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City of Lake Park
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2024
6:00 pm

Members present were Mayor Jena Sandlin, Council Member Michelle Lane, Council Member Busby Courson, and Council Member Carl Spano

Staff Present: City Clerk Lisa Johnson, Police Chief Ed Yarbrough, Maintenance Technician Kaleb Rogers

Others Present: City Attorney Rob Plumb

Mayor Jena Sandlin called the meeting to order.

Mayor Jena Sandlin led the invocation.

Mayor Jena Sandlin led the pledge.

Minutes: Mayor Sandlin called for the review and approval of the Minutes. Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to approve the Minutes of the November 5, 2024 regular Meeting and the November 9, 2024 Called Meeting. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Mayor Sandlin called for Citizens who have concerns they would like to bring to the Council's attention. She reminded residents that time is limited to three minutes and asked them to state their name, address and concern at the podium.

CITIZENS' CONCERNS:

- Zack Fletcher – 5210 Grand Oaks Circle – stated that he is the new Home Owners Association President in the subdivision, and that the Association would like to relinquish maintenance of the roads and retention pond to the City. Council Member Spano explained that the process, pending confirmation from the attorney, would be for the association to submit a request to annex the roads and the retention pond property into the City, as they are currently private property. Following submission, the request would be forwarded to the Lowndes County Planning Commission for recommendation, followed by a Public Hearing and subsequently a vote by the Council. Mr. Fletcher also requested a stop sign change at Johnston Way and Country Lane; since the new neighborhood has been built, the traffic patterns have changed and the greater amount of traffic is on the cross-street of Country Lane, rather than Johnston Way, where the stop sign is currently installed. He requested that the stop sign on Johnston Way be moved to Country Lane.

- Arthur Keckley – 315 4-H Club Rd – asked if there was any news regarding the ditches and drainage on 4-H Club Rd. Council Member Carl Spano explained that the City has advertised for an engineer to handle the drainage issues, not only on 4-H Club Rd, but in other areas of the City. There is a requirement of 30 days to allow for submission of proposals, and the City expects to have the process completed in January. City Clerk Lisa Johnson explained that research into the drainage in that area shows that the street was designed to drain to Hwy 41, rather than down Sevilla Springs Circle, as previously thought, and the question needs clarification. Mr. Keckley also noted that Sevilla Springs Circle has some very bad potholes; Council Member Spano stated that the Council would be voting on bids for that project later on the Agenda.
- Gloria Luke – 201 4-H Club Rd – offered insight into drainage in the neighborhood, stating that water has always drained to Sevilla Springs Circle, and that water from the Carter property drains to Marion and then to Baxley and levels out there. She also stated that the drainage at Marion is clogged, and the water does not adequately flow.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Fire Department:

- Mayor Sandlin stated that the Fire Chief is out of town, and the only project noted on the monthly report, other than calls, is that they are still working on the tanker.

Police Department: Chief Ed Yarbrough

- Presented activity report.
- Expressed appreciation for support from Council and residents of the City. This has been his first year as Chief and he has learned much, adjusted much, and he appreciates the support from Council, particularly in meeting the needs of the department.
- The new car has been picked up and decaled and is expected to be on the road in January, at which time the Department will hire another person for part-time patrol.
- Stated that Court has been running very long, sometimes until 9:30 or 10:00, an average of three and a half to four hours. He would like to request Council approving changing the Court schedule to earlier in the day. He has spoken with the Judge and the City's solicitor, and they are open to this.
- Reported that the Department is ready for the Christmas Parade. He and Mrs. Keckley discussed the proposed Toy Drive; they are short on time this year but are working on a plan for next time; they would like to work through the school's parent organization.
- *Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to add approval of the Court date change to the Agenda as the last item under New Business. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Maintenance/Public Works Department: Kaleb Rogers

- Presented activity report.
- Reported that they are waiting for quotes from two vendors on the fences that need to be repaired.
- Has been cleaning up trees at the cemetery, they are all cleared
- Have been decorating for Christmas
- Are continuing to clear trees from the right-of-way
- The Lead Service Line Inventory is underway, and should be almost complete
- New lights have been installed in the Civic Center
- Working on replacing backflow preventers on some of the meters
- Replaced more street signs and stop signs

- Continuing to mow, weed eat and edge
- Reported that the fountain is operational again and the vendor will be coming back to finish with the lights.

