CITY OF OGLETHORPE

OGLETHORPE CITY HALL

115 CHATHAM STREET

COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA

MARCH 28, 2024 – 6:00PM

Call to order: 6:00PM Mayor Hill

**\*\* Keep Oglethorpe Beautiful Coloring Contest Winners –** Naomi Freeland, Maria Godoy, Karma Murdock, Caitlen Jackson, Madilyn Peterson, and Natalie Brown.

**Department Head Reports:**

1. City Clerk, Melissa Jones – report emailed to council prior to meeting.
2. Police Dept – Cindy Kleckley (sends report to regular council meeting) / Interim Chief Finch - We went to Elementary School. Got a lot of stuff planned for the community for Ga Cities Week. Buck Creek Bypass is open. I have calls for service emailed to Melissa the first of the month. Not much, but main complaints come from Carla Drive. Mayor Daniels – That flock camera they moved off of Buck Creek Bypass, are they going to put it back? Chief Finch – Yes.
3. Librarian, Glenda Rigby – report to be emailed at first of the month
4. Water/Sewer/Streets - HWR Jeff Harrison – Wright Grocery has bee tied in. Main water and sewer line. There will be 3 more customers from up there. The water tank at the prison has been pressure washed and painted on the outside per your contract with American Tank. The guys got the screen up around the waste water plant. They want to know if they can put the monitor and recording device for the camera system in the old trailer that’s out there or what? There’s no power there. We can run a powerline to it or we can build a room inside the shop. I believe they are hard wired and not wireless. Mayor Daniels – wires underground? Jeff – Yes. They sent like 6 rolls of wire with the cameras. CM Harrison – What is the most cost effective and time efficient? Jeff – Build a little room inside the shop. Just so the monitor is not exposed. (discussion ensued) Trailer can be put in surplus sale if not needed. Mayor Daniels – If you are in agreement, just ask Melissa for a PO to go to the hardware store and get what’s needed to build the little room. (All council was in agreement). Was the sign put back up on Chatham? CM Harrison – Pretty sure it was put back up; Melissa had already put in a work order for that. Not sure if the signs were put up yet from the BRACE grant at the dump. They were made by Mr. Bray. (conversation ensued). Jeff – We will need to make sure that the cameras are placed where tags can be read if needed. CM Mahone – What’s the status of the mowers? Are they serviced? Jeff – They’re ready to go. CM Mahone – There was a belt issue on 54. Jeff – That one does come off a lot. CM Mahone – The pully or something may be going out. CM Harrison – Who usually services our mowers? Jeff – We change the belts and the blades. The belts are in the shop. One of them, and it might have been the pully, that we were running, it was getting worn out. I’ll have the guys check it out, and if it is the pully, we will take over to Americus where you bought it from. We’ll have them fix that. CM Mahone – What about the 60” one? Jeff – It should be ok. One has a brand-new tire on the back of it. I can Cole and ask him, but pretty sure he told me that both of those are running. CM Harrison – And the back hoe is good now, right? Jeff – Now, I haven’t seen the back hoe so I don’t know. Mayor Daniels – It’s still at Dorsey’s, right? Jeff – I believe so. CM Harrison – I will check on that on Monday. CM Beckum – About the cemetery, every Easter, we have the morning Sunrise Service there. Is it in pretty good shape? I haven’t really checked on it. CM Moore – It’s in pretty good shape, I actually ride through there a good bit. CM Harrison – yes, if the grass is high, the mosquitos are bad. CM Mahone – They just sprayed the day before yesterday. (discussion ensued) Mayor Daniels – I know that if it doesn’t get cut before Sunrise Service, there will definitely be some backlash on the city. Jeff – We will hit it hard tomorrow and get out there and get it. Mayor Daniels – Thank you for the reminder Mr. Beckum and thank you Jeff.
5. Fire Department – report emailed monthly – Chief Childs

