Council Meeting

September 2, 2025

Members Present: Mayor Buddy Duke, members Terry McClain, Greg Paige, Walter Cowart and Jody Greene. Councilwoman Celestine Hayes was unable to attend due to being out of jurisdiction.

Others Present: City Manager Mark Barber, City Clerk Rhonda Rowe, City Attorney Tim Tanner, members of staff and the public.

Invocation was given by Rev. Lewis.

Pledge of Allegiance

Intergovernmental Agreement (FLOST): City Manager Mark Barber explained that as part of HB581, a new sales tax may be levied at .05% increments up to 1%. The newly created tax, FLOST, is created for the limited purpose of property tax relief. To be eligible to levy the tax, both the county and cities within the county that levy a property tax must have a floating homestead exemption. All local governments in Cook County opted-in to HB581, other than Lenox as they do not currently levy a property tax. He did note that it is the understanding that Lenox is contemplating re-implementing taxes. Additionally, the school board is not eligible for distributions from FLOST. He explained the county and city/cities representing at least fifty percent of the municipal population of cities that levy property tax must enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) calling for the tax. The IGA shall specify the rate, duration (not to exceed five years), and the distribution between the county and cities. It will also set the ballot question. The IGA as presented is calling for a one percent tax rate. Following the adoption of the IGA, the tax must be approved through a local referendum. Approval by the voters will be required to levy the sales tax. If approved, the collection of the tax will begin at the start of the next calendar quarter that will be January 1, 2026. If approved and the referendum passes, it would move the tax rate to 9% in January. He added the benefit is that we are an interstate community, so a large portion of the sales tax would be paid by those outside of Cook County. The Georgia Dept of Revenue sends the monthly collections to the county, and they will remit to the cities in accordance with the IGA. The tax can run up to five years. Prior to the expiration, if local governments want to renew the tax, there must be a passage of a local act calling for the reimposition of the tax, a new IGA between the county and eligible cities, and a new referendum to approve renewing the tax. The City of Adel’s approximate distribution of collections is 15.55% if approved. He noted the percentages were based on a percentage of taxes paid in 2024. The legislators left the method for determining percentages of distribution open, as long as it was equitable. Mayor Duke asked about the percentages of distribution for Cook County Unincorporated and Incorporated areas. It was explained that Cook County will be doing the same thing so Adel residents will be receiving the incorporated piece of that distribution in the form of a reduction on their county tax bill as well. Mr. Barber then provided a chart to the elected officials explaining the mechanics of how the tax will work. He noted that it does not put any limits on the millage rate itself; it just requires you to roll back dollar for dollar. HB581 only affects residential property owners; but shifts the tax burden to other classes such as commercial and industrial. The FLOST, however, is for everyone – including those commercial and industrial properties that do not benefit from HB581. When questioned about the FLOST amount used in the presented example by Mayor Duke, he was advised there are a lot of variables so we do not know the full impact before it settles in. Mr. Barber stated that tonight, if it’s the council’s wishes, we need to approve the IGA. County Manager Randy Lane was present and added that the anticipated FLOST revenue for 5 years is $17.1 million. Councilman McClain asked if the next step would be to place this item on the ballot to which he was advised, yes. Mr. Barber stated that when we met with the county, we wanted to include language that we review the distribution every year. He expressed his appreciation to the county manager for adding this to the IGA. Councilman McClain made a motion to approve entering into the IGA. Councilman Greene seconded with all in favor.

Other Business:

Dr. Treva Gear – Dr. Gear, representing the Concerned Citizens of Cook County, requested to address the council concerning (1) Bitcoin ordinance amendments and data centers, (2) zoning and (3) finances and fiscal responsibility. She stated that they consider bitcoin companies terrorization as the previous company violated their MOU and the noise ordinance. The Tiverons could not enjoy their home. The city’s ordinance has not been enforced against them, nor Advanced Cylinder and Tank. She stated we weren’t supposed to consider a crypto ordinance until we had a zoning study completed. In Texas, there is a lawsuit in that county. She asked the council to please consider the sickness data centers have caused; consider what you are bringing in. Utility bills didn’t go down because of the bitcoin company; the leash is not tight enough and residents are close by. On the west side industries are next to them; with data centers the price of energy will go up – we don’t want it. Concerning fiscal responsibility, the Mayor had mentioned defunding. She noted that crypto is not our shining armor. We need an external audit, we need money and are willing to pimp ourselves out. Blockstream has not paid and the city manager leaves and the computer goes with him. We need to do a zoning study and sell the $4M building. She stated to the council that we need to trust you will protect the welfare of your community. This is a strong council/weak mayor – you are the voting members – you have the power.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

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Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk Luther L. Duke, Mayor

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