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City of Lake Park
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
October 1, 2024
6:00 pm

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

Staff Present: City Clerk Lisa Johnson, Court Clerk Melissa Morey, Deputy Clerk Christian Crews, Fire Chief Matt Ryan, Police Chief Ed Yarbrough, Maintenance Supervisor-In-Training Kaleb Rogers

Mayor Jena Sandlin called the meeting to order.

Council Member Oscar Griffith led the invocation.

Mayor Jena Sandlin led the pledge.

Agenda: Council Member Carl Spano made a request and motion to strike Financial Reports and Preliminary Budget to be approved at the Meeting to adopt the Millage Rate. Michelle Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to move Agenda Item Hurricane Relief to immediately following the approval of Minutes. Council Member Oscar Griffith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Minutes: Mayor Sandlin called for the review and approval of the Minutes of the September 3, 2024 Regular Council Meeting, the September 19, 2024 9:00 am Public Hearing Minutes, and the September 19, 6:30 pm Public Hearing Minutes. Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to approve the Minutes of the September 3, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes, with the correction of the time to 6:30 **pm** for the second Public Hearing. Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Contract for Disaster Debris Removal: Mayor Sandlin asked City Clerk Lisa Johnson to give this update. Mrs. Johnson stated that the County had run a request for proposals this year for cleanup in the event of another hurricane event, and the proposals and contract had been worded in such a way that the cities could contract with the same contractor under the same terms. The County included cities in the County in the review of proposals, and ultimately went with Ashbritt, who handled the County's cleanup last year and did an excellent job. The City has the option of contracting with the same contractor under the same terms. Mr. Tom Barr asked if FEMA would be assisting with the expense again. Council Member Griffith explained that Lowndes County had been declared a disaster, and so the City is eligible for FEMA reimbursement; he further explained that FEMA will reimburse up to 75%, and the City and the State will split the other 25% at 12.5% each. City Clerk Lisa Johnson read into the record the text of the proposed agreement with AshBritt. She

explained that the agreement is simply to discuss a quote from AshBritt with the same terms as the County, but does not necessarily mean that the City is locked into contracting with them. Mrs. Julie Wilbers spoke and explained that DOT had been able to come and assist with cleanup last year, but was under no obligation to do so, and may not be able to do so again. Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign an agreement with AshBritt. Council Member Oscar Griffith seconded the motion. The motion carried, 4-0.

Mayor Sandlin called for Citizens who have concerns they would like to bring to the Council's attention.

CITIZENS CONCERNS:

- Jimmy Street – 307 N Lawrence St – stated that he has a tree fallen in his yard that is not his, and has debris from everywhere, including neighbors' properties
- Mimi Wetherington – 420 4-H Club Rd – appealed to Council about the speed bumps on 4-H Club Rd, asking that they be removed, stated they are “bone-jarring”, way too high and not stopping the speeders.
- Jeffrey Craft – Business owner in the community, but does not live in the City of Lake Park - wants to volunteer his services to help with cleanup; he has equipment and tools and will be happy to help. Council agreed that they would be happy to help with fuel for his equipment if he is able to help. Mr. Craft was asked to return on October 2 and speak with Mr. Billy.
- Amelia Beasley – 216 Harris Trail – stated that people were blocked in by debris on Harris Trail, and that she agrees with Ms. Wetherington about the speed bumps. She further stated that she has been out of town, but emailed her thoughts on the millage rate, and reiterates that she is against a raise in millage rate.
- Danny Beasley – 216 Harris Trail – asked for clarification that Council is agreeing to look at the proposal with AshBritt, and asked what the timeline would be once the City has spoken with AshBritt; it was explained that this answer would come from the discussion with the contractor. Sharon Galloway, Harris Trail, asked to clarify that the question is what is the City's plan if they didn't go with the contract with AshBritt; Mr. Beasley stated that the millage rate doesn't need to go up and he feels he gets nothing from the City.
- Tom Barr – 395 Back Forty Dr – asked when the vote for the millage rate would be, and was told the date had not yet been set, as the last one had to be cancelled due to the hurricane; asked for clarification regarding payment to AshBritt; it was explained that the City would pay the contractor after debris was picked up and be reimbursed as discussed earlier by FEMA.
- John V Sansbury, Jr. – 331 Jackson Circle – expressed appreciation for police presence since this was brought to the Council's attention; stated that Lake Park did not pick up debris at Jackson Circle last year.
- Gloria Luke – 201 4-H Club Rd – there is a tree blocking 4-H Club Rd which was pushed into one lane and volunteers from the neighborhood cleared the limbs.
- Susan Keckley – 315 4-H Club Rd – thanked Council Member Griffith for coming to look at the drainage issue she brought to Council during the Public Hearings and for the meals provided. Stated that the trash from the last storm was never picked up, and neither was her neighbor's. She thanked City Clerk Lisa Johnson for answering her questions and helping her understand things. She then stated that the City needs a better Disaster Plan. She then stated that she loved the speed bumps on 4-H Club Rd and thanked the City because they have been a help.
- Arthur Keckley – 315 4-H Club Rd – expressed a concern with a tree on a neighboring lot which is leaning over his property. Mayor Sandlin asked if he had contacted his neighbor, and he replied that

he had. He then stated that he also is appreciative of the speed bumps; people were prone to speeding up and down 4-H Club Rd and the speed bumps have helped.

- Julie Wilbers – 360 Back Forty Dr – thanked Council for the opportunity to speak. Stated that in regards to DOT, they are responsible only for State Highways, and the help they gave Lake Park following Idalia was above and beyond their requirements. She stated that she loved the idea of triaging and hearing people’s concerns regarding what is in their yards; she noted that she knows the City has a Work Order system and wondered if the City could utilize that system for identifying the most important areas to clean up first based on citizen response. Mayor Sandlin stated that the City is doing that now. Mrs. Wilbers acknowledged that the residents may have simply not known that. City Clerk Lisa Johnson responded to Mrs. Wilbers and explained that the maintenance crews had been working first to ensure that every street had at least one lane passable, then going back to push debris off to clear both lanes. She stated that crews had begun cutting up limbs and trees so they could be moved, but had not yet begun pickup, but with the damage sustained it would take some time to get everything cleaned up. Mrs. Wilbers then acknowledged that the situation was the same in the County and the City of Valdosta. Mrs. Johnson reminded everyone that crews could not be sent to cut anything where lines have not been confirmed as not being “hot”, and that the cleanup would be a process.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS/DEPARTMENT HEADS:

Fire Department: Matt Ryan

- Presented a monthly call report
- Reported that the Fire Station took some damage from the storm, stated that the staging crew had watched the roof be lifted and then come back down.
- Reported that the cascade machine needed to be moved into the main station, as the building it is in is falling apart
- Stated that he needed to talk to the County about getting keys for fuel, rather than continuing with the Wex cards as it was less expensive. City Clerk Lisa Johnson stated that this is already in progress.
- Stated that he needed to see about getting a key to City Hall for storms, as he didn’t feel like the firefighters could ride out another storm at the fire station. City Clerk Lisa Johnson clarified that the Chief is wanting to stage at City Hall rather than the fire station in the future, and the Chief confirmed, stating that they wouldn’t be able to bring the fire truck as the wind would turn it over, which is why he has it in his report to get a small car. He has understood that the Police Chief has spoken to the Sheriff about getting a retired car from them for a small cost and would like to do that, which would increase expense only for the insurance.
- Asked for time to meet with Council after the meeting. The Mayor responded that there is an Executive Session on the Agenda.
- Council Member Oscar Griffith asked if there was still an issue with the Fire Department’s bills getting paid, and the Chief responded that there was an issue with the internet, resulting in late fees that are not in the budget. City Clerk Lisa Johnson stated that the issue with the internet was that invoices and payments were basically crisscrossing in the mail; the office has resolved this by paying the bill month ahead and sending the payments automatically without waiting for the invoice, and asked if there had been a problem lately, as she was unaware of one. Chief Ryan asked firefighter Joey Perkins if he had received anything lately, and he responded that he would get emails saying that the bill was due in 5 days, and it would be paid on day 6. Mrs. Johnson stated that she would look into that again, but as far as she was aware, there had been no problem for several months.

- Asked to have IT come out and check his printer at the Fire Station as it was not working at all, and they have problems with it every time the internet goes out.