**Council/Committee Reports:**

1. Mayor Daniels – Talked with engineer Tim Ingram on Monday and rode over to the Anna Drive area. We are discussing a temporary fix that would be in the budget, that wouldn’t cost us any money. The train is causing issues, so we need to do something to get it opened sooner. He is supposed to call back with some suggestions. They will start some of the work on Monday, April 1, 2024. (Conversation ensued). CM Harrison – May Road update needed. Once Anna Drive is taken care of, we need to get back on May Road. Also, Melissa sent me an email in regards to CDBG from RVRC. The contract will be released from suspension on April 1, 2024 and once the contract is signed, the ball will get rolling to finish the homes on the list. CM Moore – Just curious, how much was this housing grant for? CM Harrison – It was $901, 025.00. Not sure what was utilized, but it was one of the largest in the state. Mayor Daniels – Pretty much only 2 homes were completed.
2. Human Resources/Finance – CM Harrison – We’ve had to do some investigation on health insurance plans because rates have gone up to where anyone with a child, doesn’t matter if one child or ten, out of pocket is like $600.00 per week, which is not good. We are looking at 3 different options. One is the GMA Plan. Mr. Jacobs responded and said he would put us in contact with the benefits administrator. I have somebody out of Atlanta that is working on a quote for next week, and Mayor Daniels is checking into something. We had all of the staff fill out a benefits survey that would expedite the process for quoting as well. We need to look at this for our current staff, as well as the possible new police chief. Hopefully we will have more information by our next council meeting.
3. Public Safety – CM Mahone – We got the report that was sent in about a domestic last Thursday night. There was one Oglethorpe officer on duty and several back-ups from Montezuma. That’s the biggest thing with our situation. Appreciate the one’s on patrol. CM Harrison – It gets worse in the summer doesn’t it? CM Mahone – Yes.
4. Utilities/Streets/Cemetery – CM Harrison – Going back to public safety – we can discuss below. Also, we kind of have Jeff and his team in a hold with the public works part and his contract. I’m concerned that 2 part time people doing everything that is required for Public Works is not going to happen. It will take one- person day and night, especially when it gets warm, to handle the cemetery alone. Mayor Daniels – I inquired about us hiring some Public Works people, but if Mr. Jeff can hire within, on his contract side, to get the things done… There are still things like grass in the sidewalk, grass over by the Liberty gas station, it’s just small things. If the city doesn’t want to hire part-time, I’m asking Jeff, can you hire part time just to take care of these smaller things? I would just like to see things somewhat better. CM Moore – Has there been a chemical treatment program where they spray the cemetery quarterly where is slows the growth of the grass, but also kills the weeds? I use this at my home and it makes the cutting of the grass every 30 days. Jeff – I’ve heard of that, but we’ve not used it here. We do spray curbs and sidewalks and in front of the Dew Drop down the road here. The cemetery is different. When spraying weed killer, people were upset that around the graves had dead grass. (conversation ensued). CM Harrison – If we give HWR the license to leverage someone to be here when we need them, would you be willing to try it again? Jeff – Well, I pay my guys $20-$22 an hour to keep them here. The days of $12-$13 per hour are gone. They may work two weeks… then not show up any more. Just being honest. Mayor Daniels – I think I’ve had conversation about people doing community service – we might could use. How can we get contacted with that? Chief Finch – you have to have pay a guard with them. Mayor Daniels – just for community service? Chief Finch – yes. (conversation ensued)

CM Harrison – Ok, we will supply applicants and we will have to discuss your contract. Jeff – discussion of contract and sub-contracting. CM Moore – What about the Adopt a Highway project? Jeff – That’s just for litter on the roads. They will not cut the grass, limbs, trees, etc.

1. Planning & Recreation – Mayor Daniels – Ga Cities Week coming up. I’m looking for a grant to get the wooden chips for the play park. CM Harrison – We talked with other representatives from all 4 cities last night and they would like to do the unified festivities again this year. Ga Cities Week will be April 21 – 27, 2024. The unified events will be Praise in the Park on the 21st here in Oglethorpe. Monday the 22nd will be kick ball at the Recreation Dept in Montezuma. Tuesday (23rd) will be the Karaoke Dance Party in Marshallville at Julian Rice Park. Friday (26th) will be in Ideal for Horseshoes and Corn Hole. Saturday (28th) is the big day in Oglethorpe. Black Voters Matter is going to host a tournament at the basketball court. That evening we will move to the City Park for a Movie Night and Spades Tournament. There are 3 vendors already signed up. BVM will have a tech bus for the kids to get on. They want to purchase 25 meals for people that come out. Wednesday is Library Day pretty much. Monday or Tuesday might be the Public Service Day, Chief I will let you know. There may be another sponsor. GDOT will bring seeds for flowers as well. Chief Finch – GDOT will be putting up jake brake signs. CM Mahone – Done some weed spraying downtown to the Meal Ticket. Looking to have some pressure washing done downtown. Where would the funds come from? CM Harrison – Maybe the DDA could contribute, we could ask. Which brings me to another subject, you were who we had designated to sit on the DDA Board. Can you fulfill that? CM Mahone – No. CM Harrison – I can if you need me to do that. CM Moore – I will do that. CM Mahone – Their dates didn’t work for me. They weren’t meeting at city hall; they were meeting at another building. Mayor Daniels – They were meeting here the other evening. CM Harrison – We really need to bridge that gap to bring the two of us closer. (discussion ensued).

**New Business:**

1) Code Enforcement – CM Moore – I think the biggest issue of Oglethorpe not growing is the dilapidated properties. Needs to be improved to make Oglethorpe more hospitable for our young people to stay around. We

need to set the rules. There aren’t any real regulations in Oglethorpe. I’ve worked with this in Muscogee County. Properties unkept and brought down the property values as well as the city’s. I’ve obtained copies of the

most recent rules to see what would and would not work for us. I will review and in about 30 days have a rough draft. List past around of some of the properties that are problems for the city. We need a fine system and a

legal process for enforcement of these regulations/fines. Mayor Daniels – So what I’m hearing is that we are adopting rules (ordinances), someone will serve them or fine if property not maintained, and if they don’t

pay… Couldn’t we just tweak the ordinances we already have in place? CM Moore – I have reviewed our current ordinances, a lot of them are out of date and they don’t match Supreme Court rulings in the past, state

cases, etc. Since Macon Co hasn’t been big on code enforcement of any type, they don’t have any proof that their current rules have actually been working for like the last 20 years. I looked through court records and there

are almost no cases in the cities or county. I think we need to critique them. (conversation ensued) CM Moore – It’s a slow process, but it’s a rewarding process. Chief Finch – What about the Land Bank? CM Moore –

I’ve looked into our Land Bank and what they are aiming for and the kind of properties they are going for, will not benefit Oglethorpe in any way. They seem to be more focused on the commercial side of property. If we

want more businesses downtown, we need to have something to bring more people to town. We need good housing, affordable housing, a community worth coming to. Long term vision, get the rules adopted, improve the

list, get demolition grants, etc. (conversation ensued). Mayor Daniels – I agree this will be a long road to do; however, I see that you’ve already put in a good bit of time and it would be a good thing to pursue.

2) Appointment of Council Member to the Downtown Development Authority – CM Moore to be our representative.

**Old Business:**

1)Police Dept Contract / ChiefPosition **-** CM Harrison – I don’t think we’re ready to speak on the chief yet as we still need to do a little more number crunching on this whole insurance situation that affects not only the

person we are looking at for the chief position, but other city employee’s as well. I think because the end of April is coming quickly, we need to vote on extending the contract. My recommendation is for a year. Just

my opinion. CM Beckum – Did you all get the information I sent to Melissa to send to you all. (Yes). Let me start with the comment on item 3 – I made a mistake, instead of pay-up, it should say back-up. Just some view

points to think about. (discussion ensued) Chief Finch – First of all, I brought in my resume for you all. I don’t think you are going to find another law enforcement officer with a resume like I have. 2. I deal with charts, I

teach at the college, but I also believe in overview and overhead – goes over charts and paperwork and discussion of what the city gets out of the current contract. CM Mahone – What is reflected right here, is the same

thing. I don’t know if it’s something personal or what. It’s just like the cemetery, we pay $850 per month. You expect the individual to cut the grass twice a month, that’s not even feasible. (Jeff - $800 per month). That’s

with someone providing their ow equipment and fuel. Jeff – a weed eater is $430.00. CM Mahone – The same mindset you have here is the same you have for an officer’s standpoint. If you get home after you leave this

meeting and the door of your house is open, are you going in there? You aren’t going in there by yourself. Same concept, if you have just one officer, they aren’t going in there by themselves. (discussion ensued) CM

Beckum – One of my concerns was vehicles for the police department. It’s my understanding that we need 6. Do we have 6? Chief Finch – Yes, you will need at least 6. You have the chief’s truck, 3 decent leased

vehicles, and 2 cars up at the police dept that may or may not run. So, you will need more. CM Harrison – I know that one of the leased vehicles will be paid off in the next few months and the other two next year. That

will free up some money for new vehicles. CM Beckum – My point was that we needed 6 that we could count on and then need to replace them eventually. Chief Finch – Yes, they get worn out pretty quickly. CM

Beckum – I’m pretty sure the previous council had the foresight to put new police vehicles in the Splost, and we will check into that. CM Moore – How many weapons do your officers carry? And does the city pay for them?

Chief Finch – The city pays for them. Each officer has a side, then we try to put a long gun inside the car. Sometimes the officers buy extra guns to have a back-up weapon as well. (conversation ensued). Mayor Daniels –

So, we don’t have to make a vote tonight, just some discussion. CM Harrison – I agree that we need to review and put more teeth into the contract as CM Beckum said. Chief Finch – I think Oglethorpe and Montezuma

need to sit down to discuss together so things can move quicker. Regardless, we will come assist if an officer is in need. The relationship is if I have it, you got it. If you have it, I got it. We just need clear direction. Mayor

Daniels – We have a meeting next week with Montezuma to sit down and discuss the contract. So, we need all that can attend to be there. Maybe Wednesday the 3rd at 6PM. CM Harrison please make contact with

Montezuma to set up.

2)Part time Public Works Employee –already discussed under Utilities/Street

**Other Business:**

Public Comments made.

**Adjourn:** 8:37PM Mayor Daniels