



Minutes
City Council Work Session
January 3rd, 2023
6:30pm

Baldwin Courtroom, 155 Willingham Avenue, Baldwin, GA 30511

Mayor Joe Elam, Council Member Theron Ayers, Council Member Stephanie Almagno, Council Member Larry Lewallen, Council Member Alice Venter (via phone) and Council Member Maarten Venter (via phone).

Call Meeting to Order

Firefighter of the Year Award

Fire Chief Joe Roy presented the Firefighter of the Year Award to Lieutenant Michael Craig.

Promotion of John Taylor

Police Chief Chris Jones announced Patrolman John Taylor's promotion to Sergeant.

Public Hearing

Old Business

New Business

1. SAFER Grant Application

CAO Emily Woodmaster addressed Council and recapped the SAFER Grant, one of the two grants the Council agreed the Fire Department should pursue. The SAFER Grant would allow Baldwin Fire Department to hire four or five additional staff members and assist in paying their salaries over the next five years. If the grant were awarded to Baldwin, the SAFER Grant would fully fund the first year and gradually taper off as Baldwin works to build the additional personnel's salaries into their budget.

Previously 10% percent of the awarded grant is given to the grant writer, however, there is now a new requirement of an upfront fee of \$1,500 for the grant writer. This is a one-time fee until Baldwin receives the grant, not once per application. If the grant is awarded, there will be a \$5,000 grant funding fee for the grant writer. If approved by Council, the \$1,500 would come from the FY23 budget, and Chief Roy is confident that he can make it work. Woodmaster anticipates that the \$5,000 fee will be included in the next budget cycle in a new line from the Fire Department's budget. These two costs total \$6,500 are in lieu of the original 10% given to the grant writer and will likely total less than that 10% of the grant.

Woodmaster stated that the SAFER Grant does require the department to be fully staffed currently, because the intention is to support an unanticipated growth in population and therefore an unanticipated need for more staff to cover that

population. Baldwin will need to defend the need for more staff in the grant application using the population growth pattern from the last five years. If that pattern continues, the current Fire Department staff is not sustainable.

Chief Roy received an emergency call and left the meeting, so he was not present to answer additional questions. Council was in agreement to bring this forward to Monday night's meeting.

2. NGN Connect Account Update

Woodmaster recapped the current agreement Baldwin has with internet provider North Georgia Network, who has provided Baldwin with wireless internet since 2014. It is now time to renew the agreement with NGN. No modifications or changes have been made to the previous agreement, however, in the process of reviewing, Baldwin does have the option make any changes if desired or to eliminate the service altogether. Woodmaster and Mayor Elam met with a NGN representative and received an additional information. NGN has already increased Baldwin's bandwidth from 25 to 50 megabits, and they are working to increase city buildings to 100 once the technology is updated.

Woodmaster stated that one of NGN's ultimate goals is providing fiber internet and having the line-of-sight wireless installed on the water tower as a backup. However, there are limitations to what is currently available in the geographical area.

Council was in agreement to bring this forward at Monday's meeting, where an NGN representative will be present to answer any questions.

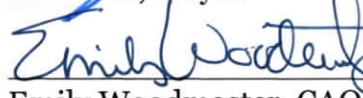
Announcements

- a. City Offices will be closed on January 16th in observation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- b. Public Works Director Scott Barnhart picked up the administrative vehicle, so all vehicles in the lease agreement are now in the City's possession.

Adjournment

Action: A motion was made by Theron Ayer to adjourn the meeting with a second by Maarten Venter. Motion Carried 5-0.

Joe Elam, Mayor


Emily Woodmaster, CAO