Police Department: Chief Ed Yarbrough

- Began by saying that the majority of the report was pertaining to the hurricane; the Police Department was out until the storm hit; as Council knows, the police do not patrol during these storms as it's not safe, but the full department was at work as soon as they could get to Lake Park on Friday morning. He continued by stating for the public, respectfully, that if there was a problem that they were aware of he is an easy man to reach, all they need do is call and if it was something he could fix, he could promise he would fix it. If it's someone that needed to be stopped on Harris Trail or 4-H Club, he had an officer that would be happy to write the ticket. The problem they have with 4-H Club Rd is that there is nowhere for an officer to park other than someone's driveway. He promised that if there was a problem and they called he would call them back; if it is something he can't handle, he would direct them to someone who could. Regarding the public's frustrations, when the storm hit, he left his house, left his family at home with no power and half the house gone to be in Lake Park serving the people.
- Presented the monthly call report.
- Responded to a question from a resident that there was no law enforcement presence anywhere in Lowndes County at a stoplight, as everyone knows they are to be treated as a four-way stop.
- Reported that there was an issue with fuel, and Council Member Griffith obtained a key from the County barn; it has since been found that we can purchase fuel from the County at a reduced price, and they now have keys to the County barn for fuel.

Maintenance/Public Works Department: Kaleb Rogers

- Presented activity report.
- Reported that the department is currently working on pushing debris out of the road until we have a location to move it to.
- Reported that they are currently inventorying, replacing, and straightening signs.
- Council Member Oscar Griffith asked if the speed bump signs had been put up on 4-H Club Rd, to which Mr. Rogers responded that they had.

Administration: City Clerk Lisa Johnson

- Presented the Administration report
- Reported that the City had received only one bid for the lead service line inventory project, for \$130 per unit at total cost of \$39,000, and clarified for the Mayor that this project is required by EPD. The bidder completed this project for Ray City, who was satisfied. This would be paid for from the GEFA grant for \$17,000, but needs a match of \$23,000. Council Member Spano asked why the City had received a quote only in the past week, when it was known about for over a year. Mrs. Johnson responded that the Engineer had only sent the specs a few weeks prior, and her office had solicited bids immediately. Council Member Spano asked the Mayor if she had not spoken with the Engineer in July to stress the importance of the timeliness of this project, and she stated that she had, and thought that the Council needed to take this under consideration when they next decided on an Engineer. Mayor Sandlin called for a motion on the bid. Council Member Spano made a motion to accept the bid for \$39,000 for the lead service line inventory. Council Member Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council Member Spano made a motion to pay for the

Lead Line Service Inventory out of SPLOST – Water. Council Member Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

Mayor Sandlin presented the next item on the Agenda as Executive Session to review the Minutes of the prior month's Executive Session.

Council Member Spano made a motion to amend the Executive Session for both Minutes Review and Personnel. Council Member Lane seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

City Clerk asked Chief Ryan to clarify the reason that he wanted to speak with Council in Closed Session, as quorum of Council can enter closed session only under limited circumstances by law. Chief Ryan stated that he needed to discuss a personnel matter.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to enter Executive Session. Council Member Spano seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council entered Executive Session at 7:18 pm.

Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to reenter Open Session. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0. Council reconvened Open Session at 8:03 pm.

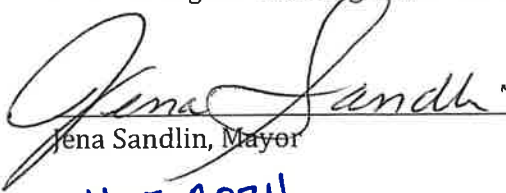
Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to research the cost of a radio for the Chaplain to be paid for from SPLOST. Council Member Lane seconded the motion. The motion carried, 4-0.

Council Member Oscar Griffith made a motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes from September 3, 2024, Council Member Carl Spano seconded the motion. The motion carried, 4-0.

Council Member Carl Spano made a motion to approve hiring Vicki Jack for the open part-time position in Administration at \$15.50 per hour unless an alternate rate was stated earlier. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion carried, 4-0.

Council Member Michelle Lane made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Busby Courson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

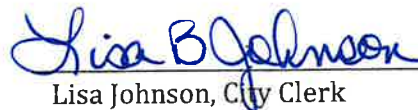
The next regular meeting will be on November 5, 2024 at 6:00 pm.



Jena Sandlin, Mayor

11-5-2024

Date



Lisa Johnson, City Clerk

5 November 2024

Date

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