

Council Work Session

May 21, 2019

Meeting called to order by Mayor Harley at 5:00pm.

Invocation given by Councilman Evans.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Jeffrey Kane.

Welcome extended to all by Mayor Harley and recognized former Councilman Randall Wright.

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

Rules of Decorum: Mayor Harley read over rules of decorum.

Public Comments

Discussion-Recycling Center-Randall Wright, 108 Virginia Dr, Centerville, GA. 31028, asked the question “why would you change something that is not broken”? The recycling center has run for 17 years like a gem. Why would you want to get rid of volunteers and hire staff to operate the recycling center 6 days a week. You cannot get what needs to be done on a weekly basis. There are 11 containers, those have to be emptied on a regular basis. You will not be able to do this if the recycling center is open 6 days a week; large truck cannot do this with customers in the parking lot. We currently have (9) volunteers that faithfully volunteer on a weekly, monthly basis. We also use probationers from the municipal court. None of this cost the city a dime. The recycling center was originally opened 4 days a week including Friday, but was stopped due to lack of business. The current hours are Tues, Thursday and Saturday. All the funds go back into the recycling center. Again, asked the question “why would you want to change something that is not broken”? Reminded them that when he was on council, asked each of them to come and volunteer a couple of hours to see the set up at the recycling center. Somebody is shooting from the hip that does not know what the heck is going on.

Opposes-Salary Increase for Mayor and Council-stated if you ware wanting to kick the fire station down the road then kick this idea also. The Fire Department is in need of something. Why would you want to pad your pockets when all you do is wear out the seat of your pants?

Last thing what happened to the city of ethics sign and city seal on the back wall? Thanked the Mayor and Council for their time.

Mayor Harley thanked Mr. Wright and stated they (Mayor & Council) will take his concerns into consideration.

Innovative Ways to Find Money for New Fire Station -Geraldine Parker,129 Ridge Bend Dr, Centerville, Ga. 31028, Firefighters are having to operate from an old substandard home that does not provide adequate accommodations for adequate training and store their expensive equipment. There are 25 firefighters with only a (4) bed sleeping area. There are no real accommodations for women. In addition, according to Councilman Armijo, are housed in a moldy building, which can be a potential health hazard. Chief Jones has been promised for the

past (5) years a new fire station. Somehow Mayor and Council found it more urgent to spend money on a city park. Reported at the last council meeting Mayor Harley and Councilman Andrews had promised to build new fire station but had to find the funding for the 1 million over the 2.5 million. The architectural plans for the building estimate over 3 million. If you are really serious about a new fire station and saving money, here are some places you can look:

1. Vote no on the pay raise, public service is simply that, it's not a salaried position, especially since you are not here full time. It's nothing short of audacity for a raise, when firefighters are doing without. Recommendation to review and revise current plans from architecture. Also, forego the 4000000 to build a splash pad. Reference quote from HHJ from Mayor Harley- we need to hold off and get money together and need to identify ways.
2. Referenced Mayor Harley and Council traveling expenditures. Through open records search found that the only people on city council to keep reasonable expenses are Councilman Evans and Councilman Armijo. Mayor Harley and Councilman Andrews could forgo the hotel upgrades, park their own vehicles, and eat meals in the lobby vs room service. You could also opt for regular hotels vs luxurious resorts. Regular restaurants vs expensive steak houses. Look at taking classes on line, stay home and not spend the limit on the travel budget, each could save estimate of \$1200 per conference.
3. Recommends using the \$ 400,000 set aside for a splash pad, maintenance will be expensive, and potential water borne diseases.

In conclusion with all the above recommendations, a total savings of \$ 655,000, that could be used for the fire station. It is a shame that the city focuses on a park instead of a Fire Department. Expressed sympathy for Chief Jones, stating he has been very patient.

Mayor Harley recognized Councilman Andrews. Motion made by Councilman Andrews to add the following item to the agenda. Resolution Re-Certification City of Ethics; seconded by Councilman Evans. Motion carried.

Old Business

New Business

Resolution Re-Certification City of Ethics: Councilman Andrews read resolution. Motion made by Councilman Andrews to approve; seconded by Councilman Wright. See Resolution 2019-3.

