

City of Donalsonville  
Council Meeting-November 9, 2020

**Official Minutes**

Mayor Ron Johnson, Jr. called the Council Meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at City Hall. After which Mayor Ron Johnson, Jr. gave the invocation, then all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America. Councilmembers present for the meeting included, Mayor Ron Johnson, Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Ed Bond, CP Mitch Blanks, CP Flossie Smith, CP Travis Brooks, CP Moses James, Jr., and CP Lindsay Register. Staff present were City Manager Steve Hicks, City Clerk Christina Corvers, Fire Chief Dean King, Police Chief Woodrow Blue, Communications Director Jeffrey Hatcher, Public Works Superintendent Bert Adams, 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 October 6, 2020 Council Meeting. CP Smith made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 6, 2020 Council Meeting with CP Register seconding. Motion carried.

APPEARANCES: Virginia Harrison gave an update on the recent DDA sponsored 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Steak Cook-Off, which had a total of 18 entries. Virginia Harrison stated that a Double Steak Cook-Off is currently being organized for March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Lastly, Virginia Harrison gave an update on the recent downtown clean-up/workday, which has allowed the downtown merchants to better conceal their garbage cans.

Next, Sarah Avery gave an update on the Chamber of Commerce as well as the Development Authority. Sarah Avery stated that the Development Authority recently purchased 138.6 acres of land east of the City limits also known as the Bramlett property. Sarah Avery requested the assistance from the City in annexing the property. City Manager Hicks stated that City Attorney Grantham will work with the Development Authority to annex the parcel of land. Sarah Avery then requested assistance from the City with the Christmas lights on the trees downtown, as well as with the purchase of Christmas Pole mounts for the 2021 Holiday Season. City Manager Hicks stated that the City would work with the Chamber in moving forward with these projects. Lastly, Sarah Avery gave an update on the Rural Zone designation that was recently awarded to Donalsonville and stated that a team meeting will be held November 17, 2020 to discuss future incentives.

**INTERNAL BUSINESS**

INTERNAL BUSINESS: The Financial Statements for September 2020 were presented and reviewed with comments made by City Manager Hicks on the current status, along with discussion on the three-month analysis.

**NEW BUSINESS**

NEW BUSINESS: City Manager Hicks recommended to approve the proposed budget amendments in the amount of \$704,144 and \$3,381 to the General Fund and the Hotel Tax Funds respectively. City Manager Hicks stated that \$466,121 is related to Hurricane Michael expenditures which were offset by FEMA and insurance payments in the amount of \$483,004. Additional grant expenditures of \$149,760 were offset by additional grant revenues of \$140,491. This is a step to completion of the FY 19-20 audit as required by Georgia law. Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to approve the proposed budget amendments in the amount of \$704,144 and \$3,381 to the General Fund and the Hotel Tax Funds; CP Register made the second. Motion carried.

Next, City Manager Hicks recommended to renew the current health insurance program with United Healthcare beginning January 2021. City Manager Hicks stated there is a projected 10% increase in the premium from \$35,323.44 per month to \$38,858.53 per month which includes all employee and optional family coverage. Based upon current utilization for the employee portion of the premium paid by the City, the FY 20-21 budget is \$393,744. The projected cost for the year is \$302,978 resulting in a budget variance of \$90,766. After some discussion with the City's insurance agent, Scott Forsyth, CP Brooks made a motion to renew the current health insurance

program with United Healthcare beginning January 2021 with the projected 10% increase in the premium from \$35,323.44 per month to \$38,858.53 per month which includes all employee and optional family coverage. CP James seconded; motion passed.

City Manager Hicks then recommended to approve Wireless Facilities Addendum and the Addendum for the Attachment of Banners and Seasonal Decorations to the Government Pole Attachment License Agreement with Georgia Power. CP Smith made a motion to approve Wireless Facilities Addendum and the Addendum for the Attachment of Banners and Seasonal Decorations to the Government Pole Attachment License Agreement with Georgia Power, with CP Register seconding. Motion carried.

Next, City Manager Hicks stated that new millage rates for 2020 are established resulting in a projected tax levy of \$1,039,962 which is an increase of \$23,840 from the previous year. The rollback rate is established at 17.319 mills. The 2019 rate was 17.374 mills. City Manager Hicks stated that the increase in the value of Real & Personal Property assessed, Mobile Homes, and Timber were partially offset by a decrease in Motor Vehicle assessments, adjusting for M & O exemptions, resulted in a net digest increase of \$1,562,278. City Manager Hicks then stated that the net effect will add \$23,840 in additional tax levied for 2020 if the rollback rate is adopted due to the net increase in the assessed property values. For example: the tax bill on a \$100,000 property value will be reduced by \$2.20 if the rollback rate is implemented. The 2020-21 budget was adopted using \$1,043,767 as the projected tax digest revenue. Based upon this, City Manager Hicks recommended to adopt the rollback rate, which would meet budget requirements for the year. Maintaining the 2019 rate of 17.374 mills would generate an additional \$3,303.

