

Regular Council Meeting

October 1, 2019

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

Invocation given by Councilman Andrews.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Luke Wood-Boy Scout Troop 400.

Welcome extended by to all by Mayor Harley, recognized Houston County Commissioner Jay Walker.

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

Rules of Decorum: Mayor Harley went over Rules of Decorum.

Public Comments

Ramona Phillips, 207 E Thomson Street-Recognition Centerville Fire Department-Sgt Daniel Myers; Mrs. Phillips stated that approximately 2 months ago, Centerville Fire Department was in the area and she thought something was wrong. Sgt Myers stopped by their house and informed them that the CFD was in the area to check out homes to see if they had appropriate/working smoke detectors. If not, the homeowners could go out and purchase the detectors and then CFD would install them. She asked if CFD was going to all homes in that area, because her son and daughter both are deaf. Sgt Myers confirmed that he and his team would look at their home and see where detectors need to be placed. In addition, CFD also looked at deaf neighbor's home. Mrs. Phillips stated that Sgt Myers came back to visit her the following Monday and was concerned because the smoke detectors would not wake them if they were sleeping. Sgt Myers provided paperwork and coordinated with Red Cross, to acquire a smoke detector/bed shaker. Mrs. Phillips expressed sincere gratitude and praise to Sgt Myers, stating he is a wonderful person. Centerville Fire Department is a great group of people who truly care and we are lucky to have such a wonderful fire department. They also offered to come back out and teach my grandson fire safety, what to do in case of a fire. Every time I tell this story I get emotional because of Sgt Myers for the love of his job and the citizens, he very possibly saved our family's life. Wanted everyone to know that what a great person Sgt. Meyers is and what a wonderful Fire Department Centerville has.

Chief Jones recognized Sgt Myers and informed all that Sgt Myers is the Public Safety Fire Educator for CFD and does a great job along with his crew. He stated this is what I expect out of the CFD fire fighters. We all are community oriented. This is just a small way we can do just that and I am glad that he was able to do this and help everyone. We don't want anyone to suffer that kind of loss. Truly grateful to Sgt Myers and his crew and department. Very proud of them. Thanked Mrs. Phillips, Mayor and Council for recognizing Sgt Myers and crew.

Adoption of Minutes: Motion made by Councilman Wright to adopt both sets of minutes as written; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Motion carried.

- September 3, 2019

- September 17, 2019 Council Work Session
- September 18, 2019 Special Council Meeting 1ST Public Hearing 2019 Millage Rate
- September 18, 2019 Special Council Meeting 2nd Public Hearing 2019 Millage Rate

Old Business

Motion made by Councilman Wright to add following item to the agenda # 11: Point of Information Police Department GOHS Grant; seconded by Councilman Andrews. Motion carried.

New Business

Home Based Business- Mustard Seed & Kids (owner: Andria S. Glynn, 111 Manchester Ct): Councilman Armijo recognized Ms. Glynn. Councilman Armijo stated this is traveling sales of clothing - no traffic at the residence. Motion made by Councilman Armijo to approve; seconded by Councilman Evans. Motion carried.

3RD Public Hearing 2019 Millage Rate: Mayor closed regular council meeting and enter into public hearing at 7:11pm.

Gary Crook- 106 Eagle Springs Drive, requesting explanation and reasoning why of tax increase.

Mayor Harley, stated there were approximately 76 new homes built this past year. This determines the value of the roll back rate. You could also get a tax increase if you home was reassessed.

Councilman Wright explained that the county recommended a roll back rate based on tax digest values, however, the city isn't opting to elect roll back rate, recommending to keep millage rate the same as last year 11.971.

Councilman Evans stated this would increase taxes est. \$19.68 if property has been sold or reassessed.

Councilman Andrews asked how long Mr. Crook has lived in his home. Mr. Crook replied 15 years. Councilman Andrews stated he will not see an increase; no reassessment would be done. Mr. Crook stated he isn't so much worried about himself but other citizens. Councilman Andrews informed all that the city has received an increase in health benefits (a little over \$100,000) that were not budgeted for the upcoming year. It is interesting if we leave the millage rate as last year will help offset this unexpected increase.

Councilman Wright has not had a tax increase in the past 10 years, 4 times during those 10 Mayor and Council lowered taxes. Councilman Wright added that he cannot think of anything that he bought 10 years ago that cost the same. We felt that this is manageable amount.

