



**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023 – 7:00 PM
CITY HALL**

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

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

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

1. The meeting was called to order by the Honorable David S. Eady, Mayor.
2. **Jim Windham made a motion to amend the agenda for the April 3, 2023 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting to add an item to discuss the Town Center development. George Holt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).** (Attachment A)
3. **Jim Windham made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda for April 3, 2023. George Holt seconded the motion.**

Discussion: Laura McCanless noted a correction in the Regular Session minutes for March 6, 2023. The vendor in Item #7 should read Benise-Dowling. This correction will be made in the final version of the minutes.

The motion was approved unanimously (7/0). (Attachment B)

4. **Mayor's Report**

- a. Mayor Eady reported that the RFP for electric service proposals for Archer Aviation was awarded to the City of Covington. Discussions will continue concerning providing the water and sewer services to Archer Aviation. Bill Andrew stated a larger water line may be required for fire services which could be expensive. He also indicated that the regional DRI from Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) states that the City of Covington plans to make road improvements to Williams Road and City Pond Road but does not mention any improvements to East Soule Street within the city limits of Oxford. Mayor Eady stated that now

is the time to seek funding to do full-depth reclamation on East Soule Street to improve the roadbed.

Laura McCanless stated that the City of Oxford can install speed tables to discourage an increase in traffic volume of heavy vehicles.

Mayor Eady also stated that there is some question whether the City currently has enough sewer capacity to support Archer Aviation. If it is inadequate, the City of Oxford would have to buy additional capacity from the City of Covington. The cost of the additional capacity would be passed on to Archer.

Jeff Wearing expressed concerns about Archer Aviation dumping hazardous materials into the sewer system.

Bill Andrew and Mayor Eady will be submitting a response to the DRI with Oxford's concerns.

Archer does plan to hold a town hall event sometime in April.

5. **Citizen Concerns**

Laura McCanless suggested that the groundskeepers can mow the areas in front of City Hall that had been mulched in the past. The mulch has disappeared and been replaced by healthy turf grass.

6. **Resolution Implementing new Water and Sewer Rates** (Attachment C)

Erik Oliver made a motion to approve the new water and sewer rates as presented, effective for the FY 2024 fiscal year (July 1, 2023). Laura McCanless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

7. **Atkins Engineering Task Orders for Paving Bid and Supervision of Paving** (Attachment D)

Erik Oliver made a motion to approve the task orders. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

8. **Jehovah's Witnesses Use of Asbury Street Park** (Attachment E)

City Attorney David Strickland advised that this group is entitled to the same 1st Amendment rights of free speech as anyone else. Chief Mark Anglin expressed concerns about enforcement of any limitations placed on them while displaying their kiosk. Mr. Strickland advised enforcement would be of their actions, such as littering, harassment, obstruction of park, etc., not for displaying their kiosk or for any free speech issues.

Erik Oliver requested that the group be asked not to leave their kiosk unattended when displaying it in the park.

Mayor Eady clarified that the group is not requesting a permit and the City is not issuing a permit for anything. They should be cited if they violate any of the City ordinances.

Jim Windham recommended that the City not specify where they can display their kiosk as long as they do not interfere with anyone's quiet enjoyment of the park.

9. **Invoices** (Attachment E)

Jim Windham asked about the status of the garbage and recycling pickup services contract. Bill Andrew stated that a request for a price increase was received recently from Latham Sanitation. Laura McCanless asked about the rationale for contracting out this service since she was not on the City Council when the decision was made. Mayor Eady stated that the City employed three people full time and had to maintain a garbage truck, and the contract model saved a lot of money.

Jim Windham asked if a quick study could be conducted to compare the cost to bring the service back in house to continuing the contract model.

10. **Town Center Development**

The City Councilmembers shared their thoughts about the town center development proposed by the DDA. Oxford College would be the anchor tenant and spaces for other companies would be available for lease. Under the proposed plan, the developer would own the building and the DDA would execute a ground lease with the developer.

Mike Ready stated that the building planned will be about 10,000-12,000 feet, with about 7,500 of it already committed.

Erik Oliver expressed concerns about the majority of the building not serving the City.

Jim Windham stated that the City would be losing the rental income it currently receives from the building of about \$33,000 per year. He wants an economic study because he does not believe the taxes and utility revenues the City will receive will make up for that loss. The citizens will be paying a lot for this building.

Erik Oliver stated his support for the overall plan and moving forward, but stated he does wish the City would retain ownership of the building.

Jim Windham asked who will pay for the Whatcoat Street improvements and deconstruction of the current facility. Mike Ready stated the DDA is only asking for the City to pay for the Whatcoat Street improvements.

George Holt stated he thought the initial discussion involved ownership of the building by the DDA. The upfront money spent by the DDA would be a loan that would be paid back by the developer.

Mayor Eady stated that if the DDA owns the building they will have to fund the design, engineering and construction of the building. The current assumption is the developer will put up those costs.

Jeff Wearing stated the City should not be in the real estate business, and therefore should not own the new building.

Bill Andrew informed the City Council that a developer has expressed interest in developing the site as a brew pub. This would require an ordinance change to allow alcohol in Oxford, which could be made by the City Council through the home rule statute of Georgia. Mike Ready stated that two other developers have also expressed interest.

Mayor Eady stated the City does not have the authority to borrow enough money to build the building. The DDA has legal authority but would have trouble obtaining a loan. They have chosen not to be in the real estate business and have a third-party finance the construction.

Mr. Windham stated the DDA was not established to contract with a third-party for construction. He believes Oxford College will eventually own the building.

Mr. Wearing expressed his support for moving forward with the DDA's proposal. He believes the DDA has done what they were charged with doing and the City Council should let them do it.

11. **Executive Session**

Jim Windham made a motion to convene Executive Session at 8:41 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Jim Windham made a motion to exit the Executive Session at 8:55 p.m. Laura McCanless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

12. Other Business

Laura McCanless made a motion to approve a non-competitive promotion for Matt Brown to the position of Assistant Supervisor of Public Works. Jeff Wearing seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

13. **Adjourn**

Jim Windham made a motion to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7/0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer