

Regular Council Meeting

September 3, 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 and recognized Houston County Commissioner Jay Walker.

Present were Mayor John R. Harley, Councilman Cameron 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

Police Chief Chuck Hadden, introduced the following new officers: Tracy Holder, Stephanie Ash, Jonathan Jacobs and recruiter Zachary Eisner. There are (3) new officers and (2) new recruiters for mandate school (Zachary Eisner and Tyler Brock-not present at meeting). Chief Hadden stated he was very proud to have this great bunch of people on board and is looking forward to exciting new beginnings.

Chief Hadden also recognized Investigator-Sgt Christine Welch celebrating her 5-year anniversary with the City of Centerville, Police Department. Presented badge to Sgt Welch; personalized with her name.

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

- August 6, 2019
- August 20, 2019 Council Work Session

Old Business

None

New Business

Home Based Business - Donna Coker's A Cherry Bloom Handmade Soaps-110 Cottage Court: Councilman Armijo stated that she will be doing online business, no traffic at residence. Motion made by Councilman Armijo to approve; seconded by Councilman Wright. Motion carried.

Approval Expenditure Equipment Water Sewer/ Storm Water (Budgeted Item): Councilman Andrews recognized Director of Operations Brumfield. A copy of estimates provided to Mayor and Council. Mr. Brumfield recommended to choose lowest bid Swartz Welding. Motion made by Councilman Andrews to approve estimate from Swartz Welding & MFG in the amount of

\$8,765.00; seconded by Councilman Evans. Motion carried. Mr. Brumfield reported that he had budgeted \$ 5,000 in Water & Sewer and \$ 5,000 in Storm water.

Approval Contract – Architectural Services – Fire Station Project: Councilman Evans made motion to table until later date- September 17 council work session; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Motion carried.

Approval Contract – Architectural Services - Center Park project: Councilman Evans made motion to table until later date-September 17 council work session; seconded by Councilman Armijo. Motion carried.

Point of Information-Signage Update: Councilman Wright recognized Director of Marketing Hogan. Mrs. Hogan stated after our new logo was adopted in April of this year, the Economic Development Department budgeted for refurbishing the entryway signage for the city. This included 5 specialty signs and 15 street signs. As a point of information this evening I wanted to notify Mayor and Council along with our residents that the specialty signage is complete. As you will see in the boards, our signs had a much-needed improvement with new acrylic plates and in the case of the sign at Margie and Watson, a new surface. We will continue to implement new entryway signage with standard street signs on a decorative iron pole at 15 locations around the city in the coming weeks and I will notify you all when it is complete.

Entryway signage is one of the things that helps Centerville differentiate ourselves from the surrounding area. We take such pride in our community and our residents do too, this is a visual manifestation of this pride for our residents. It was also a very important distinction for future goals as it pertains to Center Park and Town Center at Centerville. When talking with developers about Town Center, one of their concerns was for Centerville to differentiate from the surrounding areas.

Again, just wanted to give you all an update and receive comments from council on this project.

Point of Information-CHIP Grant: Councilman Wright stated this is an exciting opportunity and recognized Director of Marketing Hogan. Mrs. Hogan stated this point of information serves as an introduction to Mayor and Council along with residents about an initiative being considered by 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 identified census tract 201.08 as a location for a CHIP Grant. (This area is also noted in our 2018 Housing Assessment as Map 13 and 19, two of our five target areas for redevelopment.)

Information about CHIP Grants: The purpose of the Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) is to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing in Georgia by granting funds to city and county governments, public housing authorities, and nonprofits to rehabilitate owner-occupied homes and build and renovate affordable single-family homes for sale to eligible homebuyers. The CHIP program is funded with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HOME Investment Partnership Program funds. The CHIP program is not provided directly to individual homeowners and homebuyers. Eligible CHIP grant applicants include local governments, nonprofits with 501(c)3/(c)4 designation, and public housing authorities. The Centerville Housing Team and City of Centerville would be going after housing

rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes with grants up to \$300,000. In the past, there has been a possibility of new construction grants also.

Part of our housing team met with Ms. Sherry Kurtz of Grant Specialists of Georgia, Inc. Sherry has 27 years combined experience in administrating and writing both CHIP and CDBG housing grants. Sherry works with her husband in the administration of these grants, he does the onsite home inspections and construction management while she works on grant compliance and finances. She is currently administering 9 CHIP grants and 7 CDBG grants for communities in Middle and South Georgia. She is one of very few companies who writes and administers a grant of this magnitude. With her expertise, I believe the City of Centerville would be set up for a great step in the right direction for addressing housing issues as it relates to the residents. To utilize Ms. Sherry for writing the grant, the cost would be \$1,500. (As a note, if we did not get the grant this first year, she would rewrite it for free for a second year.)

If awarded the grant, Sherry would charge administration fees of 4% of the grant amount to the City of Centerville that could be budgeted in the next fiscal year.

After doing this research and learning more about the program, it is my professional opinion that this could be a great step in the right direction for the Centerville Housing Team and City of Centerville in taking care of our residents. I also believe due to staff constraints, utilizing Ms. Sherry Kurtz with Grant Specialists of Georgia, Inc. would be the best path forward. It also supports our application for this grant by utilizing a housing grant professional. At this point in time, I am open for questions or comments from you all about this grant.

JW what is great about this program, an individual who has owned their home and do not have funds to do renovations, new roof, repairs; this is all federal money, give some of our citizens to improve our homes, gives a good option for the city. Hope with this grant can make a noticeably change in the area.