Susan Lemme, 219 Mason Drive, talking of publicity about the taxes. Understands that it is confusing for people, millage rate, and roll back and so forth. Citizens will see an increase in what they pay about \$ 19.68 per \$100,000; because they will be charged at a rate of 11.971 vs the roll back rate. Want it to be clear that people would understand and see the effect.

Councilman Wright, stated yes that is correct, this will help us to continue projects. If you could tell me I could have all of this for \$30.00. I would write a check right now.

Mayor Harley stated personally he will not see an increase in taxes, his property has not been reassessed, same rate as last year.

Councilman Evans, stated he looked at his tax bills for the last 4 years and the value is the same. The assessment did not change and the tax bill is the same. If we charge the same rate as we did last year and assessment did not change, you will not see an increase, tax bill would be the same.

Geraldine Parker, 129 Ridgebend Drive, mentioned anyone 70 and over qualify for senior exemption status, with an acre or less than acre. Mayor confirmed “yes”.

Gary Crook- 106 Eagle Springs Drive, tax assessed values do not change, where does the \$19.68 increase come from if the millage rate remains the same. City advertised an increase.

Councilman Armijo, Homes that were sold, purchased or new construction would be reassessed. That is what we would be referred as new assessments.

Councilman Wright, stated because we are not looking at choosing the roll back rate, state law defines this as an increase.

Geraldine Parker, 129 Ridgebend Drive, inquiry, please explain what is a roll back rate?

Councilman Wright, stated that Houston County recommends each year what is required to cover expenses.

City Attorney Tydings, stated “roll back rate” is the millage rate determined by the county that the city would have to levy to collect the same amount of taxes for 2019 as it did for 2018. If Mayor and Council chose the roll back rate the tax revenue would be the same as collected last year. If Mayor and Council chose the same millage rate as last year at 11.971 then collections would be slightly more, than last year, therefore keeping the same millage rate as last year is deemed a tax increase.

Motion made by Councilman Wright to adjourn public hearing and reconvene regular meeting; at 7:24pm; seconded by Councilman Evans. Motion carried.

Adoption Ordinance 2019 Millage Rate: Mayor Harley entertained motion. Motion made by Councilman Wright to adopt as written; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Motion carried. See Ordinance 2019-5.

Point of Information: Centerville Housing Team Update: Councilman Andrews recognized Director of Marketing Hogan.

Mrs. Hogan stated this point of information serves as an update to Mayor and Council along with residents about the Centerville Housing Team. The Centerville Housing Team strives to support Centerville residents with their homes by building community pride and educating the public on housing resources. In addition, the Centerville Housing Team will promote housing that is available, attractive, and attainable. Through this vision, we have accomplished a number of goals set out in our first work plan and also set goals for our second work plan.

In our first work plan we have completed some initial reporting and data tracking in association with our Centerville Housing Assessment from 2018.

- We have failing home reports that Code Enforcement and the Housing Team have reviewed.

- We have prioritized our target areas of the five identified by the Regional Commission.
- We identified possible Habitat for Humanity building sites.
- We have a housing rights flyer for the lobby.
- We conducted a housing survey for 200 residents during July and August.
- The Centerville Housing Team was excited to partner with the established Spring Cleanup Day.
- We also had our first Centerville Housing Team Housing Resource Fair.
- We explored the possibility of a CHIP Grant.

At our Housing Team Retreat this past week in Douglasville, several Team Members heard sessions related to successes in other communities, Land Bank Authorities, and conducted successful work sessions. In our new work plan, we have identified new goals but our large projects have stayed the same. Our three projects are: 1. Improve Existing Housing Opportunities in Centerville 2. Create Opportunities for New Homes in Centerville and 3. Create Stronger Community Engagement for the City of Centerville. Some of our new projects include:

- Continuing to be there for the residents who reach out about housing related issues like the residents in the Crestwood Estates Neighborhood. (Sign to be completed soon).
- Looking into a Land Bank Authority
- Creating a stronger partnership between the Housing Team and Code Enforcement.
- Create an action plan specific to the five target areas in order to make sure we are making on the ground connections with regards to helping our friends and neighbors in Centerville.

Councilman Wright, reported that they had an excellent retreat, got to hear from other communities that are going to walk through similar issues, trying to address, got to see some ways we can be more proactive, good faith efforts that is by pursuing a more proactive approach re: code enforcement issues. We are going to have a different approach and process; have progressive steps. We are going to make sure we can take care of everyone, working with Police Department allow us to address issues. Great team of community leaders working together. Appreciates Mrs. Hogan's hard work. Looking at expanding Spring Cleanup day in the future, these are good efforts.

Councilman Armijo, is the housing team open to public participating? Mrs. Hogan informed all that during the training, we are looking at quarterly meetings that will be open to the public. If people are interested will advertise.

Councilman Wright, stated there are guidelines that predetermine members.

Councilman Armijo, asked if there is a means where public can communicate with team members about certain things. Councilman Wright stated this was discussed at the retreat, looking at creating additional forms to accommodate citizens who wish to make inquiries.

Councilman Armijo, stated there are a lot of people who are interested in making suggestions.

Councilman Wright, stated GICH requires certain regulations, thinks this is a great opportunity.

Mrs. Hogan reported there will be open quarterly meetings and informed all that her email is listed on the website, anyone can send her an inquiry.

Councilman Wright, recommended to Councilman Armijo to inform the individuals who are wanting to speak with a GICH member to make contact with him.

Point of Information: Center Park Design: Councilman Andrews recognized Director of Marketing Hogan. Mrs. Hogan recognized David Selby, Architect WM2A. Mr. Selby provided copies of Center Park Site Plan along with slide show for public viewing. The site plan included Center Park restroom facilities and shade pavilion. No action taken.

Glen Portwood, 104 Eagle Springs Drive, asked the following questions, will the outer perimeter have a fence, positive place to enter and exit, who will be calling shots on scheduling events.

Mayor Harley confirmed “no” there will not be a fence.

Mrs. Hogan stated this has been an ongoing project, there has been a lot of public input, when we have had large events. The Fire and Police Departments work closely with all departments to ensure safety.

Mrs. Hogan reported Mayor and Council have entered into a joint use agreement with First Baptist Church re: partnership for parking. This will be worked throughout all departments.

Approval: Center Park RFP: Councilman Andrews made motion to table until October 15, 2019 work session; seconded by Councilman Evans. Motion carried.

Point of Information Police Department GOHS Grant: Councilman Wright recognized Chief Hadden. Chief Hadden reported that the Police Department has been awarded the GOHS Grant in the amount of \$ 13,193.00; 100% reimbursable. The grant runs from Oct 1-Sept 30, 2020. The grant will be used to purchase the following equipment: 8x5 trailer, DUI goggles and other equipment. The traffic safety grant, will participate in 15 events,

Councilman Evans asked Chief Hadden to talk about the recent, 20th annual Governor’s awards, Chief Hadden informed all that Lt Michael Welch is the Assistant coordinator MGA Traffic Network with GOHS. Chief Hadden recognized Lt. Welch. Lt stated he volunteers as the GOHS coordinator and this helps Centerville PD. CPD participated in the Governor’s challenge and placed 2nd this year in the state of Georgia. The award is based on education and you can compete against other agencies in the state of Ga.

Mayor stated he appreciates the Police and Fire Department.

Comments from Council

Post 1 Councilman Andrews, thank you for your commitment Fire Department-Sgt Daniel Myer and also recognized Ms. Phillips. Appreciate what you do.

Post 2 Councilman Wright, informed all that this is the last food truck Friday, October 4. Also, will be having Farmers Market this Saturday, fresh Georgia shrimp, also puppies and Pilates at 9am, City Hall, Community Room.

Post 3 Councilman Evans, has had the opportunities to come and attend events. Encouraged all to come out and enjoy them. Recognized Police, Fire and Utilities departments; keeping people safe.

Post 4 Councilman Armijo, thanked everyone that came out and spoke, important to come out and speak, Centerville is going in the right direction due to our leadership. Thanked Troop 400 for coming. Also, recognized City Clerk Bedingfield for doing a great job, informing all that the City that City Attorney Tydings reported that Mrs. Bedingfield had recently been recognized at a conference re: Worker's Comp. Councilman Armijo commended her on doing a great job.

Mayor informed all that Warner Robins Councilwoman Carolyn Robbins had passed away. She will be greatly missed. Also, reported that Officer Mashuga was selected as the home town hero and he got to fly on one of the Thunderbirds F15.

Mayor Harley adjourned meeting at 8:07 pm.

Mayor John R. Harley

Attest by City Clerk Krista Bedingfield

Date