



**MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
WORK SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2023 – 6:30 PM
CITY HALL**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

David Eady - Mayor
George Holt – Councilmember
Jim Windham – Councilmember
Laura McCanless – Councilmember
Mike Ready – Councilmember
Erik Oliver – Councilmember

STAFF PRESENT:

Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Bill Andrew – City Manager
Mark Anglin – Police Chief

ELECTED OFFICIALS NOT PRESENT:

Jeff Wearing – Councilmember

OTHERS PRESENT: Mike Hopkins (NCWSA), Mike Jewell (Covington Natural Gas), Mike McQuaide

Agenda (Attachment A)

1. Mayor's Announcements

2. Committee Reports

- a. **Trees, Parks, and Recreation Board** – Mike Ready and Laura McCanless provided the report. They discussed a grant to apply for that provides trees to cities. Mayor Eady reiterated his previous request for a recommendation of a strategic tree management plan from the Board that the City Council will approve.
- b. **Planning Commission** – Recommendations of the Planning Commission for ordinance revisions are included on the agenda.
- c. **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)** – Mike Ready provided the report.
- d. **Sustainability Committee** – Mike McQuaide provided the report.

3. Review of the City of Covington Natural Gas Easement Request (Attachment B)
Mike Jewell, Director of City of Covington Natural Gas spoke of the need for an extension of their easement from the City of Oxford to extend their gas line to Keegan Court in the industrial park area of Covington. The current easement is located near

Oxford College and runs across I-20. They wish to install a 4" steel pipeline across property within the City of Oxford to extend the line. They are flexible regarding the exact placement of the pipeline to accommodate plans for bike/ped paths.

Extension of the pipeline will provide the ability to back feed natural gas to industrial customers in the area that currently have no fallback supply of natural gas if the existing pipeline is damaged. They plan to tunnel under the creek, and they do not anticipate a significant loss of trees. Their policy is to plant a new tree for every tree lost. They plan to use an old roadbed for part of the pipeline, which does not have trees in it. They do not have a specific time frame and are willing to work with the City on any tree counts or other studies needed.

4. **Partnership with Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority (NCWSA) for Sanitary Sewer Flow Study on the Turkey Creek Basin** (Attachment C)

Mike Hopkins, Executive Director of NCWSA, spoke to the City Council of the need for a flow study on the Turkey Creek basin. They are planning to upgrade the sewer line that supplies the City of Oxford. They are requesting that the City share about 20-25% of the \$84,200 cost of the study proposed by Carter & Sloope. The purpose of the study is to get realistic flow data because capacity estimates are based on outdated data. The agreements with their various customers have also expired, and the expired agreement with the City of Oxford does not specify a capacity amount.

Mayor Eady spoke of the need to have an accurate understanding of the City's capacity needs given recent inquiries about development in the City's service areas.

Mr. Hopkins wants to conduct the study this winter and anticipates putting replacement of the line out for bids late next year.

The City Council will vote on sharing in the cost of the study at the September regular session. Mayor Eady believes that contributing 25% of the cost is fair. Mr. Hopkins advised he would work with the City on a MOA regarding the cost-sharing arrangements.

5. **BS&A Software Change Order** (Attachment D)

The contract with BS&A did not include their Work Order module. The included modules address work orders for utility accounts and importing current data into the new system. The change order is to add the work order module.

Laura McCanless expressed concerns about acceptance of the work order module by the Maintenance staff. She does not want to spend money on something that will not be used. George Holt agreed with Ms. McCanless' assessment. Ms. McCanless also asked if Jody Reid is being included in the discussions.

Marcia Brooks stated that the City does plan to include Mr. Reid in training. She also pointed out that they will need to learn the system for utility work orders whether or not the additional module is purchased.

Mayor Eady stated that a budget amendment will be needed if the additional module is purchased. The City Council discussed options for equipment and processes related to work orders.

Jim Windham asked if the module would be available for the same price at a later date. He is concerned about making decisions about how the process will work without Mr. Reid seeing the module.

6. **New Audit Proposals from Mauldin & Jenkins and Rushton & Co.** (Attachment E)
Mayor Eady stated that the City's current auditor, Mauldin & Jenkins, has doubled their price in a new contract proposal. Bill Andrew advised that he contacted the other two firms that provided bids when the City let its RFP in 2021. Bates Carter advised they could not fit the City into its schedule this year. Rushton & Co. LLC advised they would be able to start an audit for FY 2023 around mid-October. They cannot guarantee it will be completed by December 31, 2023. Although this is a requirement under State law, an extension can be requested from the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts.

The City Councilmembers were in favor of accepting Rushton's bid, which is less than Mauldin & Jenkins. This decision will be ratified at the September regular session meeting.

7. **2024 Supplemental and Reserve Capacity Needs for Electric Utility** (Attachment F)
The City of Oxford falls short of its capacity needs each year. MEAG has calculated how much additional capacity the City of Oxford needs to purchase for supplemental and reserve capacity for FY 2024. They have the ability to negotiate purchase of this additional capacity on behalf of the City. The decision to be made is whether the City wants MEAG to negotiate these purchases on behalf of the City. Mayor Eady noted that in future years as the two solar projects come online, they should help reduce the amount of shortfall the City experiences each year. The vote to allow MEAG to broker the 2024 purchases will be taken at the September regular session meeting.

8. **City of Oxford Media Productions Regulation**
Laura McCanless brought up that the draft document contains several typographical errors that need to be addressed before the draft is finalized.

9. **City of Oxford Short-Term Rental Regulation**
Erik Oliver asked for clarifications on the time limitations in the proposed regulation. He also questioned the requirement for insurance by renters. Specifically, he stated that companies such as Airbnb already offer insurance. Jim Windham asked if housing swaps would be included in this regulation.

10. **City of Oxford Riparian Buffer Amendment**
Laura McCanless stated that the revised version she sent out is what needs to be reviewed. It is only changing the amount of buffer in an existing ordinance. Erik Oliver asked how this ordinance would impact his property.

Mayor Eady stated that the intention is not to penalize current landowners as much as to stop future degradation of areas.

Bill Andrew stated that a definitive map to accompany the ordinance is not needed. A developer would be responsible for proving the existence or non-existence of a creek.

Mike McQuaide stated that he was looking for a definitive map to show that nonconforming property owners, such as Mr. Oliver, met the original 25-foot requirements.

Mr. Oliver cautioned against being so specific that landscaping and building ponds would not be allowed.

11. Other Business

- Bill Andrew provided information on a situation regarding overbilling for Electric service at Oxford College. Oxford College has agreed to allow the City of Oxford to pay the money back in two payments. The first payment can be made from the Electric fund in FY 2024, and a budget amendment will be needed.
- Erik Oliver asked who is responsible for transferring the gas bill for Oxford Church to the City. Mayor Eady advised him to coordinate with Mr. Andrew.
- Marcia Brooks stated that she will be bringing budget amendments to the City Council because of several projection changes in the Electric fund.
- Erik Oliver stated that he would like to see sign clutter and blighted properties addressed. He would like to discuss lists of fixes to be addressed in each work session by staff.
- Laura McCanless stated that she was advised that Oxford College over-enrolled again, and they expect that practice to continue in the future.
- Laura McCanless asked about the frequency of mowing the utility cut along the Oxford side of Dried Indian Creek. She does not believe it has been mowed for quite a long time. Mayor Eady stated that it has gotten too tall to mow without the new equipment the City plans to buy.
- Jim Windham thanked Bill Andrew for sending out the video concerning non-taxable properties in Newton County. The City Councilmembers discussed how Oxford College could be held accountable for properties that should be taxed. Bill Andrew advised that one way to deal with this issue is to negotiate a Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes agreement with Oxford College.

12. Work Session Meeting Review

13. Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Eady at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Brooks

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcia Brooks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

City Clerk/Treasurer