



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE OXFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING
Oxford Mayor and Council Regular Meeting
Monday, August 1, 2022 – 7:00 PM
Oxford City Hall

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

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

APPOINTED/STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Andrew – City Manager
Marcia Brooks – City Clerk/Treasurer
Mark Anglin – Police Chief
C. David Strickland – City Attorney

ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:

Jeff Wearing – Councilmember

OTHERS PRESENT: None

1. Call to order: Hon. David S. Eady, Mayor

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. **Agenda Adoption** (Attachment A)

Motion to adopt the agenda for the August 1, 2022 Mayor and Council Regular Meeting – Jim Windham

Second – Laura McCanless

Approved unanimously 6/0

4. **Consent Agenda** (Attachment B)

- a. Minutes of the Work Session June 22, 2022
- b. Minutes of the Special Called Council Meeting June 24, 2022
- c. Minutes of the Regular Session Council Meeting July 11, 2022
- d. Minutes of the Public Hearing 9:00 a.m. on July 18, 2022
- e. Minutes of the Public Hearing 6:00 p.m. on July 18, 2022
- f. Minutes of the Special Called Council Meeting July 18, 2022
- g. Minutes of the Work Session July 18, 2022

Motion by Jim Windham to amend June 22, 2022 Work Session minutes to reflect that Jim Windham was told someone with the Newton County Board of Commissioners would take the Oxford resolution forward once it was passed.

Second – Laura McCanless

Motion to accept Consent Agenda with amended minutes for June 22, 2022 Work Session – Mike Ready

Second – Lynn Bohanan

Approved unanimously 6/0

5. Mayor's Announcements

It is his understanding that the Newton County Board of Commissioners will be voting this evening on the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the 2023 SPLOST referendum.

The IGA is for a six-year SPLOST and splits the projected amount of \$108 million with 78% going to Newton County and 22% going to the cities of Newton County distributed according to their population percentages. Any excess collections will be allocated using the same formulas. The final agreement is due to the State by August 4, 2022.

6. Citizen Concerns

Laura McCanless shared a concern about vehicles racing at the intersection of Williams Road and City Pond Road which was passed on to Covington Police by Chief Anglin.

7. Approval of MOA with Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) for Grant Application Preparation

(Attachment C)

A motion to approve the MOA was made by Jim Windham

Second – Laura McCanless

Discussion:

Laura McCanless advised she thought the city's recent purchase of land could be included in the city's match. Mayor Eady advised that the land purchase was outside the period allowed for considering it as eligible for the match portion, but it is still an important point to bring up in the application.

Jim Windham asked if there is still discussion about the DDA giving land back to the city in relation to this grant. Laura McCanless stated such a land exchange would be beneficial for the grant application because it would demonstrate a community partnership. She advised the DDA had discussed it and the only stipulation they had was that it should be a natural entry point for the trail accessible to the downtown district. Mayor Eady advised it could be placed on the August work session agenda and on the DDA August meeting agenda.

The motion was approved unanimously (6/0).

8. Consideration of Holding the FY 2023 City Millage to be the Same as the FY 2022 Rate (Attachment D)

The proposed millage rate for 2022 is 5.444, which is the same millage rate imposed last year. While the millage rate is not being increased, this is considered a tax increase by State law because of an increase in the valuation of city property.

**A motion to set the 2022 millage rate at 5.444 was made by Mike Ready
Second – Laura McCanless**

Discussion:

Jim Windham asked what the effect would be of not increasing the tax. Mayor Eady stated that this impact is shown on the materials published in the newspaper. It is the amount of the tax increase. Mr. Windham asked what percent of the city's revenue property tax comprises. Mayor Eady stated estimated property tax revenue as a percentage of total revenue for the General Fund for FY 2023 is about 10%. Mr. Windham asked what the issue is with transferring money from Enterprise funds to General funds. Mayor Eady stated part of it is transparency and accuracy in terms of paying for the services of maintaining the city. If revenue is not generated through property taxes, it will have to be generated through utility bills.

Mr. Windham stated that homeowners can take steps to control their costs for utility payments, but they cannot control what they pay for taxes. He is not comfortable with requiring homeowners to pay higher property taxes after several years of not increasing property taxes or utility rates and taking steps during the COVID-19 pandemic to help residents.

Mayor Eady stated that costs in the general fund to run the city are increasing and if the increased costs are not covered by property taxes, they will have to be covered by utility rate increases. His intention is to lower utility rate costs. The electric rate structure is based on the city needing a portion of those payments to cover general fund expenditures, and that has not been required for the last three years.

Mr. Windham stated that he always wants to be able to point to how the money that is spent by the City Council helps the constituents.

Laura McCanless stated that it is also important to point out to constituents that over 29% of their tax payment goes to the county and to schools. Oxford is not getting much of the full tax pie in Newton County.

The motion carried (4/2). Jim Windham and George Holt voted nay.

9. Invoices (Attachment E)

A clarification was made about the tree trimming costs listed being part of the annual tree trimming that is planned around the city.

10. Executive Session

Jim Windham made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:46 p.m. to discuss real estate matters. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (6/0).

Jim Windham made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. Mike Ready seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (6/0).

13. Adjourn 8:29 p.m.

Motion – George Holt

Second – Jim Windham

Approved unanimously 6/0

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Marcia Brooks
City Clerk/Treasurer