

Called Council Meeting  
September 23, 2024

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

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

Invocation was given by Councilman McClain.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

Ord #24-04: This ordinance, establishing the millage for 2024 at 6.000 mills, was read for the second time. City manager Mark Barber stated there had been several discussions concerning the millage rate and the proposed budget includes leaving the millage rate the same as last year, 6.000 mills. Because reassessment was not rolled back, the State of Georgia considers this an indirect tax increase, and in accordance with Georgia code, three public hearings must be conducted. The city has met all advertising and public hearing requirements. Councilman Hayes asked if this meant there was an increase for residents? Mr. Barber explained that if you didn't have a reassessment, it would remain the same. He then explained the increase on the tax bills in dollar value for different levels of reassessment increases. Councilman Greene made a motion to adopt the ordinance. Councilman Paige seconded. All were in favor.

Res. #24-06: This resolution, adopting the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget, was presented to the council. Mr. Barber explained the citywide budget includes capital expenditures of \$7,074,543, operating expenditures of \$26,377,234, debt service expenditures of \$354,420 and disbursements to other funds expenditures of \$2,580,443. The proposed budget is balance according to State of Georgia code requirements. He noted deficits were discussed at the last meeting but we do have adequate reserves to pull from. Included in the proposed budget is a 6% Cost of Living Adjustment for employees, a 6.000 tax millage rate, with no increases to employees' premiums for benefits. Additionally, there are no increases in fees or utility rates included. He noted we will continue to work on things we need to address and close certain gaps. Councilman Hayes questioned the use of ARPA funds for the lead water service project instead of a loan. Mr. Barber explained the grant and loan that will be utilized for that project. The use of the remaining ARPA funds to purchase a fire pumper truck will help maintain our ISO rating and he explained that remaining ARPA funds have to be obligated by December 31, 2024, meaning the issuance of a purchase order. If we can't show proof of the obligation, we will have to send the funds back. He noted it was a great question, but we will be receiving a grant for the water project, which we don't have to pay back. Councilman Greene then made a motion to adopt the resolution. Councilman Paige seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Barber thanked the department heads for the tremendous job they do. He noted some departments took a bit of a reduction in their budgets, but citizens will continue to receive superior service. We will continue to work hard to bring efficient budgets to the elected officials.

Other Comments:

Mark Barber – We are preparing for the upcoming storm as best as we can.

Mayor Duke – Thank the staff for the work on the budget.

Asked if sand bags are available for citizens with the upcoming storm. TJ Tucker, Public Works Manager, advised yes, bags and sand are available, along with shovels.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

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Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

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Luther L. Duke, Mayor

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