Administration: City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Administration report
- Reported that the contract for debris removal has transitioned to the Army Corps of Engineers as of November 21. From this point, Ashley Tye will be the contact for the contract for all Lowndes County entities; Council was reminded that if any construction and demolition debris, such as fencing, roofing, etc. this mixed in with tree trunks, limbs or other vegetative debris, none of the pile will be picked up. This has been posted several times, but the question is still being asked.
- Stated that the PTSD coverage would require a Resolution to be started, which is later on the Agenda
- Reported that the final proposed FY25 Budget is attached for review. Council discussed dates for Public Hearing and Budget Adoption.
- Reported that she and Council Member Spano have discussed the streets and drainage projects, and installing a payment window for Court for the Capital Budgets and asked if there were other projects the Council would like to add.
- Reported that the City had received a quote from only one vendor for the LMIG project, included in the packet. Mrs. Johnson explained that in reporting the closure of the FY22 project, she had noted that the quotes for the several potential projects listed were low enough that a second project may be needed to be able to use all of the LMIG grant and meet the 10% match requirements, so two previously unfunded projects had been pulled from the previous list to include, so the quotes for all three are included for review. It was noted that the FY24 regular LMIG, combined with the outstanding monies due to the SPLOST 7 Fund and the City's 10% match from the monies held in the Money Market account could be used to complete Sevilla Springs Circle. There is still an amount held from the FY24 LMIG supplemental grant for the drainage project at Sheavette and Broadway, although this one requires more engineering work before bids are let.
- Reported that the Request for Qualifications for Engineering services is scheduled, and asked if Council had a preference for who would need to review the score sheets; her suggestion was Council Member Courson, who has been working on the drainage issues and a member of the maintenance staff.
- Reported that Sheldon Hill is working on a new project on Railroad Avenue past Island Street and the maintenance crew has been working to locate water lines there; the water map as provided by the Regional Commission shows that there is a line there, but it has not been found. Mike Killeen has agreed to pothole the area.
- Reported that a new Ethics Committee needs to be appointed, as the terms of the existing members have expired. This appointment is later on the Agenda.
- Reported that the two adjuster's reports had been received after Council received packets, and those were included.
- Reported that she had been asked to research the appointment of the Mayor Pro Tem. Under the Charter, the Mayor Pro Tem is appointed every two years, following an election. It is believed that this was put into place when the Council amended the Charter to stagger terms of office; however, due to a calculation error, Council Members are elected in consecutive years, rather than staggered two-year terms. This will need to be clarified in the Charter, but the question has arisen now, as the current Mayor Pro Tem has now served three years. City Attorney Rob Plumb will look into this.

- *Council Member Courson clarified that new appointees to the Ethics Committee would be selected at this meeting, and the decision to appoint a new or confirm the existing Mayor Pro Tem would take place in January.

Old Business

- *Mayor Sandlin reported that the volunteers have been working very hard on the Christmas Event, and everything is on track.

Financial Reports

- Council Member Spano reported that the FY24 Budget is performing well, and the Budget for FY25 looks very good as well. For the new year's budget, the City will be able to meet the goals set out, including a 32-hour position for the Police Department and an additional position for Maintenance. Council Member Spano made a motion to accept the Financial Reports as presented. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

