CITY OF OGLETHORPE

OGLETHORPE CITY HALL

115 CHATHAM STREET

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 – 6:00PM

Call to order: Mayor Hill 6:00PM

Department Head Reports:

1. City Clerk, Melissa Jones – report emailed to council prior to meeting.
2. Police Dept – Cindy Kleckley / Interim Chief Finch – Update on Macon County Jail, I was told they were bringing in contractors to work on the jail the last time I spoke here. I have since found out from David Parrott that the county manager is some of that work be done by David and Shawn (Building Inspector Office). He sent them down to Dougherty County to teach them how to fix locks. According to David, he sent them a bill and I think the locks were too much. To make a long story short, pretty much ain’t no work being done over there. According to David, all of the toilets are not working and the fire alarm system is not working, and they don’t have the locks. Probably going to have to meet with the county manager again because I was under the impression that they were going to bring in different people to get the work done quickly. Another thing they won’t release any money to fix it, Mr. Parrott said he gave them a price for the locks and they said that was too much. Now Asbury Road – right now we got three poles up. Asbury will be under 24- hour video camera surveillance. This is not going to cost the city of Oglethorpe one penny. After we had that last shooting in Oglethorpe, me and Richard had a little talk and he got the Housing Authority to purchase the 24- camera system. The next thing I want to talk to you about is the Active Shooter Drill. I been working with the school system. In the last 2 ½ months we have been working on the active shooter plans for all three schools and we sent it to the state along with a drill on October 1. The shooting that we had in Montezuma on Barnard St last month and the person came to Asbury Rd., we were able to shut down the school and use that as a drill for the school system. We found some pluses and minuses with that incident. All in all, it was a success. It determined that everybody did what they were supposed to do except for the adults. Janitors and everyone in there talking. Other than that, it was a good drill, so we sent that into the state. The first of next year we will do another drill. The schools here in Macon County, when they were built, they weren’t built for what’s going on today. All of those classrooms have an outside door. We have looked at some shades that are bullet-proof and the school is in the process of looking at that. Other issues that have happened in Oglethorpe was a big fight up in the trailer park. Officer Whitehead did a great job investigating that. They was going to take criminal warrants on them, but I told them to resend the warrants and put them in our municipal court because those charges were misdemeanor charges and if they were to went to, we don’t have a probate court here in Macon County, so basically the warrants would have been dropped. Our superior court mainly handles felony cases, so the City of Oglethorpe would benefit from that. So those cases have been sent to our municipal court. Another problem we have is Dollar General. The problem is shoplifting because the employees are not up front. So, when they realize it, they will call us and show us the camera with the picture and we go locate the person and charge them in municipal court. But the problem is no one is up front, people come in, and they just walking out with stuff. I brought you a copy of the Faith in Blue information. It’s a program to bring together law enforcement officers and local clergy together on how we can improve our community. (copy attached). From October 5-9 and on the 5th we are going to have local preachers to come down to the park in Montezuma. I talked with a minister this morning and let him know that we have no problem with our ministers riding with our officers to see what’s going on in our community. A lot of times, when things happen, ministers aren’t sure of what went on or wasn’t given the correct information. We will be ready for the Fall Festival in the Park on the 31st and we have officers for that. Also, on the 29th, the recreation dept will have a Trunk a Treat. I don’t recommend doing a door to door trick or treat these days. I would much prefer having a centralized area. The next thing is I have Officer Cruthird is now riding by himself. I want to highlight Officer Whitehead. We had a graduation this past Saturday down in Albany. There were 42 graduates and 22 were from Macon County. A lot of them were students of DF Douglas High. What we learned was a lot of these students quit school because they didn’t want to change over to Macon Co High School. But what I wanted to say is that Albany State was so impressed with the program that they told us that they wanted graduation on their campus. The auditorium was full. The vice-president of the college even awarded out $500 scholarships. What we did was with some of the monies that we got on our thing, I gifted a scholarship on behalf Montezuma and Oglethorpe for $1000.00. Albany State became the first historical black college to ever host something like that. We are proud of that. Finally, I want to talk about Officer Whitehead. Two weeks ago he was awarded as one of the Top Traffic Officers in Middle Georgia. Of all the agencies in Middle Georgia, only 7 agencies were invited to this dinner. I want to personally thank Officer Whitehead. Also, I talked with Jeff about some concerns. The concern is Anna Drive is because of what we have out there is not secure. I feel like somebody might be driving drunk and drive right in that hole. So, he is going to get some secure barricades up there. My idea was to drop some dirt down in there, but he gave me some good news on that today so we are good. CM Cross – What about the rest of the Flock Cameras? Chief Finch – I talked to the guy and they are still waiting on DOT. 40% of the cameras are already installed. They are going to extend our contract out because of this. On a side note, the shooting that was on Barnard St in Montezuma last month, those are some really bad guys and that one will be charged as an adult. Other parts of that case have been sent to the GBI to investigate. I’m just going to say this, if it wasn’t for the Flock Camera’s we wouldn’t have a clue of what/who were involved. Officer Whitehead – Fort Valley spoke very highly of the work that we have been doing over here. The camera system is really easy to use and when we get the rest of them in, it will help cover the whole city. We can tap into other cities that also have those cameras when looking for a particular vehicle and other cities can call us when needed to check our cameras for them. CM Harrison – I have a question about the graduation, how many were from Oglethorpe? Chief Finch – I will get that information for you. CM Harrison – It was said that a lot of the records for DF Douglas students were hard to get because it was so labor intensive. No computers back then, just a lot of boxes. So shout out to one of the secretaries that took it upon herself to dig through those boxes and find the transcripts so that they could figure out what credits were needed to graduate. I think that’s awesome. Chief Finch – Because of what we have done with that program and our school system, we have increased the education level of this community. This has made us an area where jobs will come to Macon County. They have approved $5.1 billion dollars to make the Montezuma Airport a real airport. CM Harrison – That program started in Oglethorpe so we can be very proud of that.
3. Librarian, Glenda Rigby – report to be emailed at first of the month
4. Water/Sewer/Streets, HWR Jeff Harrison – I mainly have what Mr. Ingram is going to talk about. We did fix the sidewalk up here at Dew Drop and it’s done. Had 4-5 service lines fixed. Then of course getting Anna Drive done and reports on the Waste Water Plant Project. I’m ready to get that done.
5. Fire Department – report emailed monthly – Chief Childs (out sick).