Mayor Harley inquired why is the city not utilizing MGRC (Middle Georgia Regional Commission) to write this grant at no cost. Mrs. Hogan stated they (MGRC) could write the grant however, they cannot be the one who draws down on the grant; provide the administrative side of the process. City of Perry has had great success with Grant Specialist of Georgia, Inc. Councilman Wright stated this is a specialized grant. Mrs. Hogan reported that Mrs. Sherry does this type of grant writing on a regular basis along with CDBG. She has proven to handle this type of grant with delicacy. City Accountant Harrison wanted to clarify that when we say “administer the grant” that entails receiving the applications from the homeowners and introduction with contractors. The accounting side would include setting up a specialized account and a special fund in the accounting system. All checks and funds would be handled within the accounting department. Mrs. Hogan informed all that Mrs. Kutz and Mrs. Harrison would work closely together during the grant process.

Councilman Evans inquired the amount of grant funds available? Mrs. Hogan reported that \$350,000 is the magnitude of the grant funds available.

Councilman Armijo asked Mrs. Hogan if she had budgeted the \$ 1,500 for the grant writing services. Mrs. Hogan replied “no”, however her budget could be accommodated, cut back and make it work. Councilman Armijo stated he would like to see Mrs. Kutz’s portfolio to see what she has worked on prior to voting. Councilman Armijo also inquired how the areas were chosen.

Mrs. Hogan reported that the Housing team identified 2-5 significant areas when they did their wind shield tour to do their development.

Point of Information-Special Events Permit: Councilman Wright stated as the city grows, have more and more activity, special events 5 k. Having a special events permit would be at the best interest of the city. Director of Marketing Hogan provided a working draft, worked with City Attorney Tydings and compared with other cities. There was a citizen who raised some concerns re: recent 5k race.

Mrs. Hogan presented a scenario to explain how the special events permit process would work with all departments that would be affected with special events in the city.

Scenario presented to host 5 k at Center Park, working with the process of working with Police Department pulling permits, all pertinent information with contact along with map of route, environmental, first aid if so needed. The proposed permit along with application does include a committee comprised of the departments to review all applications, pull this information within 10 business day and notify the organizer with fees associated with the application.

Councilman Wright stated he feels it is better to put a policy in place to provide protection and clarity of the process. Mrs. Hogan stated her only concern if someone falls on city right of way without us having a policy, city can be held liable. All vendors would be required to have 1-million-dollar policy.

Councilman Wright stressed to all, that any fees received are to break even, these are fund raising events, we want to make sure we cover our cost, this is our goal.

Councilman Evans asked if the \$200 event fee is additional? Mrs. Hogan stated this was a fictitious amount, there is a permit fee along with special event fee.

Councilman Armijo asked if there has been an increase in events? Councilman Wright confirmed, stating people have made contact with us to do events. Mrs. Hogan added that she is currently aware of (4) groups that are interested in events.

Discussion 2019 Millage Rate: Councilman Evans stated this is something that everyone is always interested in which millage rate=property taxes. To provide services to our citizens takes revenue. City Accountant Harrison stated she had provided a summarization of our current millage rate with each rate current and roll back.

Councilman Andrews stated he would like to remain at the current 11.971 millage rate.

Councilman Evans stressed to everyone that he wanted to make clear, according to state law, this would be a tax increase if the roll back rate was not approved. Any citizens assessment that has not changed then their tax rate will not change. If a home is sold or new construction results with a reassessment of property.

Mayor Harley reminded all there were 78 new homes built in city.

Councilman Andrews stressed to all that the news article will read “Centerville is raising taxes”; even though it isn’t a true tax increase if the millage rate proposed is the current at 11.971.

Motion made by Councilman Evans to authorize City Accountant Harrison to move forward with the advertisements to include the 5-year tax history with proposed millage of 11.971; seconded by Councilman Andrews. Motion carried.

Comments from Council

Councilman Andrews Post 1, Detective Welch “congratulations”, appreciate the work that you do for the city. Thanked Police Department staff present at the meeting. Appreciate them all and stressed to each of them not to pay attention to the other gentleman that has done the recent stories. The view point and vast majority of the community we live in does not feel the same. Always remember that you represent yourself and each other and the city. Be safe and careful and be professional. Encouraged each of them, keep your head on a swivel.

Councilman Wright Post 2, stated the story that everyone has been talking all week, has been pairing down. My wife pointed out a train of power trucks and service vehicles today while driving; traveling to provide aid. Things like that, First Responders and public safety, thanked them all.

Councilman Evans Post 3 stated hurricane Dorian has already created a lot of damage in the Caribbean. My father is here tonight, recent evacuation, happy that he is here, but wish it was under different circumstances. Appreciate all those people who are out there to keep us safe.

Councilman Post 4, congratulated all of the new hires and staff of the Police Department. I am a firm believer in the law enforcement. Prayers that everyone is safe and they do their best. Proud of each and everyone of them. Welcomed Councilman Evans father and thanked him for coming to the meeting.

Mayor Harley, thanked everyone for coming out tonight, Police Department and Councilman Evans father.

Executive Session Personnel Matters: Councilman Wright made motion to enter into executive session at 7:48pm; seconded by Councilman Evans. Motion carried.

Mayor and Council reconvened at 8:51pm.

Affidavit & Resolution: City Attorney Tydings read resolution. Motion made by Councilman Evans to adopt resolution as written; seconded by Councilman Wright. Motion carried. Affidavit executed by Mayor Harley and notarized by City Clerk Bedingfield.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52pm.

Mayor John R. Harley

Date

Attest by City Clerk Krista Bedingfield