



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
WORK SESSION
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022 – 6:30 PM
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

Meeting Recording Available at <https://youtu.be/5Wo8Tp7r8bU>

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

David Eady – Mayor
George Holt – Councilmember
Lynn Bohanan – Councilmember
Laura McCanless – Councilmember
Mike Ready – Councilmember
Jim Windham – Councilmember
Jeff Wearing – Councilmember

STAFF PRESENT:

Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Bill Andrew – City Manager
Mark Anglin – Police Chief
Jody Reid – Maintenance Supervisor

OTHERS PRESENT: Josh Carroll (Mauldin & Jenkins), Mike McQuaide, Sarah Davis (Covington News), Dean Doug Hicks, Adrienne Waddey, Danielle Miller, and Laura Gafnea (Oxford College)

Agenda (Attachment A)

1. Mayor's Announcements

None

2. Committee Reports

- a. **Trees, Parks, and Recreation Board** – Cheryl Ready provided the report for this Board.

Mayor Eady stated that the Giles family has asked if the City would consider naming the nature area the City creates on the property behind Mainstay Academy that was recently purchased after a member of the family who passed away unexpectedly last year, Chelsea Giles. He will be meeting with the Giles family on April 4th and will provide some additional information to the Board for their consideration. Ms. Ready stated their next meeting is scheduled for April 19th.

- b. **Planning Commission** – Bill Andrew provided the report for this Commission.
- c. **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)** – Mike Ready provided the report for this Authority.

- d. **Sustainability Committee** – Laura McCanless provided the report for this Committee.

Mayor Eady announced that the City will receive \$900,000 from the federal Omnibus Appropriations Funding package for construction of the trail from East Soule Street to I-20. This funding will allow the City to look strategically at how the GOSP grant funding will be used if it is approved. The City is in touch with Congressman Hank Johnson's office to obtain additional information on how the money will be distributed.

- e. **Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** – This committee is formerly known as the Committee on Race. It is in the process of being reconstituted since its Chair, Avis Williams, is no longer on the City Council. Mayor Eady is considering changing the name to the Committee on Untold Stories.

Mayor Eady proposed that certain signs around the City that do not tell the complete story of African Americans in Oxford be removed followed by a facilitated conversation to determine what information will be placed in the City to tell this story in a more accurate, complete, and robust way. The signs he recommends removing are the sign on Whatcoat Street, the sign behind Old Church at Kitty's Cottage, the sign on Wesley Street across from Old Church, and the granite marker at the cemetery. He wants the City to continue to walk with Emory University as they progress with plans for placement of memorials on campus. He would like to bring this proposal for a motion at the next Council meeting and begin the community dialogues by the summer with some professional assistance.

Dean Doug Hicks of Oxford College spoke on the efforts Emory University is making on the Atlanta campus and on the Oxford campus to recognize the contributions of formerly enslaved persons and other persons of color to the building of Emory and the town of Oxford. He provided an update on the twin memorials project that is in progress to place memorials on the Atlanta Emory campus and on the Oxford College campus. He invited the City staff and officials as well as the community to join meetings regarding this project and their efforts in general. Meeting information is available at www.twinmemorials.com.

3. **FY 2021 City of Oxford Audit Presentation by Mauldin & Jenkins** (Attachment B)
Josh Carroll with the audit firm of Mauldin & Jenkins narrated a presentation summarizing the outcome of the audit they completed for Fiscal Year 2021. He advised that the staff of the City of Oxford was cooperative during the audit and provided all documents requested.

The City does have a couple of material weaknesses in internal controls to work on related to segregation of duties and requirements to adopt annual budgets (grant fund budget not adopted for FY 2021). Management recommendations for improvement included escheatment of old outstanding checks, approval of all disbursements, IT cybersecurity, and proper accounting of capital assets.

Mauldin & Jenkins issued a clean opinion for the City of Oxford's financial statements for FY 2021.

4. **Resolution to Amend the Signatures Allowed for Georgia Fund One Account** (Attachment C)

The change is to add Bill Andrew's name to the account.