Council/Committee Reports:

1. Mayor Hill – nothing to add
2. Human Resources/Finance – CM Coogle (absent)
3. Public Safety – CM Cross – The AED has been received. I finished the clean up grant that included a couple of extra big dumpsters to be brought in, a camera system to go over the dumpster at the waste water plant with a DVR so we can rewind and see it, signage stating what can be dumped, who can dump, etc. Also, flyers. I incorporated a coloring contest for the school age kids at the elementary. We can do coloring sheets and ribbons and prizes. Just tried to make it last the whole month of March. We will see if we get it or not. CM Harrison – Did they say when they would announce the winners? CM Cross – Sometime the middle of next month. They are giving priority to communities with less than 2500 people, which we fall into. I went ahead and made sure to talk about the run-off into the Flint River from the pollution and blight, etc. Tried to play that up. When I did the numbers, like 78% of our households are either senior citizens or single parent homes, so I played on those as well as the poverty. CM Harrison – I wonder if we can fold this into our We Love Oglethorpe Week celebration? CM Cross – Well I did it for the whole month of March. CM Harrison – oh March, ok. CM Cross – They have to be expensed before the month of April, so that was as far as I could push it out. I know that I won’t be on council at that time, but I would like to come back and help with it since I wrote the grant if you need help with it. If we get it. I did posters, etc. You had to expense the entire $5000.00 or you would only get $2500. CM Harrison – That’s awesome. Good job.
4. Utilities/Streets/Cemetery – CM Harrison – Mine was with the Anna Drive information.
5. Planning & Recreation – n/a

New Business:

1) Anna Drive Update – Tim Ingram – Monday we received a letter from GDOT and they are going to fund $275,695.00 towards the Anna Drive repair. Plans and specifications are laying in there on the desk (Mayor’s Office). Talked with Randy Spillers (DOT District State Aide Coordinator) today. I actually forwarded her the email that Melissa had sent to me from DOT. She thinks in 2-3 weeks you will have paperwork to sign accepting the money. CM CROSS – and how much are you thinking? Is it still the $400K and change? Tim – Some of that depends on how you bid what you bid. If we can get some folks interested in it. Hopefully we can find some precast – which is like a disaster, and we feel like that would be cheaper. Pouring the concrete and rerouting to get water off of it, it’s just a little bit more of an ordeal. If we can precast it, 3-4 days and be done with it. Jeff – I talked to a contractor and he said that if they had to pour in place, we are looking at 8 weeks. He said if we could precast it, we would probably be done in a week. Tim – yes, the precast would be in like 6ft sections. Then you run the steel wall, pour the gravel and dirt and you’re done. Usually you can turn one in a week without any problem. We do have water leaks. You have to call in like Gas Light Co. CM Harrison – How many people does this serve? Jeff – (can’t understand). Tim – We will re-route it also. You will be able to cut it off and cut it right back on. Jeff – It will be like we didn’t even lose water. CM Harrison – Oh, ok. I was worried about 8 weeks without people having water. Jeff – No. There will be no interruption of service at all. CM Harrison – I don’t know if this is the forum, but I know we are being granted $275K, but what about Chase? How much would they be responsible for? Jeff – That’s going to be a question for your attorney. That’s going to be a suit that the city is going to bring against Chase Farms. That’s a legal deal there. If he informs you, yes, we need to do it, then that’s going to be on your city attorney and you all to have that discussion. CM Mahone – With that repair, how much of the road outside of the area where the damage is out can be reconstructed as far as paving? Jeff – Clifton Bradley ties into Anna Drive and there’s some messed-up sections in there, too. Tim – Will probably need to wait and see how much money comes in for the project. CM Harrison – yes. Jeff – We do have some LMIG or T-Splost money and I can call Shephard Paving to have them come in to handle that pretty easy. If you want to get the whole road paved, that’s a whole project. CM Cross – Has anyone even heard from the person that caused this? Jeff – I’ve heard that when they caused that they through the excavator on the trailer and left. So obviously they didn’t have insurance or knew they made a mistake, or something. Tim – The local insurance for Chase Farms sent the contractor’s insurance to Melissa today. Jeff – So they have insurance. CM Harrison – I want to say that Melissa said Chase acknowledged they messed up. Jeff – They told me out here one day that by the time the water quit draining, that tractor was gone off the site. CM Cross – Melissa can you inform all of us of the information you’ve received on Chase please? Jeff – I’m pretty sure they didn’t mean to do that, but that’s why you carry insurance. Tim – Plans and specs for the waste water plant are on the desk out there. We had run into a snag with the state. We sent a report in in July regarding funding, an Environmental Information Document, they haven’t touched it yet. They had promised we would have something in a month, but that is got the GEFA process stopped right this minute. We’ve notified the local EPD office that we are waiting on that as well. The Waste Water side of EPD in Atlanta is having some real problems right now. They have for two or three months. CM Harrison – Are we going to get dinged because of that? Tim- I do not know, but we are being proactive and making sure that the local office knows what is going on. Jeff – At least there’s a paper trail. We did this here and they didn’t respond. So when it gets down to the deadline and they go to hollering, we can show that we did our stuff on time and they were holding us up. Tim – It’s not a big secret about them having problems in Atlanta. They just don’t have people to process. These reports are required and they don’t have anyone to check them. When you don’t have but three people, you’re not going to turn stuff around. Jeff – I would all of you to look at the plans and if you have questions, please ask us. He’s designed it for longevity. It’s a very simple system to run. Not a lot of area for breakdown in the future. We will be glad to walk you through it. It will stand over the test of time. CM Harrison – Can you do a real walk through of what is what? Tim – Your pond originally built is only about 5 foot deep. It operates at 3.5ft – 4.5ft now. Typically, ponds are 10ft deep. CM Cross – So how about the mats? Did the chemicals work on the mats? Jeff – The mats in the big pond, they are going to be gone. The only thing that will have mats on it is will be the small pond in the back. We were able to do clear aeration, so if ya’ll have a lot of stuff on the service, it had a lot of issues. What we are going with now is blowers (like big air compressors) and it will force air through and there are diffusers in the water. They let the air bubbles come up and you have better aeration in your water. You have to have the oxygen. It will help knock down the algae. It helps with the bacteria and helps your pond water be more efficient. CM Harrison – And the algaecide is working? Jeff – It did. Now we have two places we can put algaecide in. The only time we will have to do that is Dec – Jan. It will kill it when it starts growing and with the clear aeration, it should good to go through the year. The other thing is you have a very high ammonia content here, and I believe it is from the prison with their cleaning supplies because Marshallville’s ammonia reading is .5 and here they are 17.5. The only thing that is different is the prison. When you thinking about all of the stripping of the floors, cleaning and all that goes on all the time, that’s cleaning supplies going down the sewer system. Tim – The City of Wrightsville has the same problem. Jeff – We tested the inflow and it was 16.9 and once it gets to the plant it’s 17.5 moving out of the plant. With the clear aeration, you try to return the ammonia into a gas and release into the atmosphere. CM Harrison – Isn’t International Paper… Jeff – No, they have their own sewer plant. I do believe it’s the prison. In Roberta when school starts each year, it jumps up. Then drops right back down when they’re out. But the clear aeration should clear up this issue. The blowers will use a lot of power is the only issue. CM Cross- Anyway we could tie it to solar? Jeff – I don’t even know if solar would be enough to push it. Where would you even put a solar power pad? CM Cross – I was thinking maybe on top of that metal building? Jeff – It would need a lot more power voltage. These are about 7ft tall and 6ft long. They are made for big loads. They have a 12” pipe coming out of them. What I am going to do in the winter time, I’ll be able to run at 150hp. CM Cross – So preparing the budget, do you think the power bill is going to double, triple? Tim – We talked to Melissa last week and told her to add about another $9K monthly to the budget. CM Cross – Just wondering if it might be logical to look into solar to see if we might could get a grant? Everything is going green right now. Might be something to look at for savings. Jeff – the way it’s designed right now we have to have 400 hp for 750K gallons a day which is what you are currently permitted for. You have to design your plant to hold capacity. We only run 280K – 300K gallons per day. So, half that. Look at the numbers. We can set the timers to run also. On 6hrs and Off 6 hrs. So we just have to play with it some and dial it in to help with cost savings also on power. CM Cross – I’ll go on Go Green and see what I can find. CM Harrison – Yes, definitely worth looking into. Jeff – yes, but this was the only way to get rid of the mats. Jeff – They’re not giving us an option. CM Harrison – Well they can’t penalize us for what they caused (not getting back to us on the paperwork sent in in July) I wouldn’t think. Jeff – They can. They gave us 4 years to take care of this. CM Cross – We can beg for mercy… that’s all we can do. Jeff – yes, that’s all we can do. CM Harrison – May Road? Tim – We did probably about (can’t understand). We’ve been doing everything we can to get the treatment plant project going so we can get bids. (couldn’t understand). CM Harrison – Do you think that will be done this year? We’ve been promising our people and need to know what to tell them. Tim – If we have money, then yes. Jeff – We should have it in T-Splost. Tim- then I think we’ll be close. We also had to wait on the DOT to come in due to the storms that had come in. CM Harrison – I sent four requests to our state rep so yall be sure to tell Patty Bentley thank you. I’m also a little concerned about this power bill, but we have to do it so. Jeff – you already have horse power out there, so I doubt you see that much of an increase. I just wanted to give you the heads up so you wouldn’t be shocked. We are going to try and get it down. CM Harrison – Get it down to an exact science. I still fill like it’s a win. Thank you all.

Old Business:

1) Grand Re-opening of police dept with Veteran’s Day Celebration – CM Cross/CM Harrison – Saturday November 11, 2023 at 11:00AM. CM Cross – I was wondering if we could do it inside? CM Harrison – Ok.

CM Cross – That way rain or shine we would be good and we could set up some type of refreshments in there. We could use the extra money left from last year to have some really nice refreshments. CM Harrison – I’m good with that. CM Cross – And we could advertise as the grand re-opening as well as the Veteran’s Day celebration. Anything else Michael that you think we could draw on? CM Mahone – We got to get the movement on the gym as far as that’s why I’m trying to catch Melissa to get the card to go get those doors and everything. Hitting those key things that Chief Childs pointed out. Once we get the doors opening, kind of like pause right there because the gym is also part of the evacuation for the schools. So, then the county can kind of play a part into it far as it’s part of that plan they have in regards to the active shooter event. Just got to get it to a point to where we are able to pull resources from them as they would have more money to pour into it to add a little bit more to it for updates. CM Cross – The other question that I had, which I was going to ask Melissa, is the old Ag Building (AA Building) what’s being done with it? CM Harrison – I wish that could be like a community space. CM Cross – I wonder what kind of shape it’s in, that we might could do some type of …. CM Mahone – Somebody owns that there. CM Harrison – No, the city owns that building. CM Mahone – You talking about that building in the back, yeah somebody owns that. Somebody got that now. You see them doing different things out there. CM Cross – Somebody bought that? CM Mahone – Yes. I’ve seen them there. That was purchased some years ago. CM Cross – Do you remember that Bruce? Mayor Hill – I do not. I remember the old Ag Building. CM Harrison – I thought we owned that (the city). CM Mahone – Technology part was out there. Somebody was out there doing something. CM Cross – Melissa can you inquire on whether we still own that piece of property or not? I was just wondering why we weren’t utilizing that, could be because we don’t own it. And if we don’t own it, we’ve been keeping the grass cut around it and everything. We need to look at that. We have play equipment right up against that building. CM Harrison – I swear I thought we still owned it because Joe was scheduled to take me to see that building right before he passed. So, I don’t know about that. CM Cross – Let’s look into that because I could see some good possibilities for that building. Melissa did say also that she’s got the paperwork for the first rental for using the outside space. I wanted to ask her about where we’re out on getting the signs and stuff because I would like them up before the 11th as well. I really want to make sure that we have the utilities and water locked down. Someone in the audience asking about street signs being replaced. CM Cross – I believe they have taken care of those. Captain Hill do you know of any street signs that need to be replaced? Not to my knowledge, but I will double-check. CM Cross – I know that I reported one between Cuyler and Randolph and they immediately replaced it. It was faded and somebody sent me a picture advising their daughter had just run that stop sign because it was so faded that she couldn’t see it. CM Harrison – But to go back to the grand opening, I have secured the High School Color Guard, but Mike just gave me a great idea that he’s part of the color guard for the state. CM Mahone – But we going to roll with that there. Let’s keep that because it’s local and they look forward to it. I can still bring the state. Let’s stick with the school because they brought the other group with them also. CM Harrison – The dance team. They haven’t confirmed yet. Ms. Oglesby is checking their calendar. I also have a female Veteran decorated officer to come talk about the importance in history of females serving and I asked another keynote speaker and I don’t want to say yet as they have not confirmed. I have about half of the food truck vendors coming, I will have the graphic done by our next meeting. I want to give certificates of course, but also trying to secure a donation of flags so every veteran can leave with a flag. I think that in the background we are doing the work. We’ve received the IP donation and I’m working with a couple of other businesses for donations as well to have that cushion there. CM Mahone – Flags meaning pole flags or folded flags? We need to get a count.

CM Harrison – ok, if we do that than registration is very important. CM Cross – So maybe if we say the first 50 or something like that. CM Harrison – yes. You could help with that you think? That’s all I have.

2) Appointment to Council – CM Cross – We talked about coming to this meeting with some names, so that we could possibly vote next week. So I have a few. CM Harrison – I’ve tried, but I don’t have any. CM Cross – I have three maybe. Gerald Beckum who used to be the mayor here and is very interested in joining council. He has a long history with the city with stability financially. He knows a lot about grants and things that he can tap into that could be very financially beneficial to us. When I mentioned it to him, he said absolutely. I want to come in and I think I can make a difference. He said he’ll even call Melissa now and make sure she knew about things that had to be done. The other one that was given to me was Joy McNutt. I have Mr. E T Hosely over there thinking about it. He hasn’t given me a definite answer yet. I approached a couple of others, they weren’t interested. CM Harrison – The one that I did approach advised that he would, but he was running for commissioner and didn’t want to mess that up. CM Mahone – I spoke to a few individuals. I prefer to wait until the new council comes on so we can brainstorm as a team and then appoint someone once we get everybody on board. CM Cross - We talked about it last month and three of us (being myself, Jill, and Tommy) that we needed to go ahead and make an appointment. Mayor Hill – I think we need to go ahead and make an appointment. We will put that on the agenda for next week. CM Mahone – What will be done? To vote for an appointment? Mayor Hill - we will discuss it again and make a vote if we so decide. CM Mahone – Vote to actually appoint someone? CM Cross – We go ahead and vote next week in our regular session. CM Mahone – So voting if we are going to put someone on there, or to go ahead and put them in? CM Cross – At the last meeting we decided that we would go ahead and appoint someone at the October regular session. CM Mahone – That wasn’t a vote though, that was just a discussion in general. CM Cross – Then we will see if we want to vote. CM Mahone – Then we got that part first. All that can’t be done at the same day. CM Cross – It can be. CM Harrison – It can. If the motion includes that we’re going to go forward with nominating and appointing someone. CM Mahone – So what would be the criteria to pick one of the individuals to pick. CM Cross – It would be the one that the majority of us decides would fit that roll. CM Harrison – The criteria would be willingness, availability, the basic stuff, living in the city limits, taxes up to date, etc. CM Mahone – On those individuals, so how are basing all that? CM Cross – That’s how it’s done. CM Mahone – That might be how it’s been done, but is that how it should be done? CM Harrison – In my opinion, yes. CM Mahone – Because if I bring a name, you bring one, and you bring one, then what? CM Cross – We talked about that the last time this subject came up and your name might be better than the one’s I suggested. CM Mahone – But what determines that though. If there’s not criteria in regards to this person is better than that person there. It can be based off a individual’s name. CM Cross – Perspective. CM Mahone – I can give reasons for this one or that one. CM Cross – Like I said it’s all about perception. CM Mahone – That’s why I said in regards to the new council coming on, new team, that would be something for them to sit down and come up with because they would be the ones to work with them. Then the knowledge with the team as a whole would be better. We could say this is the team we have and this is the team we need so we could go about finding a person to fit that role, instead of picking someone now. You are picking a team and you won’t even be playing anymore. CM Harrison – I understand what you are saying. I’m open to the meeting next week that we decide to move forward and go ahead and appoint someone as soon as possible, but I do understand what you are saying that maybe we need to vet them a little bet. Let’s come with some names, vet them at the next work session and then decide who we will vote in at the November Regular Session so that way we are meeting in the middle. CM Mahone – I agree with that process, but I say wait until the new team comes on that way they have some input in it. Right now we have two new individuals coming in and that way they can put their input in also. CM Cross – We can talk about that. CM Harrison – I think the middle ground though is that yes we need to get someone in place and I don’t want it to be just anyone. CM Cross – I can’t tell you a whole lot about Joy McNutt, but I can say that she actually approached me about the position. CM Harrison – She approached you? Really? CM Cross – yes. I can tell you about people, but that’s all I can do. CM Harrison – Let’s bring it to the table next week and vote to vet this group of people at the next work session and the choice would go into place in November. The vetting would take place between now and the next work session. Have them come in to speak or whatever. I can agree to that. CM Cross – I can agree to that. CM Harrison – But I don’t agree that we wait until January to get somebody in place. That’s just my opinion.

Other Business:

1) Note – 2023 Millage rate down from 15.170 in 2022 to 13.750 for 2023 Mayor Hill advised this is just an informational note prior to Public Meetings.

Adjourn: Mayor Hill / CM Mahone: 7:13PM