

Regular Council Meeting

August 6, 2019

Meeting called to order by Mayor Harley at 7:00pm.

Invocation given by Councilman Wright.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Andrews.

Welcome Extended to all by Mayor Harley.

Rules of Decorum: Mayor Harley went over Rules of Decorum

Present were Mayor John R. Harley, Councilman Cameron Andrews, Councilman Justin Wright, Councilman J. Micheal Evans, Councilman Edward Armijo and City Attorney Rebecca Tydings.

Public Comments

Susan Lemme, 219 Mason Drive, response to millage rates that you all will be proposing, think it would be to the benefit to the city, publicize along with proposed millage rate that a little over 10% of the expected tax revenue are deferred due to senior exemption. So, people will know and appreciate that they have it or can realize what it cost.

Adoption of Minutes: Motion made by Councilman Andrews to adopt minutes as written; seconded by Councilman Evans. Councilman Wright abstained; absent from the July 16, 2019 meeting. Motion carried.

- July 16, 2019 Council Work Session

Old Business

New Business

Motion to table item 5 by Councilman Wright to table until a later date- Job Description- Lieutenant over Special Operations/ Investigations; seconded by Councilman Andrews. Motion carried

Point of Information-2019 Millage Rate: Councilman Evans deferred to City Accountant Harrison. Mrs. Harrison provided a packet in their folders tonight that consisted of the following: proposed 2019 millage rate comparison, PT32.1 form, current 2018 tax digest and 5-year history of levy, current 2019 tax digest and 5-year history of levy. General discussion among Mayor and Council.

Councilman Andrews reminded everyone that earlier today he had contacted Mrs. Harrison to run some numbers at 12.479 millage rate which equates to 1 mill increase. Mrs. Harrison reported that if a 12.479 millage rate was adopted. It would generate approximately \$ 193,000 in revenue. Councilman Andrews stated that each year we are losing a quarter of million dollars of revenue due to the senior exemption and it continues to grow. This is never easy, complicated,

but necessary right now. Don't want to be negative about the exemption, however, thinks it was a huge mistake. Cost more to operate each year and the senior exemption only has grown larger.

Councilman Wright stated if we adopt the roll back rate, leaves \$15,000 less than anticipated current budget revenue. Asked the question to Mrs. Harrison when was the last time there was a millage rate increase? Mrs. Harrison confirmed that the last millage rate increase was in 2010. Councilman Wright stated we haven't increased the taxes in 10 years, hard to look at that and understanding that things cost more, eventually this has to shift to keep revenue above expenses and this is our goal. Inquired what would the impact of a 1 mil increase be for a typical household? Mrs. Harrison reported if the FMV (fair market value) of home is \$ 100,000, roll back rate of 11.479, taxes would be \$459.00, current millage rate of 11.971, taxes would be \$ 479.00, millage rate of 12.479, taxes would be \$499.00; increase of \$40.00 per year. Councilman Wright asked Mrs. Harrison, how many years have we used money from W/S fund to offset General Fund. Mrs. Harrison reported this has been done consistently. This year intergovernmental transfer of \$ 200,000.00 from Enterprise Fund; depending on what type of city projects are done, more or less.

Councilman Wright reminded everyone that this was discussed in the planning retreat, everything is costing more: parks, police, and everyday operations cost more. Also, reminded all that Mrs. Harrison had mentioned to Mayor and Council that a discussion was needed re: additional potential revenue streams. Councilman Wright stated it is wiser to look at this, creating small changes and provide coverage for our budget. Mentioned other entities (Bibb County) being over budget.

Mayor Harley reminded all that we have funded 2 new police positions also mentioned fire department.

Councilman Evans stated we would have to convince people that their taxes are going up and justify the increase. Can see leaving the millage rate the same for now. Inquired when reassessment is done on homes. Mrs. Harrison reported that when homes are sold or new construction is completed, the county does reassessment / revalue with new owners.

Councilman Armijo stated the last 4 years, the city has been rebranding as part of our Economic Development to build our city/ businesses, / community to draw in additional revenue. For us to say let's hit the homeowners; does not agree. Mrs. Hogan-Economic Development/ Dir of Marketing and Mrs. Alicia Hartley-Event Planner are working very hard. Those things do not develop overnight and fortunately a lot of things we are doing are being paid by SPLOST. We as a Mayor and Council, in trying to manage the growth of the city, have to work diligently to draw revenue into our city. Don't automatically jump to the citizens, we owe this to citizens to look at our Economic Development and how it's growing and bringing in revenue. Reminded all that we (Mayor and Council) just elected to vote ourselves a pay raise. We are too eager to draw this cash, let's work hard on drawing businesses, sometimes you have to let them develop, not always solving problems on the backs of our tax payers. We need to think about this and consider everything, don't jump to the conclusion right away.

Point of Information-Center Park: Director of Economic Development Hogan provided a breakdown of construction in the park.

Infrastructure and Dirt

- Continued partnership with Houston County Board of Commissioners

- Donated dirt from Board of Education and Board of Commissioners
- Building storm water retention pond (Mike has ordered all the pipes)

Sidewalks: ¾ mile installed in a loop around the pond, and on the Southeast side of the road.

Road: being roughed in along with our site work.

Playground: Large play structure with a rubberized fixed surface.

Splash pad: Large water feature, more of an interactive fountain rather than fixture based.

Restroom facility: festival sized restroom facility with message boards for the community, seating area for parents to watch their kids play, and storage for our internal usage and splash pad pump room.

Pavilion: large, 1,800 sq. ft. (estimate) pavilion with a utility counter and sink, and two single stall restrooms.

Moving Forward:

RFP Technical Assistance request sent to Middle Georgia Regional Commission. We are working with them to have something ready no later than the September 3rd Council Meeting. Becky, Mike and I are planning on meeting with a couple of construction companies to talk about broad strokes the best way to proceed with the RFP for the park project. City may do the project piece by piece or may do the whole thing at once.

Councilman Andrews and Mayor Harley stated they are “excited”.

Discussion Centerville Fall Festival 2019: Councilman Andrews stated we have had a lot of individual conversations; construction on Church Street over the next weeks/ months. Would like to have the Fall Festival.

Councilman Evans inquired about Church street project; how will the roads be at this time. Mrs. Hogan stated that by Sept 21 half of the driveways will have been dug up and at this time believes most of the utilities have been completed; silt fence along the entire frontage; scraped to the edges of the road. Mrs. Hogan reminded everyone that Church Street would have to be closed for the festival. Councilman Evans asked if there would be hard top on the roadway. Mrs. Hogan confirmed yes and stated Church Street will always have hard top and maintain rough.

Mrs. Hogan provided stats for the following:

Past Metrics:

- | | |
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| ○ 2017: | |
| ▪ Attendance: 2,500 | |
| ▪ Food Vendors: 8 | |
| ▪ Total Vendors: 68 | |
| ▪ Facebook “Going”: 808 | |
| ▪ Facebook “Interested”:4,300 | |
| ▪ Fundraising: \$83 | |
| ▪ Vendor Fees: \$1,600 | |
| | ○ 2018: |
| | ▪ Attendance: 5,000 |
| | ▪ Food Vendors: 7 |
| | ▪ Total Vendors: 83 |
| | ▪ Facebook “Going”: 590 |
| | ▪ Facebook “Interested”: 3,900 |
| | ▪ Fundraising: \$98 |
| | ▪ Vendor Fees: \$2,870 |

Mrs. Hogan reminded everyone that there was a brief discussion about hosting this event at City Hall during the Planning Retreat. Expressed concerns that the space will not be large enough. At Independence Day this year we had 5,000 people and 17 vendors. This overwhelmed our restroom facilities and made our campus and First Baptist Church's look like a sea of people. We have been fortunate to host the Independence Day Celebration event at City Hall so far and it has grown steadily and become an event we can be proud of and doesn't believe we will be able to host our Fall Festival successfully at City Hall. There are space constraints and construction along E Church Street. Vendors load in around 2 hours prior to the event and with 60 vendors and one point of entrance and exit we are looking at very difficult traffic.

We would max out at 60 vendors with food vendors needing about double the space a craft vendor requires. This would also have us borrowing some of the adjacent field for inflatables like we do for the Independence Day Celebration. With these 60 vendor spaces we would have to use the water department parking lot which when mentioned to some of our reoccurring vendors from Fall Festival and Farmer's Markets, they expressed concern about because there is more limited visibility.

I have talked to a few vendors and they said they would 'understand' that there were complexities that made skipping this year necessary. One of the vendors, Jail Creek Farms, lives in Centerville, and they expressed concern over our construction on E Church Street as it related to City Hall being the Fall Festival Location.

With our Farmer's Markets and other events being at City Hall, we have seen a decline in attendance. I am concerned this decline would negatively impact our recruitment of quality vendors, the expectations of vendors, and prove to be difficult to overcome for future Fall Festivals.

I am suggesting we proceed with a statement on Center Park's Facebook about this decision being a difficult one and then have 2 expanded farmer's markets allowing for 30 vendors with a special craft emphasis during the month of September.

Nothing is not doable, however, wanting to address concerns but, as long as we go in with eyes wide open, the Fall Festival could be done but with limitations. Councilman Wright stated in the beginning he wanted to have the Fall Festival but after long consideration it would not be a good thing. Councilman Evans stated he likes the idea of scaling back and expanding farmer's market. Councilman Armijo agrees, thinks this is in the best interest of the city, and knows this is important to Mrs. Hogan and has my support.

Motion made by Councilman Andrews to cancel Fall Festival and have 2 extended farmer's markets; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Councilman Evans thinks this is important and as we move forward, important to advertise to attract people. Councilman Armijo stated Mrs. Hogan is setting the standard and it is set high, other communities' benchmark, copycat of what we are doing. We have the corner stone on this. Mayor Harley called for vote. Motion carried.

Point of Information-Purchase Truck-Sgt. Powell: Councilman Wright deferred to Chief Hadden. Have to replace vehicle that was involved in wreck last fiscal year. In the process came across the vendor in Dublin, Dodge Ram trucks that are cheaper. The vehicle considering to purchase comes in at a lower cost; savings of \$2940. This serves as a point of information.

Councilman Evans asked if the reason for changing was due to lead time of receiving vehicle and savings. Chief Hadden stated yes and that the Dodge truck is comparable. Councilman Armijo inquired if this is a basic truck with basic equipment. Chief Hadden confirmed.

Comments from Council

Post 1 Councilman Andrews, none.

Post 2 Councilman Wright, none.

Post 3 Councilman Evans, none.

Post 4 Councilman Armijo, like to take a minute of silence for El Paso, Dayton Ohio shootings. Wanted to publicly compliment again Director of Marketing Hogan for the new SPLOST sign on corner of Houston Lake Blvd and Church Street. This tells our story, very nice, thanked her for following through to get message out to citizens.

Mayor Harley adjourned meeting at 7:50pm.

Mayor John R. Harley

Attest by City Clerk Krista Bedingfield

Date