

Council Meeting
December 2, 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, City Attorney Tim Tanner, 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 November 18, 2024 as presented. Councilman McClain seconded. All were in favor.

Sewer Service Extension: This item, having been tabled at the last meeting pending revisions to the proposed agreement, was brought before the council. The agreement concerns the extension of sewer services to Circlestone Country Club, 173 Circlestone Drive, which is located outside the city limits. Revisions included the owner retaining ownership of the lines and responsibility of maintenance for a period of 3 years from the date of Final approval of the connection as well as the owner installing an additional lift station or appropriate device to increase the flow of wastewater to the City's sanitary sewer infrastructure if there is not sufficient flow at the point where the Main Installation connects to the City's sanitary sewer system; the amount of sufficient flow is defined as a minimum of 2 feet of velocity per second and a maximum of 5 feet of velocity per second. Mr. Barber notes the numbers presented came from the city's engineer. Councilman McClain asked what happens if the velocity is exceeded? Mr. Barber advised it could cause damage to the pipe; therefore, there would need to be an adjustment to the pressure fed, that is the way it would be controlled. Councilwoman Hayes asked if it would end up at lift station #18? She was advised it should not go to lift station #18; however, if it did, the amount would be very minimal. She then asked if repairs had been made to lift station #18? She was advised that some electrical repairs have been made. We have not received the funding yet for the major repair work. That total project is over \$2M. We would do the project and then get reimbursed; however, we don't have the matching funds yet to go with it. That is the funds we tried to get through Senator Ossoff's office. Councilman McClain then made a motion to accept the agreement with the proposed changes. Councilman Paige seconded with all in favor.

Alcoholic Beverage License (Jutt 786, LLC): The council was presented with an alcohol license application from Jutt 786, LLC located at 103 Brookside Drive. All documentation has been completed and reviewed, along with payment of the fees. Councilman Greene made a motion to approve the application. Councilman McClain seconded. All were in favor.

2025 Alcohol License Renewals: The following applicants have completed the 2025 renewal application process:

Heny Enterprises, Inc.	Krina & Shiv, LLC	Hayan 9, LLC
Keshav 8, LLC	Kakezai, Inc.	Super Petroleum 22, Inc.
RAM 007, LLC	Shree Verai Mata, LLC	Happy Management, LLC
Wal-Mart Stores East, LP	Super Petroleum 23, Inc.	J Mar Industries, LLC
Super Petroleum 21, Inc.	Albertana Gonzalez	

Councilman Greene made a motion to approve the renewal applications. Councilman McClain seconded. The decision was unanimous.

Fire Truck Bids: Bids were received for a pumper truck on November 19, 2024. This item is included in the FY 2025 budget and will be funded utilizing a combination of our remaining ARPA funds totaling approximately \$707,735 and GMA's lease pool financing program for the balance. It was noted that our remaining ARPA funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024. Bids were as follows:

Fire Line, Inc.	\$899,990 with a prepay discount of \$104,000 – Net Bid \$795,990
TEN-8 Fire & Safety	\$932,233 with a prepay discount of \$106,767 – Net Bid \$825,466

Mr. Barber noted that staff is recommending the low bid. He also noted that bids came in lower than what had been budgeted. This unit will replace a 1957 model truck and will help in maintaining our ISO rating. Councilman Cowart made a motion to approve the low bid. Councilman Paige seconded. All were in favor.

Staff Comments (Mark Barber):

Christmas Parade: The parade will be held this Saturday, December 7th, at 6:00 pm. A float is being constructed for the elected officials to ride on.

Christmas Movie Night: The movie will be held on Friday, December 6th, beginning at 7:00 pm at Storybook Park. The public is invited to attend.

Expressed appreciation to Sharon Harnage for her work with the tree lighting event this past Saturday night.

Water Service Line Inventory: Reported the mandated inventory project has been completed within the deadline, while many other communities have not. Letters have also been sent to applicable customers by the company. He was pleased to report that no lead pipes or connectors were found within our infrastructure. That was the main thing the crews were looking for. EPA is also saying that galvanized pipes should be replaced; not that galvanized pipes would do what lead pipe would do, but if there was ever a lead pipe or connector that somehow touched that galvanized pipe it could possibly lead to some contamination. They just wanted to take this extra step. We had 46 findings of galvanized pipe on the city side of the meter only. There was 167 findings of galvanized pipe on both sides of the meter (city and customer); 628 findings of

galvanized pipe on the customer side only on personal property. We did get a grant to pay a third party to do the inventory and we also received a \$135,000 principal forgiveness loan to help us with anything we might have found. We want to go ahead and attack the 46 found on our side using that funding. They are still making changes as we go. November 1, 2027 starts the process of the galvanized replacement and they are saying you have to replace 10% per year. We want to go ahead and get the city side only taken care of. Right now, EPA is saying we need to strongly encourage personal property owners to change their pipe. At this moment, there is no funding for those property owners to assist with the change out. At the same time, if anybody has galvanized on their side, they are to notify the city that they have taken care of their replacement; the city will then have 45 days to take care of the replacement on our side. There are a lot of moving parts to this process. We also have to provide a BRITA water filter for 6 months to the customer after the change out. One of the biggest hurdles is going to be trying to help persons find funding sources. The water manager, Seth Pitts, has a map of the complete inventory for anyone that wishes to see it. Again, we had no lead pipes and in the scheme of things, there is not a lot of galvanized pipe. Councilwoman Hayes asked how we would take care of the galvanized pipe? He explained we would take it out and replace with standard PVC piping or some other type of pipe. Councilman McClain asked if this was coming down from the EPA because at one time galvanized pipe was the industry standard for 100 years, now are they saying something is wrong with it? Mr. Barber replied that he didn't think they are saying anything is wrong with galvanized pipe, it's more of an indirect way, in case a lead pipe had been around the galvanized pipe they would be concerned with leaching. Councilwoman Hayes then asked if you could not do anything for personal property owners until 2027? He advised EPA has not provided any guidance on any funding they are trying to make available. Our charge is to heavily encourage property owners to change out the galvanized pipe or fittings; however, we have no funding sources available to share with homeowners.

Council Comments:

Celestine Hayes – Stated that several people are asking her why we don't allow people to speak at our meetings like the county commissioners. They have a sign up sheet when you come in, why don't we have that? She stated that we do work for the people, they have a right to ask questions; it's like we are stifling them. She knows it's in the charter, but why? They shouldn't have to put in a request on Wednesdays (to be on the agenda for Monday). The city manager advised that is the council's decision but it is a mix of what different communities do. When he was in Valdosta, that's how they did it; Lowndes County does it just like we do it. He agreed that everyone has a right to speak but here's the advantage to him; if a citizen comes to the podium, they have 5 minutes to speak and that's all the time you get. He has intercepted several simple requests that people have and he can handle it right then and they don't have to wait a week and a half until the council meeting. He can call them or have a meeting with them and get it handled because at the end of the day what you guys are more than likely going to do is have me to get with them. When people come up and start asking questions, he's not prepared for what they may be asking, he doesn't know what they're going to be asking. Ahead of time, this gives him an opportunity to have a much longer discussion than just 5 minutes. It's a benefit for the citizen because they don't have to wait. He can a lot of times go ahead and get matters taken care of and they get their answer the same day. It's the council's decision but he thinks this way works better. Councilwoman Hayes replied

that she thought we needed to do it the way the Commissioners do, we should have a sign up sheet. Councilman Paige asked why would we do what the commissioners do? We don't have to do what the commissioners are doing. We don't have to follow what they do. We are leaders. We do what we want to do. She said no, we are supposed to be leaders. He disagrees. Councilwoman Hayes stated that when she was in training that's the way it was done. He stated he had been to training also. He added he's not trying to follow what the commissioners do. Mayor Duke stated that each person represents their district. If a person has a concern, they should go see their elected official in that district. Each citizen has two council representatives, the council at large, the mayor and the city manager. They have 5 layers of sources to get information from before you should even think about coming to a council meeting. If the council member cannot get an answer for that individual, he is not doing his job. Mr. Barber added that he's been exposed to both ways and for the "public comments" section of the agenda, we are to listen, period. We are not supposed to be responding to someone at the podium. We are not to answer their question at that time. That is not what the public comment period is about. Councilwoman Hayes agreed, that is what she had learned. He stated that sometimes we do it, but we're not supposed to. He stated that more times than not, you're going to tell them the city manager will get back with them. There hasn't been a time yet when he's not been told to contact that person, or email that person. When he was in Valdosta, they never once responded to the person at the podium. It was the city manager will get in touch with you. This way, it takes longer for the citizen to get the question answered because you don't know what to prepare for so, to him, it's the opposite of what we're trying to do to make sure someone is getting a response quickly. He thinks it slows it down himself. She stated she did learn you don't respond right then but you take the information and get back with them.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned.

Rhonda P. Rowe, City Clerk

Luther L. Duke III, Mayor