New Business

- Council reviewed LMIG quotes for Sevilla Springs Circle, Jackson Circle, and Island Street. City Clerk Lisa Johnson noted that the quotes for Jackson Circle in 2021 vs. Jackson Circle in 2024 differed by approximately \$30,000; Sevilla Springs Circle is the primary street approved to complete. Council Member Spano requested clarification on amounts available for the proposed projects. City Clerk Lisa Johnson responded that available were the 2024 LMIG grant in the amount of \$20,499.71, SPLOST 7 in the amount of \$19,706, SPLOST 8 in the amount of \$116,668.75, Reserves in Money Market for Streets and Roads in the amount of \$135,981.25, and TSPLOST in the amount of \$120,156.72; the combined total of these funds is \$372,806.72. She reminded Council that these pots of money are also where the drainage projects would come from and recommended that Council consider matching the LMIG grant first from SPLOST 7 to close that fund and then from the reserves in Money Market. Mayor Sandlin noted that it was possible to complete all three projects and called for further discussion or vote. Council Member Spano made a motion to approve the re-paving of Sevilla Springs Circle, Jackson Circle and Island Street by Reames and Sons Construction in the amount of \$152,899.00 with funds from the FY24 LMIG grant, SPLOST 7 and Money Market Reserves for Streets and Roads first, then TSPLOST and SPLOST 8 if needed. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.
- Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to approve the 2025 City Holiday and Meeting Schedule. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.
- Mayor Sandlin announced that the City had received volunteer applications from Ronnie Sauls, Larry Hebdon and Jeff Patterson. Council Member Spano stated for the record that the Mayor selects one member, as strictly her choice, the Council appoints one member without consideration from the Mayor, and the Mayor and Council select the final member. Council Member Lane asked to clarify that only two appointees were needed tonight. Council Member Spano noted that this presents a question for the existing member, Mrs. Gloria Luke, whose term ends at the end of December, as to whether she would like to continue for another month. Mrs. Luke stated that she would not mind serving, but would not want there to be any conflict, and would therefore like to withdraw. She stated that when she comes to the Council, she comes with her concerns and sometimes her neighbors but wouldn't like any questions for any issues coming up. Mr. Spano noted that there is a case currently waiting, and the question for Mrs. Luke would be if she is willing to serve for the pending case to its end. Mrs. Luke reiterated that she would like to withdraw. Council Member Busby Courson made a motion to

appoint Ronnie Sauls as the Council appointee and for Council to consider a third appointee, Mayor and Council appointee, in January. Council Member Spano reminded Council Member Courson that there is a case pending that involves one of Mrs. Luke's neighbors, which presented a Conflict of Interest for her, and she had withdrawn. Council Member Courson stated that there would always be a case for one of her neighbors, as the committee applied to only people in [the City]. Mayor Sandlin asked Mrs. Luke again to clarify whether she wanted to continue her term through January. Mrs. Luke stated that her understanding was that her term would end at the end of the year, and she didn't want to start something that she couldn't finish and that she would withdraw and allow the Council to select an appointee to replace her. Council Member Courson restated the motion to select Ronnie Sauls as the Council appointee. Council Member Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0. Mayor Sandlin selected Mr. Larry Hebdon as the Mayor appointee. Council Member Spano made a motion to appoint Jeff Patterson as the Mayor and Council appointee. Council Member Lane asked for the procedure if there was no second to the appointment of Mr. Patterson and another applicant was needed. Council Member Spano responded that he believed the Council would need to hold the pending case until a third appointee could be found. He further stated that he believed that another potential issue is that he believed that if at any time an Ethics Committee member became a member of a different part of City government, he would have to step aside. He understands that there are other concerns under consideration that might affect Mr. Patterson's appointment. He clarified that the complaint had been received approximately 15 days prior, on November 20. Arthur Keckley asked what the requirements were for serving, and having been told, volunteered for the position. Council Member Courson made a motion for Arthur Keckley to serve as the third appointee. Council Member Spano addressed Mr. Keckley, stating that he is not opposed to him in general, but as the complaint pending involves a direct family member, his service would be a conflict of interest. Mr. Keckley stated that he understood. Ms. Tina Sirmans, 650 S Broadway St, volunteered to serve on the committee. Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to appoint Tina Sirmans as the full Council appointee. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

- Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to adopt a Resolution to add PTSD coverage for First Responders through GIRMA. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.
- Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to retain the existing Court Calendar, amended to begin at 1:00 pm. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to enter Executive Session to review the Minutes of previous Executive Sessions and to discuss personnel. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0. Council entered Executive Session at 7:04pm.


Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to reconvene Regular Session. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council reconvened Regular Session at 7:08 pm.

Council Member Busby Courson made a motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes from November 5, 2024. Council Member Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion carried, 3-0.

Mayor Sandlin invited Council Members to join City Staff at City Hall on December 12, 2024 at 11:30 for a Christmas luncheon.

Council Member Busby Courson made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.


The next regular meeting will be on January 7, 2024 at 6:00 pm.



Jena Sandlin, Mayor

1/7/2025

Date



Lisa Johnson, City Clerk

January 7, 2025

Date

Seal