5. **Resolution to Amend the Signatures Allowed for the MEAG Competitive Trust Account** (Attachment D)

The change is to replace names with positions of the Mayor and City Manager as authorized to communicate City decisions to the Municipal Competitive Trust.

6. **Letter of Request and Memorandum of Agreement to Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) to contract for them to update our Comprehensive Plan for 2023** (Attachment E)

The City Council will vote on approval of a contract with NEGRC for \$3,000 to work with the City on the Comprehensive Plan update for 2023. Bill Andrew added that a steering committee will need to be appointed in conjunction with the update. Mayor Eady asked Jim Windham to represent the City Council on this steering committee and plans to ask the owner of the property occupied by the U.S. Post Office to serve as an economic development representative. Another possible economic development representative is Ray Wilson.

7. **Review of Possible Engineering Projects**

a. **Action Plan for Bicycle Friendly Communities** (Attachment F)

The City Council discussed the items on Bill Andrew's list. He is currently working with Robert Jordan on some of the issues. Signs on the trails for trailhead parking and lighting were also discussed. Several Council members expressed concerns about traffic on streets within the city limits. Mr. Andrew advised those issues should be addressed in the Complete Streets design mentioned in his list.

b. **Coke Street ROW Path – Field Meeting Needed** (Attachment G)

Decisions:

- Trail width – change to 12 feet? Does volume justify?
- Widen road at Watson Street at Coke Street/create sharrow?

Jim Windham requested traffic counts on Coke Street and Watson Street for two weeks on each.

Laura McCanless asked Bill Andrew to send everyone the material he sent to her.

Mayor Eady deferred discussion about cost for twelve-foot trails, legality and appropriateness of golf carts, and other related topics to April work session when the traffic count data will be available.

Bill Andrew will coordinate with Robert Jordan to have field meeting at 10:00 March 30th, meeting at the water tower.

8. **Recommendation from Trees, Parks, and Recreation Board for ReForest ATL, LLC to remove invasive plant species in Asbury Street Park** (Attachment H)

A new bid was received from ReForest ATL, LLC covering the whole park. It was discussed at the Trees, Parks, and Recreation Board meeting. They recommend

approval of a contract with this vendor to perform the work. The City Council will vote on this recommendation at the next Council meeting.

9. Review of FY 2023 Budget Schedule (Attachment I)

Bill Andrew plans to present the first draft of the Capital and Operating budgets at the April work session. The property tax digest may not be available until after the budget is adopted, however, the City Council should have a sense of what direction the millage rate should go for 2022. Mike Ready stated that there was no assessment conducted so property values should not noticeably change, and George Holt mentioned the small impact property taxes have on the overall budget.

10. Discussion on asking Mr. Strickland to pursue documents/actions needed to align the organizational staffing and our Charter

There was no opposition to the changes discussed. Marcia Brooks also added this may be a good opportunity to change when oaths are taken to the last meeting of the year before a person takes office, and to not require an oath every year for incumbent officers.

11. Discussion on City Council returning to conducting meetings at City Hall

George Holt stated that he is not comfortable with in-person meetings but will meet in person if necessary and wear a mask. Mayor Eady stated all people attending should be cognizant of the risks and take appropriate actions to protect others. Some other members expressed support for Mr. Holt and advised they would wear masks even though they are optional based on CDC guidelines. The City Council is targeting for holding the April regular session in person.

Mike Ready asked if the City Council made a formal resolution to hold remote meetings. Other members did not think that had occurred. Mr. Ready recommended that this matter be researched and added to the agenda if action is needed.

12. Other Business

None.

13. Work Session Meeting Review

- a. Motion to remove signs from City property in April meeting
- b. Vote to adopt resolutions for Georgia Fund 1 and MEAG Competitive Trust in April meeting
- c. Vote to approve contract with NEGRC for work on 2023 Comprehensive Plan in April meeting
- d. Meet on March 30, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the water tower on Coke Street to look at the Coke Street ROW path
- e. Vote on the contract for removal of invasive plant species at Asbury Street Park in April meeting
- f. Budget discussion at April work session
- g. Contact David Strickland to begin work on revision of charter and ordinances
- h. Meet in person for April 4th regular session

14. Executive Session

None.

15. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Eady at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer