CITY OF OGLETHORPE

OGLETHORPE CITY HALL

115 CHATHAM STREET

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023 – 6:00PM

**Call to order:** Mayor Hill 6:00PM

Council and Dept Heads in Attendance: Mayor Hill, CM Mahone, CM Cross, CM Harrison (by phone), CM Coogle, City Clerk Melissa Jones, City Attorney Jon Coogle, Captain Hill (Police Dept)

Council absent: none

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Invocation:** CM Cross

**Approval of Agenda:** Motion made to approve Agenda made by CM Cross, 2nd by CM Mahone, AIF

**Approval of Minutes** from August 3, 2023 Regular Council Session and August 31, 2023 Work Session – Motion made by CM Coogle, 2nd by CM Cross, AIF

**Recognitions of Guests**: Gene Allen, Brenda Harvey, Cheryl Law, Lee Felder, Renay Bray, Gloria Stewart

**New Business:**

1) Gene Allen – Completed 2022 Financial Audit- updated. Motion to approve the updated 2022 Financial Budget as presented by Auditor Gene Allen and hold until Thursday September 14, 2023 with possible adjustments from the IRS update in regards to previous payroll taxes made by CM Cross, 2nd by CM Coogle, AIF

2) Brenda Harvey – CDBG update and requested a community meeting. Doesn’t think that Jim Livingston from RVRC is familiar enough with the program. CM Cross advised that there would be a meeting and that those that are already approved for the grant work will be formally invited to get updates on what is going on.

3) Cheryl Law – CDBG for her mom - absent

4) Lee Felder – CDBG update – Citizen requested information on the following:

A) Garbage not picked up and wants a credit of $13.00 – City Clerk Melissa Jones advised asked when was the garbage not picked up so that she could advise GFL. Ms. Felder advised last week and it was late by a day this week. Ms. Jones advised that everyone’s garbage city wide and county wide was pushed back a day this week due to the Labor Day holiday on Monday. Ms. Jones also advised that if her garbage is not picked up at any time to please contact City Hall immediately and they would make sure that the company came back and picked up the garbage. She said that if we were not informed, we wouldn’t know it needed to be addressed and she felt that GFL had been doing a better job in the last couple of months as complaints had almost diminished.

B) What’s being done to beautify our neighborhood? CM Cross advised that we were currently working on a grant that we could possibly get extra roll-offs brought in and have a clean up week for everyone to bring their trash items and have them taken off and help get the neighborhoods cleaned up. Ms. Felder asked that she couldn’t move furniture and wanted to know who would come pick up old furniture/mattresses, etc. CM Cross advised that those things were the home owners responsibility.

C) When are the limbs going to be picked up on her road? CM Cross advised that limbs were picked up once a month and there were 4 areas of the city. Each area had its own week where the limbs/grass/yard clippings were picked up one week out of the month.

D) Why are the home owner’s work not done? CM Cross – If you are talking about CDBG, we are working on it.

E) When are more applications going to be available for home improvements? – City Clerk Melissa Jones advised that the program is every 2 years.

F) Ms. Felder wanted to bring to the council’s attention that she was told she would have to pay “x” amount of dollars to have the grant work done at her home. She wants to know why? She has never had to pay for a grant before and if she wanted to pay money, she would not have applied for the grant. City Clerk Melissa Jones advised that the CDBG grant was not a 100% paid grant. Ms. Felder asked what that meant? Ms. Jones advised that it meant that not 100% of the work approved for the grant was paid by the gov’t, that a percentage was paid by the approved applicant normally based on household income. Ms. Felder said she looked up grants online and they said that grants were free. CM Cross stated that it depended on the type of grant and rules for each grant. CM Mahone said that it all goes back to the education part (discussed in work session). When RVRC takes over, we will educate. Ms. Felder asked if others could be put on the current grant. Ms. Jones advised no, that the current grant monies for CDBG were for already approved applicants only.

5) Renay Bray – Tennis Courts, Parks, Chief of Police – Ms. Bray advised that some of the citizens of Oglethorpe as well as herself are concerned about our police department and want to know if the is trying to obtain a Chief of Police for Oglethorpe? CM Cross said the agreement we had with Montezuma was through Feb 2024 and that Chief Finch had helped us get back on our feet. She said that the agreement was done that way so that the new council in January could work on. The hope all along was to have our own Chief of Police. Ms. Bray – We appreciate Montezuma and especially the officers for what they have done / are doing, but are we actively seeking an applicant? Council – no. Ms. Bray – Should somebody be qualified I feel like we should always be advocating and looking out for the city of Oglethorpe. CM Coogle – This contract has been very beneficial for us financially. Ms. Bray – Our own chief would be more beneficial. CM Mahone – We realized we were behind on a lot of things when they (Montezuma) came in. The leadership to building a staff is very beneficial. There are some things that individuals don’t even know. Ms. Bray – I do understand. We paid a chief before, so I’m just saying we need to advocate for Oglethorpe. I appreciate all law enforcement officers. Now, can I ask what is going on with the Tennis Courts? They were half way done, but not finished. CM Mahone – After we finished the basketball court, me and previous CM Daniels started cutting back the tennis courts and ran into an issue with a dog back there on a chain. We worried about it getting loose. Ms. Bray – Could talk to the dog owner and have that handled. CM Cross – I believe that dog owner just went to court in regards to the dog, right Captain Hill? Captain Hill – yes. Ms. Bray – Ok. Glad to hear about the dumpster area. The city is really good to the people of Oglethorpe. We need to get things cleaned up. Captain Hill advised that the police dept was leaving door tags on residences doors and keeping a log so that fines could be imposed.

6) Gloria Stewart – Trash (carpet, household items) – Ms. Stewart advised she was upset that she was being charged a fee for “trash”, but then having to take it herself to the dumpster area. She feels it’s not right. CM Mahone advised they are going to have a meeting about it. I know what you are saying. CM Cross advised that only limbs, leaves, and yard debris could be picked up because of the liability and it wasn’t the city’s responsibility. Ms. Stewart said she doesn’t have limbs and leaves every month. CM Mahone – We will go into Executive Session for that. Ms. Stewart asked what the city was doing about Anna Drive; if there was an emergency and a train on the tracks, you couldn’t get through. What are you all doing about that? CM Cross advised that we have had engineers out and gotten an estimate of $400K and the paperwork has been completed for help. CM Harrison advised that the engineer (Ingram and Associates) had already called and sent in an emergency request for help through GDOT. It is to be reviewed by the commissioners in next couple of weeks. We will get moving once approved. Ms Stewart asked why just starting now when the dam burst? CM Coogle advised that it was a different story now than before. CM Harrison advised that Anna Drive was already on the list for repair prior back in early August. This dam break was a blessing in disguise. There will be a much better fix now. CM Mahone – Now the whole road will be fixed instead of just a portion.

7) Mayor Hill attendance at the GARC Annual Conference November 8-10 in St. Simons – no motion - dead

8) City Park Use – Motion made to 1)post a sign advising Events with more than 30 attendees must complete an application and pay a deposit at City Hall, 2) post signage advising no alcohol or drugs on the premises, 3) add a lock box for all electrical use, 4) lock down the water spicket, and 5) install water fountain at the City Park. AND 1) post signage advising no drugs, alcohol, or weapons, 2) lock down the water spicket, and 3) install a water fountain at the Basketball Court made by CM Harrison, 2nd by CM Mahone, AIF

9) City Vehicle Policy – Motion to accept the city vehicle policy as presented at previous work session by CM Cross to be adopted as written made by CM Cross, 2nd by CM Mahone, AIF

**Old Business:**

**Other Business:**

**Adjourn:** 6:56PM, Motion made by CM Harrison, 2nd by CM Mahone, AIF