CITY OF DONALSONVILLE CURRENT 2020 TAX DIGEST SUMMARY	ROLLBACK		
	2019	2020	CHANGE
Real & Personal	\$ 59,317,777	\$61,998,099	\$ 2,680,322
Motor Vehicles	1,387,000	1,147,810	(239,190)
Mobile Homes	192,595	277,172	84,577
Timber-100%	-	109,747	109,747
H.D. Equipment	-	-	-
Gross Digest	\$ 60,897,372	\$63,532,828	2,635,456
Less M&O Exemptions	(2,412,179)	(3,485,357)	(1,073,178)
Net M&O Digest	\$ 58,485,193	\$60,047,471	\$ 1,562,278
Gross M&O Millage	17.364	17.374	0.010
Millage Equivalent of Reassessed Value	0.010	(0.055)	(0.065)
Rollback Millage Rate	17.374	17.319	(0.055)
Net Taxes Levied	\$ 1,016,122	\$ 1,039,962	\$ 23,840
Net Taxes Levied \$ increase (decrease)	\$ 9,029	\$ 23,840	14,811
Net Taxes Levied % increase (decrease)	0.89%	2.35%	1.46%

After some discussion, City Manager Hicks stated that at the next Council Meeting a Public Hearing would be held and then the adoption of the roll-back rate of 17.319 mills if the Council were in approval. No action taken.

City Manager Hicks then recommended to provide a lump sum one-time payment of \$350.00 to be paid on December 1, 2020 to all active full-time employees who are in active pay status as of November 30, 2020. As this payment is made with the assumption that future services will be performed, notice of termination or resignation prior to this payment will cause the employee to be ineligible for payment. After some discussion, CP Blanks made a motion to provide a lump sum one-time payment of \$350.00 to all full-time employees and \$200.00 to all part-time employees to be paid on December 1, 2020 to all active employees who are in active pay status as of November 30, 2020. CP Smith seconded; motion carried.

Next, Mayor Johnson recommended the consideration of the Council to place an ad for the L.A.W. Publication. It's an annual/bi-annual subscription regarding drug abuse/awareness that will be published within the county. CP Blanks made a motion to place an ad of \$150.00 in the L.A.W. Publication regarding drug abuse awareness. CP Smith seconded; motion passed.

City Manager Hicks then stated that a request had been made to allow Survival Flight to provide air ambulance coverage for employees and families at a cost of \$40.00 per year if at least 10 employees participate. City Manager Hicks stated that some cities pay for that service as an employee benefit, but it is not a requirement. It is also eligible for payroll deduction. The Survival Flight membership is not an insurance policy, it is a membership that covers the employee and their family household in the event they are flown by Survival Flight Air Ambulance. The financial benefit of a Survival Flight Membership is if a helicopter is needed to transport a Survival Flight member, the member will incur no out-of-pocket expense, the cost will always be \$0.00. After some discussion, CP Brooks made a motion for the City of Donalsonville to cover the cost of \$40.00 per year per employee to Survival Flight to provide air ambulance coverage for employees and their families. CP Smith seconded; motion carried.

Next, Communications Director Hatcher gave an update on the eDonalsonville activities, along with the system's continued growth. Communications Director Hatcher stated that the server at City Hall was recently replaced. All data was transferred to the new server last weekend and users are now able to work on the new system while extending the functionality for another five years. Lastly, Communications Director Hatcher stated that City Attorney Grantham has begun the process of sending out letters to individuals who have failed to return eDonalsonville equipment back to the City after either canceling and/or having services disconnected. These letters are sent after exhausting internal attempts including mailing certified letters giving them 10 days to return the equipment.

Fire Chief King then gave an update on the Fire Department and stated that the department recently implemented a new reporting system into their monthly report. Lastly, Chief King stated that the Bid Opening for the Breathing Air Compressor Grant is at 2:00 PM November 18, 2020. Chief King stated that the department is in dire need of the air compressors and request approval from the Council to authorize the City Manager and himself to approve awarding the bid to the best most reasonable contractor once all bids are opened and reviewed. Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion authorizing City Manager Hicks and Fire Chief King to award the bid to the best most reasonable contractor for the Breathing Air Compressor after all bids have been opened and reviewed on November 18, 2020 at 2:00 PM. CP Blanks seconded; motion passed.

Next, Police Chief Blue gave an update on the Police Department and stated that the department was back running at full capacity. Chief Blue stated that the department was recently awarded the Bullet Proof Vest Grant in the amount of \$5,700.00, which will allow for the purchase of approximately ten bullet proof vests. Chief Blue stated that a bullet proof vest has a life expectancy of five years.

Public Works Superintendent Adams stated that he had nothing new to report at this time.

City Manager Hicks then gave an update on the following:

- (1) Water Damage to the Police Station: The contractor investigated the underlying space for issues that may have caused some deterioration in other parts of the office and discovered a significant amount of water under the floor. The insurance company has verified coverage for those repairs. The City is responsible for mitigation of the drainage problem that caused the flooding which is estimated to be about \$20,000-\$25,000 in additional work on the roof and drainage system.

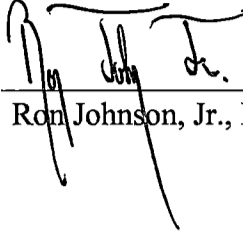
Lastly, City Manager Hicks reminded the Council of the following upcoming events:

- Veterans Day Holiday-November 11, 2020
- Rural Zone Orientation-November 17, 2020 9:00 AM (online)
- Thanksgiving Holiday-November 26-27, 2020
- Council Meeting-December 1, 2020 6:00 PM
- Christmas Holiday-December 24-25, 2020
- New Year's Holiday-January 1, 2021

With there being no further business to come before the Mayor and Council, at 7:17 PM, Mayor Pro Tem Bond made a motion to adjourn, with CP Brooks making a second; and the motion carried.

ADJOURNED

City of Donalsonville



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Ron Johnson, 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 November 9, 2020 meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of Donalsonville.



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Christina Corvers, City Clerk