

City of Donalsonville
Council Meeting-January 7, 2020

Official Minutes

Mayor Dan E. Ponder, Jr. called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. Councilmembers present for the meeting included, Mayor Dan E. Ponder, Jr, Mayor Pro Tem Ed Bond, CP Mitch Blanks, CP Travis Brooks, CP Mitzy Moye, CP Flossie Smith, and CP Lindsay Register. Staff present were City Manager Steve Hicks, City Clerk Christina Corvers, Public Works Superintendent Bert Adams, Fire Chief Dean King, Police Chief Woodrow Blue, Communications Director Jeffrey Hatcher, and City Attorney Billy Grantham.

City Manager Hicks stated that the City of Donalsonville is applying to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of up to \$750,000.00. The purpose of the Public Hearing was to allow the public the opportunity to provide the City of Donalsonville with ideas concerning potential projects. Projects that are eligible for funding include the program activities of housing, public facilities, economic development, and a combination of housing and public facilities.

With there being no discussion on the application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of up to \$750,000.00, the meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.

Mayor Dan E. Ponder, Jr. then called the regular Council Meeting to order at 6:02 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. After which Councilmember Lindsay Register gave the invocation, then all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Councilmembers present for the meeting included, Mayor Dan E. Ponder, Jr, Mayor Pro Tem Ed Bond, CP Mitch Blanks, CP Travis Brooks, CP Mitzy Moye, CP Flossie Smith, and CP Lindsay Register. Staff present were City Manager Steve Hicks, City Clerk Christina Corvers, Public Works Superintendent Bert Adams, Fire Chief Dean King, Police Chief Woodrow Blue, Communications Director Jeffrey Hatcher, and City Attorney Billy Grantham.

Approval of the Agenda: Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to approve the Agenda, with CP Blanks seconding. Motion passed. Next, the approval of the minutes from the Council Meeting held on December 3, 2019. CP Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from the December Council Meeting, with CP Moye seconding. Motion carried.

APPEARANCES: David Maxwell spoke on behalf of the Downtown Development Authority/BetterWay and stated that a big announcement is planned to be made at the February Meeting.

Next, David Maxwell gave an update on the annual Chamber of Commerce banquet to be held on Thursday January 30, 2020 with the location to be announced at a later time.

Gwendolyn Williams then voiced her opinion regarding the purchase of a Business License for 2020. Ms. Williams stated that due to Hurricane Michael and health issues, she was not able to open for business during a portion of 2018 and all of 2019. Ms. Williams also stated that she had previously paid for a Business License for 2019 that she was not able to utilize. After some discussion, Mayor Ponder stated that once Ms. Williams opens back up for business, the City of Donalsonville will require her to purchase an active business license for that current year as per City Code.

At 6:21 PM, CP Blanks excused himself due to a conflict of interest regarding the next Agenda item.

Next, Noel Stout requested to rezone two parcels that are currently zoned RA to be used as a Thrift Store and a transitional home for troubled women. City Manager Hicks stated that in order to properly classify the request for a Thrift Store, the property would have to be rezoned to C-1 for a Commercial Business. It would be spot zoning which is illegal. The current draft of the new zoning ordinance, when enacted, would still classify this property as the most restrictive residential classification. There would be no justification for a Thrift Store to be opened in that

area. City Manager Hicks also stated that as for the request for a group home, the RA zoning classification allows for single-family dwellings and two-family dwellings (which generally mean duplexes). Multi-family dwellings are allowed through the RB zoning classification which again would be spot zoning. After some discussion, CP Brooks made a motion to table the request until City Attorney Grantham could further research the request for the transitional home. CP Smith seconded; motion carried.

At 6:35 PM, CP Blanks rejoined the meeting.

INTERNAL BUSINESS: The Financial Statements for November 2019 were presented and reviewed with comments made by City Manager Hicks on the current status, along with discussion on the three-month analysis.

OLD BUSINESS

OLD BUSINESS: City Manager Hicks recommended to award the bid for the 2020 Roadway Resurfacing Project to Oxford Construction Company with a base bid of \$436,355.50. Upon award of the bid a change order will be submitted to reduce the contract amount if funds are not available. CP Blanks made a motion to award the bid for the 2020 Roadway Resurfacing Project to Oxford Construction Company with a base bid of \$436,355.50 pending any change orders necessary to reduce the contract amount. CP Smith seconded; motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS: City Manager Hicks recommended to adopt a resolution authorizing the preparation and submittal of a Community Development Block Grant application for the 2020 CDBG funding cycle. CP Register made a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the preparation and submittal of a Community Development Block Grant application for the 2020 CDBG funding cycle. CP Moye seconded; motion passed.

Next, City Manager Hicks recommended to reappoint Mitchell Blanks and Tracie Beard to serve on the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Council. This appointment is annual and both appointees have agreed to serve the upcoming term. CP Brooks made a motion to re-appoint Mitchell Blanks and Tracie Beard to the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Council, with Mayor Pro Tem Bond seconding. Motion carried.

City Manager Hicks then recommended to enter into a Mutual Aid Agreement with the American Public Gas Association to provide emergency or other non-routine services to restore and provide natural gas services upon request in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. Any costs incurred will be paid by the entity requesting the assistance. CP Blanks made a motion to enter into a Mutual Aid Agreement with the American Public Gas Association to provide emergency or other non-routine services to restore and provide natural gas services upon request in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency. CP Moye seconded; motion passed unanimously.

Next, City Manager Hicks recommended to approve the proposal from J. Smith Lanier for Worker's Compensation Insurance Coverage to be provided by Bitco General Insurance Corporation at a cost of \$74,548. City Manager Hicks stated that the current budget is \$77,257. The actual FY 2018-2019 cost was \$75,372. CP Smith made a motion to approve the proposal from J. Smith Lanier for Worker's Compensation Insurance Coverage to be provided by Bitco General Insurance Corporation at a cost of \$74,548. CP Register seconded; motion carried.

Communications Director Hatcher then gave an update on eDonalsonville activities, along with the systems continued growth. Communications Director Hatcher stated that there was a temporary outage for customers due to some radio issues that could not be resolved completely until the following morning. This resulted in a total outage of 21 hours for LTE customers. The City is still looking at options for spectrum and adding capacity. Once the FCC releases the spectrum, the City plans to pursue a license for use in our system. Communications Director Hatcher stated that the new spectrum would be easier to obtain and would cover the entire county.

Next, Fire Chief King gave an update on the Fire Department, stating that everything had been running smoothly and that the new year started off busy with the first fire call being received a few

hours after midnight on New Year's Day. Chief King reviewed the yearly activity report for 2019, and stated that all the yearly reports have been submitted to all necessary agencies.

Police Chief Blue then gave a brief update on the Police Department and stated that they were still continuing efforts in resolving the nuisance issue regarding the Buzzards. Lastly, Chief Blue stated that they were in the process of finishing up some pending projects.

Next, Public Works Superintendent Adams stated that there was nothing new to report at this time.

City Manager Hicks then gave an update on the following:

- (1) Cities United Summit (Mayors Day) Luncheon: Please let Christina know if you can attend the luncheon on January 26, 2020 at 12:15 PM.
- (2) National League of Cities Membership: Dues for membership in the National League of Cities is \$849.00 per year. The annual conference is March 10-13, 2020 in Washington, D.C. The membership gives the City of Donalsonville access to information on national issues that affect our City. Attendance at the conference affords the opportunity to interact with federal officials on the related issues (Broadband Licensing). All were in favor of moving forward with the application process for the National League of Cities membership.
- (3) Water Loss Audit: The City of Donalsonville has been informed that a water loss audit report might be required to be submitted to EPD by March 1, 2020. We are in the process of gathering information to see if the City of Donalsonville's population meets the criteria base.
- (4) Letter of Credit: As you may recall the City of Donalsonville obtained a 10-year interest free loan from Three Notch Electric in the amount of \$300,000 to assist with the construction of the new Fire Station. The current balance is \$210,000. Three Notch Electric is requiring an update to the letter of credit issued by Ameris Bank to secure the loan. The letter of credit was issued with no fees due to the deposit relationship the City had with Ameris Bank at that time. Ameris Bank has determined that it would not be cost-effective for Ameris to provide this letter of credit to the City of Donalsonville. The deposit relationship no longer offsets the cost of funds and reserves to cover the amount for the letter of credit. Ameris would have to charge a significant fee to make this cost effective. Ameris is willing to review a refinance of the Three Notch Electric note if it would be materially beneficial to the City.
- (5) Farmers Market Property-Environmental Assessment: The appraised value on the Farmers Market Property is \$190,000.00, which would be the amount required to remove the deed restriction limiting public use of the property. If there is any interest in this, a Phase I Environmental Assessment could detect any potential problems. A Brownfields Grant could address and resolve any issues. The assessment may be a negotiating tool to lower the amount needed to remove the restriction. The assessment would cost around \$2000-\$2500.

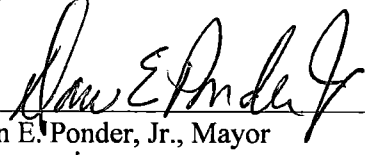
Lastly, City Manager Hicks reminded the Council of the following upcoming events:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday-January 20, 2020
Cities United Summit (formerly Mayors Day)-January 24-27, 2020
Chamber of Commerce Banquet-January 30, 2020 6:00 PM
City Council Meeting-February 4, 2020 6:00 PM

With there being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, at 7:13 PM, Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to adjourn, with CP Register making a second; and the motion carried.

ADJOURNED

City of Donalsonville



Dan E. Ponder, Jr., Mayor

Attest and Certification:

I, Christina Corvers, do here Attest and Certify that
The above written is a true and correct representation
of the business and actions conducted during the January 7, 2020
meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Donalsonville.



Christina Corvers, City Clerk