Officer of the Year: Chief Hadden informed everyone that on May 4, Knights of Columbus, honored Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, Military and GSP recognizing for officers of the year. Sgt Mike Welch was recognized as Officer of the Year- Centerville Police Department. Sgt Welch has served the City of Centerville with the highest-level professionalism and dedication. He has led subordinate officers with care and compassion and has been instrumental in maintaining the overall morale of the patrol division. Sgt Welch leads from the front and is one of the most productive officers employed by the Centerville Police Department. Sgt Welch's reach doesn't stop there. He is also the Assistant Coordinator for the Middle Georgia Traffic Enforcement Network and strives to reduce traffic fatalities and crash injured drivers across the state. Sgt Welch's actions and character are to be commended and are honored by the Centerville Police Department. Sgt Welch had to leave meeting for emergency call.

Approval – Policy for Hourly Employees Annual Merit Increase: Councilman Andrews stated this is something we have been needing to do for some time. City Accountant Harrison stated this formalizes the process and gives the Department Head more guidelines and continuity. Motion to approve made by Councilman Andrews; seconded by Councilman Wright. Councilman Evans stated since he has been on the council, we have made an effort to take care of our employees. Mayor Harley called for motion. Motion carried.

Approval -Agreement and Authorization of Signatory - M&R Marketing Group-Website Transfer and Hosting: Director of Marketing Hogan reported that we are finally at the point to transfer web site from Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC) to M&R Marketing. We are putting our best foot forward for an elevated level of service. MGRC has served us well. Ms. Tydings has review agreement, revisions were added to document. Seeking approval of agreement and authorization for Mayor Harley to sign. Councilman Wright referenced last page of document/ invoice: hosting transfer \$ 500.00, hosting set up and renewal \$ 336.00. General Motion made by Councilman Wright to approve agreement and designate Mayor Harley as signatory; seconded by Councilman Andrews. Motion carried.

Ordinance -Compensation Increase Governing Authority (Mayor/ Council): Councilman Andrews stated there has been considerable conversation. Motion made by Councilman Andrews to approve; seconded by Councilman Wright. Councilman Armijo stated we have been talking about this and funds are in the budget and we (Mayor and Council) are concerned about saving money so we can do other city business that we have to do. Just to make it clear, this money for this increase is a very minute out of the whole budget. So, the funding that we are looking at for the fire department and other things, is money to get to the ends of our means. Councilman Wright and Councilman Andrews confirmed. Councilman Andrews referenced an email that City Accountant Harrison had provided to Mayor and Council that was several scenarios; 5 & 8-year with interest rates and both were very enticing, cannot really discuss at this time; very encouraged and supports the 5 year completely. Councilman Armijo said at the end we are still talking about doing what we need to do to support all departments. Mayor Harley stated he needed to clarify something that he has said; we need to identify where the funds will be coming to build the fire station. This is a critical thing. We are going to have a retreat here June 27-28, 2019. This will be discussed. This is a priority to discuss Fire Station, open to the public; we are going to fund the fire station and identify the fire station. Councilman Wright stated that one point Councilman Armijo is making, offset of the salary increase is minimal. The savings if used for the fire station, would take 160 years to build the fire station. One of the best things we have is the city is debt free. Councilman Armijo stated his other point was issue with Councilman Andrews making statement re: timeline to build fire station; waiting a year. Councilman Andrews denied making statement. Mayor Harley called for the vote. Motion carried. See Ordinance 2019-1.

Comments from Council

Post 1 Councilman Andrews, stated he is for the Fire Station. Thinks what we will end up doing and does support the project. The projected 2 million from SPLOST and then borrow the other at whatever possible best rate available, without invading the reserve, would prefer to leave that and borrow the money, we will figure out how to pay for it as we go and identify as Mayor Harley mentioned. Addressed Director Hogan, likes the branding stated he and Caleb were headed to church on Sunday and saw utility truck with branding. Like the new branding and where we are

going. His 17-year-old said he really like the new branding. It is starting to invade the city. It refreshes something that was drawn a long time ago and it was time to step up into the future. Expressed to Mrs. Hogan, that he likes what she has done. Encouraged her to keep her head up about Center Park. We heard from one tonight but keep on moving, this is the direction the city wants to go in and there are more people that like it than don't. Keep your head up, proud of you and keep doing what you are doing.

Post 2 Councilman Wright, great discussion tonight, see more dialogue in our meeting both with citizens, Mayor and Council. There were good things brought up tonight, agree with Mrs. Parker there may be some areas "extravagant", that is the right word, this is where we have asked Chief Jones to review for excellence not extravagance; fine line. That is why this project is going to take a little time. There was a very passion to appeal about mold in the fire station at our last meeting. Mentioned Councilman Armijo re: update mold status; update will be provided.

Doesn't completely agree with Mrs. Parker about using funds from splash pad for fire station. Mentioned he had played in softball game last night in Perry, lost 32-2. Not familiar with area and drove the wrong way out park and went by their splash pad. There was a large and diverse crowd, looking forward to invest in the future. We are not making a decision public safety or public parks; we are pursuing both of those. We have to do this at a deliberate speed and pace for both. Mayor, Council and city employees are doing a great job of getting us there. We will see some results on this very soon and excited.

Reminder June 1st events: Puppies and Pilates and Farmers Market. Food truck Friday will be June 7; events will be held at City Hall due to park construction. Thanked everyone for being here this evening.

Post 3 Councilman Evans, excited about things that are going on Centerville. Living here for about 12 years. Everything is not going to be for everybody, but when it gets done there will be things for everybody. That is what we are trying to do, trying to serve our citizens. It takes time and takes effort. Definitely takes money. Service is a calling, but is definitely not free. Everything cost something, somebody pays for it. Politicians talk about free college for kids, it's not free, Medicare. We have to remember that; this comes from tax dollars. Comes out of your and my pocket, people should be given an opportunity. I believe people should be given an opportunity. We all want to serve, but it cost something. Pay raise for the city council, know how much time you spend, mentioned former Councilman Wright "you know how much time you spent". As Councilman Armijo had mentioned earlier, we are not talking about a large amount of money. I hope you are not unhappy about that, but if you are everyone has an opinion. I hope you are not mad at me, but if you are, I will continue to serve whether the pay goes up or not. I hope to be here a long time; I enjoy living in Centerville and enjoy serving the citizens. I have an open door if you want to call me, please feel free to do so, I would love to talk with you. That is why we are here.

Post 4 Councilman Armijo, let's talk about the Fire Department, recognized Chief Jones and asked if he could give a quick overview of the mold situation. Chief Jones stated that late last week, Director of Operations Brumfield contacted company to come out and test for mold spores inside and under the crawl space. The samples and test results were received on Monday. There were no abnormal levels, no unhealthy mold spores within the Fire Department. There are some in the crawl space and this can be taken care of with a moisture barrier. Addressed Councilman Wright re: proposed change to the Recycling Center, stating that he nor Councilman Evans were aware of these proposals. We have to do better communicating

amongst ourselves. Councilman Wright, stated that somebody kicked an idea around, would it be different, would it be a good idea to look hiring some folks over at the Recycling Center. The comment was made who would know if we needed that, suggested speaking with former Councilman Wright, he is going to be the one to know. So, we had someone float the idea by Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright stated “No, heard it through the grapevine son, a little birdie told me”. Stated the two of you (Councilman Wright and Councilman Andrews) want to do away with the volunteers and hire personnel. Councilman Wright stated this was his idea, Councilman Andrews was not involved. Councilman Wright stated he had spoken with Director of Operations Brumfield, asked him to speak with Mr. Wright. Mr. Brumfield reported back that Mr. Wright did not want to do this and the idea was not pursued further; no funds were budgeted. The reason why we did not bring it to everyone else is because we did not think it held water. Councilman Armijo also mentioned the removal of the city seal. He nor Councilman Evans knew of the removal and replaced with the logo. Does like the new logo, but again it would have been nice to be informed instead of walking into the meeting tonight and seeing that this had been done. Again, all I am trying to drive home is “communication, communication, communication” is important. I have 2 phone numbers; they could have called and I would have said “cool”. At least afford us that respect. Love the city, think everybody is doing a great job.

Sgt Mike Welch returned to the meeting from emergency call. Presentation done for “Office of the Year”.

Mayor Harley mentioned article he saw in the Sunday paper “China scrap ban provides boon for US Recyclers”. Hopes this a great thing, get paid for plastics that come from Recycling Center. Hardest thing to do, working the center for 12 years, one of the ones who volunteer, sometimes they have enough volunteers to cover, hard work, volunteers do an excellent job. Recognized Mr. Kane, who also volunteers at the Recycling Center.

Meeting adjourned at 5:46pm.

Mayor John R. Harley

Attest by City Clerk, Krista Bedingfield

Date