

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF AUSTELL
CITY HALL BUILDING
MONDAY, MAY 3, 2021**

Present:

Mayor Ollie Clemons
Valerie Anderson
Melanie Elder
Devon Myrick (virtual)
Sandra Leverette

Absent: Randy Green & Marlin Lamar

Also, present: Scott Kimbrough, City Attorney; Denise Lowe, Finance Director; Bo Garrison, Public Works Director; Brandon Merritt, Fire Chief; Bob Starrett, Police Chief, Darrell Weaver, Community Affairs Director and Elizabeth Young, City Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Clemons called the meeting to order, gave the invocation & led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Clemons asked if anyone had items to add to the agenda. Chief Starrett stated he needs to add item 9B Certification.

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to add item 9B to the agenda. Seconded by Mrs. Leverette. Motion passed. (4-0)

2. CONSENT AGENDA – INFORMATION AND UPDATE

(No Action Required by Council – See Specific Department Director before a Meeting.)

3. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Bills
- B. Approve Legal Bills - \$3,277.02
- C. Approve Minutes of Regular Council Meeting April 5, 2021

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Mrs. Leverette. Motion passed. (4-0)

4. EXCEPTION TO CONSENT AGENDA

5. CITIZENS REPORT

This email was sent in for Mayor & Council, from Natasha Dyer.

I would like to ask a question tonight at the council meeting. Last month I asked about what had become of the discussion to create quiet zones with the trains that run through downtown Austell at all hours of the day and night. Unfortunately, the mayor didn't answer the question, didn't share any timeline, what timing is being investigated. He just kind of mentioned that business also wants a quiet zone but would not allude to the timing of the quiet zone. Quiet zones are a pretty common thing, and so they have a pretty well-defined way to go about setting them up. The City may need to help pitch in costs for upgrading railroad crossings to meet design requirements, but there're federal pools of money that can also be tapped for doing so. Again, I would like to know what has become of the discussion to create quiet zones with the trains that run through downtown Austell at all hours of the day and night...especially when we are sleeping. Thank you. Mayor Clemons thanked her for providing the information about quiet zones. He stated that he has met with the Federal Railroad Association & went to all the crossings needed in this study. Mayor Clemons stated that Ms. Dyer needs to contact Darrell Weaver, Community Affairs Director, for more background information & where we are at in the process.

The email was sent in for Mayor & Council from Ann Turner.

For what was the spraying being done on the grass behind the old playground? If it was for weeds, they are not nearly the problem the many fire ant hills at the junction of the sidewalk and the grass in front of the retaining wall are. And those are growing larger by the day. Are there plans to eliminate those potential dangers? (I use 20 Mule Team Borax on the ones here in our yard. Nontoxic to anything but those pesky ants.) Are there any plans to eliminate any of the poison ivy runners that are proliferating along the new trail? Or the ones that are on the creek-side of the walkway? Yes, they are constant problems, but careful removal (I use long handled pliers) and insertion into black garbage bags seems to kill them. Burning is not the solution, nor is grinding and making the stems part of landfills or compost. And poisons just further exaggerate the declining pollinator problems. (The same way liquid poisons do for lawn weeds.) I will be so, so, so glad when I can ask these questions when we can all see each other. Mayor Clemons directed the question to the Community Affairs Director, Darrell Weaver. Mr. Weaver stated he spoke with our Parks Manager, Zach Evans, and this is a work in progress, and will all be taken care of as they go along.

6. GAS SYSTEM REPRESENTATIVE

OLLIE CLEMONS, MAYOR

Mr. Kimbrough stated we are ahead from last year and doing good.

7. FINANCE DEPARTMENT

VALERIE ANDERSON, CHAIRPERSON

Denise Lowe, Finance Director

A. Financial Report

B. Public Hearing 2021-22 Preliminary Budget

Mr. Kimbrough open the public hearing & asked if anyone had questions. No one spoke.

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mr. Kimbrough to close the public hearing. Seconded by Mrs. Leverette. Motion passed. (4-0)

The purpose is to present the City of Austell 2021-22 Preliminary Budget. The City of Austell Finance Committee would like to hold a public hearing for the first reading of the 2021-22 Fiscal Year Budget. The following items have been reflected in the 2020-21 Preliminary Budget:

- Increase in healthcare premiums of 10% beginning January 1, 2022
- Completion of Removal of last two pump stations

These increases will primarily be funded by additional franchise fees and property tax revenue. It is the recommendation to conduct the public hearing for the 1st reading of the 2021-22 Preliminary Fiscal Year Budget and answer any questions.

8. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

MELANIE ELDER, CHAIRPERSON

Elizabeth Young, Director

A. 2021 Election Qualifying Dates

The qualifying dates for the 2021 Election will be August 16-18, 2021. Qualifying hours will be from 8:30-4:30 and will be held at the Threadmill Complex Conference Room, Suite 121.

Ms. Elder moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the 2021 Election Qualifying Dates. Seconded by Mrs. Leverette. Motion passed. (4-0)

B. Municode Ordinance

The city has been working diligently with Municode to recodify our current ordinances. Attached is the ordinance to adopt Municode. Once the ordinance is adopted, Municode will go live online.

Ms. Elder moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Municode Ordinance. Seconded by Mrs. Anderson. Motion passed. (4-0)

C. Salary Increase for Judges/Solicitors

D. To reduce the amount of overtime pay, Court has been moved from night to day court as of June 2, 2021. Seeing that our pay rates for Judges/Solicitors monthly/weekly salary have not been adjusted in many years, we have discussed a pay increase with our Finance Director, Denise Lowe. The salary increases will be effective as of July 1, 2021.

Current Monthly	Projected Monthly	
Judge Darden	\$1,750.00	\$1,900.00
LeAnn McDougall	\$925.00	\$1,050.00

	Per Session	Projected per Session
Judge Bloom	\$225.00	\$500.00
Chris Lanning	\$250.00	\$350.00
Tom Campbell	\$250.00	\$350.00

Ms. Elder moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Salary increases for Judges/Solicitors. Seconded by Mrs. Anderson. Motion passed. (4-0)

9. POLICE DEPARTMENT
RANDY GREEN, CHAIRPERSON
Bob Starrett, Police Chief

- A. Police Report
- B. Certification

Council was provided information on the Police Department applying for certification during the April Council meeting this year. At that time Council agreed on approval and Chief Starrett began the process.

During this process The Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) has informed Chief Starrett that Council must formally approve this request. The Police Committee requests Council to approve current policy and procedures and seek state certification for the Austell Police Department.

Mrs. Anderson moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to approve the Certification. Seconded by Ms. Elder. Motion passed. (4-0)

10. FIRE DEPARTMENT
MARLIN LAMAR, CHAIRPERSON
Brandon Merritt, Fire Chief

- A. Fire Report

11. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
SANDRA LEVERETTE, CHAIRPERSON
Bo Garrison, Director

- A. No Report

12. PARKS DEPARTMENT
DEVON MYRICK, CHAIRPERSON
Darrell Weaver, Director

A. No Report

13. COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
VALERIE ANDERSON, CHAIRPERSON
Darrell Weaver, Director

- A. Code Enforcement Report
- B. Alcohol Event Permit

Mrs. Anderson requested to table item 13B until next council meeting. Ms. Elder seconded. Motion passed. (3-1)

14. ATTORNEY, DUPREE & KIMBROUGH

A. No Report

15. MAYOR'S REPORT

A. No Report

16. ADJOURN

Mr. Myrick moved to follow the recommendation of Mayor Clemons to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Elder. Motion passed. (4-0)



Mayor



Attest

6-10-2021

Date