

Council Meeting
September 16, 2024

Members Present: Mayor Buddy Duke, members Terry McClain, Greg Paige, Walter Cowart, Celestine Hayes and Jody Greene.

Others Present: City Manager Mark Barber, City Clerk Rhonda Rowe, Jaylee Bass-Layfield (representing city attorney's office) and other members of staff and the public.

Invocation was given by Councilman McClain

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Councilman Paige made a motion to approve the minutes of August 19, 2024 and August 26, 2024 as presented. Councilman McClain seconded with all in favor.

Ord. #24-04: This ordinance, establishing the ad valorem tax rate for 2024 at 6.000 mills, was read for the first time. City manager Mark Barber stated that our proposed budget includes leaving the rate at the same millage rate as last year. He noted that due to reassessment growth and that growth not being rolled back, the State of Georgia considers this an indirect tax increase; therefore, in accordance with Georgia code, we had to advertise and hold three public hearings. There were comments from two individuals at the first public hearing with no one in attendance at the remaining two hearings.

Ord. #24-03: This ordinance, amending the zoning ordinance and zoning map of the City of Adel, was read for the second time. This ordinance requests that property owned by Charles Shiflett and located on S. Elm Street between West 6th and 7th Streets be rezoned from R-8 (Residential) to PD (Planned Development). City manager Mark Barber advised the council that the developer had sent changes to the original plan on Friday, which he had forwarded to the elected officials. Councilman McClain questioned the density of the project. What does the new proposal do, is it still above the recommended number? He was advised it is still above the R-8; however, they reduced the number of units from 64 to 32 so it does reduce the density, but not enough to remain R-8. Mayor Duke asked if by reducing it to R-8 does it change the concept of the holding pond? Mr. Barber replied that he didn't know if it changed the location but it does look like it expanded it and it appears to be more defined. When they reduced the density it made more room to have sufficient stormwater drainage. Mr. Duke then explained to the council that if it remains R-8 it has its own guidelines as to the density with the amount of land there which is 20 units. That's the way its currently zoned. The developers asked for 64 units to begin with, which has now changed to 32, so we're not looking at the same plan we were looking at two weeks ago. We can either pass it under R-8, table it, or deny it so everybody can get on board with the new proposal. We can do whatever the council chooses. If it's denied, he will have to wait 6 months before reapplying or we can approve it under certain conditions. He thought there needed to be more transparency in the whole project now since we're only talking about half the number of units. Councilman Greene felt that it needed to be tabled until we can review and look at the square footage and other items. Councilmen McClain and Paige

agreed. Councilwoman Hayes disagreed stating that the detention pond will breed mosquitoes. Also, if it overflows, where does the overflow go to? She is for denying. Councilman Greene then made a motion to table this item pending the receipt of further information. Councilman McClain seconded. Members Greene, McClain and Cowart voted in favor to table any action. Members Paige and Hayes opposed.

Library Board Appointment: We received a letter requesting that Shelva Keeley be reappointed to the library board. Her term has expired and the appointment will be for the remainder of an additional 3 year term that will expire on June 30, 2026. There had been an oversight by the library in not getting the request to us prior to the expiration. Councilman Greene made a motion to approve the reappointment. Councilman Cowart seconded with all in favor.

There were no further comments from the staff or council and the regular session was adjourned.

Budget Presentation and Hearing: Following the regular session, city manager Mark Barber presented the proposed FY 2024-2025 budget. He noted the following summary hi-lites:

- The budget is balanced according to state code - Although we are not required to have a budget for enterprise funds, we have a budget for all funds.
- The general fund utilized the same millage rate from last year of 6.000 mills
- No utility fee increases – He noted that next year we will have a little different conversation.
- 6% COLA adjustment for all career (full time) employees – Looking back to 2012, and with the COLA provided last year, the average is still only 2.37; providing a 6% COLA this year will increase that average to 2.65
- No increase in premiums for benefits to employees
- Operational expenses trend as they did last year
- \$7M plus capital plan that includes infrastructure, housing and equipment

He noted that tonight he would spend a good bit of time reviewing the capital projects included in this year 's budget. The council has the detail by every account number included in their notebook for review.

He reviewed the overall financial plan summary that includes the general fund, special revenue funds, capital projects fund and enterprise fund. The general fund has uses that exceed sources by a total of \$415,247. He noted that some of those reasons have been talked about on several occasions and he would discuss that further when he gets to the general fund section. Special revenue funds are funds where the uses are specified for specific items. Some of the revenues in these funds were received and recognized in prior years with the expenses occurring in this year. The capital projects fund are for the SPLOST funds as well CDBG grants. Enterprise funds are for electric, gas, water, sewer and sanitation funds. These funds operate like a private business and charges for service should cover the cost of operations. The majority of these funds are producing a small profit; however, the electric fund has uses exceeding sources of funds by approximately \$1.7M.

He reviewed the FY 24-25 Capital Plan which includes facility improvements, equipment, infrastructure additions/rehabs, resurfacing, regional radio tower and housing rehabilitation. The capital costs will be funded from current revenues, SPLOST, DOT funding, T-SPLOST, ARPA funds, Grants and lease pool funds.

The city manager then reviewed the general fund revenues and expressed concern that the City of Adel is receiving only 5% of the total Local Option Sales Taxes paid in Cook County. We are the economic hub and bear the cost of vehicles on our infrastructure coming in daily, along with providing public safety, etc. We received \$13,499.13 in August and that number is declining. We were at 11% and negotiated it down to 5%. He's not sure of the reasoning but from reviewing information he thinks it had to do with parks and recreation. At one time we were receiving 21%. He felt that parks and recreation should be funded through the tax millage, not a volatile sales tax. Additionally, if we're only receiving \$170,000 per year, Adel citizens are getting a low amount of the rollback. This is just something we need to work on in some way. When questioned by the council, Mr. Barber advised the LOST negotiations are held every 10 years. If you can show that the result is something unintentional, you can ask for renegotiations through the Department of Community Affairs. He also added that Blockstream's sales taxes were a part of this and you can see the trend of it going down with them gone. We need something else to pick the sales tax back up. He stated that budgets for the fire and police departments alone are pushing \$5M, yet we only receive about \$2.4M in total tax revenues. Transfers from the enterprise funds to the general fund is lending a deficit in the enterprise funds; however, the general fund won't survive long without the transfers. The total revenue sources for the general fund is \$7,313,195. He then reviewed the change in net position for all of the departments in the general fund as well as their manning charts. He reviewed the special revenue funds, explaining their uses and funding followed by the change in net position for the enterprise fund departments.

He reminded the council of the special called meeting that will be held next Monday at 5:30 for the 2nd reading of the tax millage ordinance. The budget resolution will also be presented for a vote. He asked the council to review their budgets this week and contact him with any questions.

Following the budget presentation, there was no one present with comments concerning the proposed budget and the meeting was adjourned.

Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

Luther L. Duke III, Mayor
