reflected on the July bill, which customers will receive in August.

Council had no further questions or comments.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the FC Sanitation contract as presented and authorize the CAO to execute the contract with a second by Erik Keith. Motion Carried 5-0.

7. Consideration/Approval of **LMIG** Paving Project

Woodmaster presented a quote from EMI to repave Batson Street, Davis Drive, and Homer Drive in the amount of \$171,210. \$116,210 will be expensed from SPLOST VII and the remainder will be expensed from LMIG.

Council had no additional questions or comments.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to approve the LMIG Paving Project, not to exceed \$172,000 and to be expensed as presented between SPLOST VII and LMIG funds, with a second by Joseph Satterfield. Motion Carried 5-0.

8. Discussion of CAO Contract Renewal

The contract for the Chief Administrative Officer is up for renewal, and it is necessary to determine any wage increases to include the upcoming FY25 budget, which must be balanced and approved by June 30th. Per the current contract, the CAO is to receive an annual review from the Mayor and Council.

Council member Alice Venter stated that Baldwin's CAO is currently the lowest paid city manager in the county and that historically, Woodmaster has put the salary needs of staff before her own, which led to an imbalance in the position's salary until last year's increase in pay. Venter said that Council would be doing itself and the City a disservice if the CAO contract is not appropriately adjusted.

Mayor Almagno reiterated that the CAO is essentially a 24/7 position and that filling this position at the current salary would be difficult. Almagno requested that the item be tabled in favor of an ongoing discussion and scheduling Woodmaster's review.

Venter stated that the current CAO salary is less than the median of \$106,000 according to the recent wage study, and that she personally supported a 10% increase to the position's salary.

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to table the discussion of the CAO contract renewal with a second by Joseph Satterfield. Motion Carried 5-0.

9. **Consideration/Approval Firehouse Subs Grant**

Chief Jones credited Captain Justin Ferguson for his diligence in seeking grants, sharing the opportunity to purchase four AEDs through a grant from Firehouse Subs. Historically, the agency would select items for purchase and Firehouse would complete payment. Procedure has now changed to where the agency must purchase the items desired and Firehouse sends reimbursement to the agency. Council, therefore, must approve the MOU between the City and Firehouse Subs for funds in the amount of \$7,980 for the AEDs and freight.

Council had no further questions or comments.

Action: A motion was made by Alice Venter to approve the Firehouse Subs Grant as presented with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion Carried 5-0.

Executive Session


Announcements

- a. The City of Baldwin will be holding the annual Budget Town Hall Meeting regarding fiscal year 2025. Due to Mayor Almagno and Council Member Satterfield being out of town on the originally proposed date, Council will decide on a new date for the meeting within the next few days.
- b. Calling all local farmers and foodies! Join us on the second and fourth Saturday of May, June and July for the reFRESH Market! Bring your fruits, veggies, farm fresh eggs, and other goods to City Hall for a FREE place to sell your fresh staples! Vendor applications can be found at www.cityofbaldwin.org or contact John at City Hall for more information.
- c. Woodmaster shared City staff's visit to Baldwin Elementary last week to roll out a red carpet and encourage students in preparation for testing. Mayor Almagno shared the success of the 25th Annual Peachy Clean Up Day with a turnout of nearly 100 people.
- d. Public Safety Day is this Saturday from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at Steel Cell, providing fun and educational activities to the public to better prepare for common safety concerns.
- e. Council member Maarten Venter thanked former council Theron Ayers for continuing to attend meetings.
- f. Mayor Almagno thanked City staff and department heads for a successful and productive spring retreat.
- g. Early voting polls are open for the general primary elections. Election day is May 21st.

Adjournment

Action: A motion was made by Maarten Venter to adjourn the meeting with a second by Kerri Davis. Motion carried 5-0 at 7:51 pm.


Stephanie Almagno, Mayor


Erin Gathercoal, City Clerk



5/13/2024
Date Approved by Council