

CITY OF OGLETHORPE
OGLETHORPE CITY HALL
115 CHATHAM STREET
COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
MARCH 6, 2025 – 6:00PM

Call to order: 6:00PM Mayor Daniels

Department Head Reports: (All should have been emailed prior to meeting)

- 1) City Clerk, Melissa Jones – report emailed to council prior to meeting.
- 2) Police Dept – Cindy Kleckley (regular council meeting) / Chief Breletic – gave report – Ms. Cindy is back over at the PD, we've ordered to hard drives, policies and procedures are finished up, sirens are working on my vehicle. Cost the city \$130.00. We will repurpose that vehicle for the part time officers to use. Officer Leeanne's blue lights aren't working, but we did find out they are under warranty so we have contacted the manufacturer. Got with code enforcement personnel and looking to have a meeting in the near future with all code enforcement of the county to do an outline for a packet that can be given by ALL cities so that we are all on the same page. We will be looking to re-open the wall back up in the Business Center for safety reasons, we will still go to the 2 week pay period for the officers and I will be getting with Ms. Melissa on that.
- 3) Librarian, Glenda Rigby – report to be emailed at first of the month
- 4) Water/Sewer/Streets - HWR Jeff Harrison
- 5) Fire Department – report emailed monthly – Chief Childs

Council/Committee Reports: (All should have been emailed prior to meeting)

- 1) Mayor Daniels – #2 under new business
- 2) Human Resources/Finance – CM Harrison emailed report
- 3) Public Safety – CM Moore emailed report
- 4) Utilities/Streets/Cemetery – CM Harrison emailed report – she hit the highlights on getting grants to complete May Road. She contacted Senator Ossoff's office. They did stress to get as many letters of support as possible. From clergy, business owners, community members, state representatives, etc. I will request a template and just send out. (Ms. Jones advised that she gets this request sometimes and they all send out a sample template to make it easier). I will bug the county commissioners next week as well. I am asking for \$250K to give us a little bit of cushion. CM Moore – I did some checking and once again we find ourselves with a March 13th deadline for a budget resolution. If it doesn't happen, it could affect it a little bit. Mayor Daniels – yes let's get these request for support letters out. We have a lot of projects to work on and we need to do what we can. CM Harrison – I think we have an advantage because we are working with GDOT and they are taking on a lot of the heavier expenses as far as Hwy 49, so we will ask for a letter from them as well.
 - A) Blue Tag Tree Service - absent
 - B) Mahone Lawn Care – working in the cemetery, got a dead tree up, will start spraying around the graves next week, etc.

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- C) Daddy Rabbit Mosquito Spraying – Chip Dunmon would like to have the city’s mosquito spraying business.
- 5) Planning & Recreation – CM Woodard – quote for pressure washing. Mayor Daniels advised they would talk about at next meeting.
 - 6) Downtown Development Authority – CM Moore Economic Development Plan Draft
 - 7) Grants Committee – CM Moore/CM Harrison emailed
Guest Ian Perry from RVRC – gave CDBG Update. They have finally begun rehab on 2 Kaigler Street homes. DCA has gotten the first draw down request. Sherrie Kurtz called prior to the meeting and has gotten approval of a 2nd draw down request to complete that includes payments for two of the contractors. The city will hold the monies in the CDBG account until work is complete. Ian will get more information for the one house that is new construction.
 - 8) Connectivity Committee – CM Harrison reported the Quarterly Meeting hosted by City of Oglethorpe and the great turnout. Mayor Daniels commented on the meeting as well.
 - 9) Building Maintenance Committee – CM Mahone: Gym update – Goal is to have a “Warming Center” for those who do not have adequate heating in extreme cold weather conditions for our area or loss of electricity. They are working in the restrooms now and will continue doing small projects to complete the gym rehab. Back door in the library - casing was replaced so we will look at and replace the door lock as there issues opening the door, and we are looking at removing the toilet and sink and capping the pipes off in the bathroom in the old police office at City Hall. Ms. Glenda is using the office for storage and that bathroom can become a big closet as there is no water run to it. Would like to have looked at over the weekend. Mayor Daniels asked if there was any updates on the Senior Center? CM Mahone – No, but from appearances on the outside, it looks a lot better. September is renewal and maybe we should create a fee and do a year to year lease? Mayor Daniels – or another company come in? Could we do a walk-through? I’m available to do a drop-in. (will discuss more).

New Business:

- 1) Economic Development Plan Draft – CM Moore laid out the 6 steps and guidelines for completing the EDP. Going to take a lot of work. I’ve talked about the 6 steps before: Business _____ and Infrastructure Planning, Business Incentives, Proposed Incentives, State and Federal Development Programs that could assist with supporting existing businesses as well as expanding businesses, Marketing and Outreach Strategies. Housing Development and Work Force Growth. That’s the initial. Let’s talk about the tax incentives for housing developers in GA. I’ve been working on this and looking at an Enterprise Zone. I started putting a little work in on how Enterprise Zone for property tax exemption would work is the first 5 years they would get 100% exemption from property taxes and then after that on the 6th year it will be 80% exempt, the next year 60%, then 40%, then 20%, down to zero. Then they will be paying regular taxes. The first 5 years makes or breaks a business. The next is Opportunity Zones. I went to Muscogee County and they helped me build the map for our city. I can have a large nice map for citizens to see in the lobby for them to review zones, etc. Tax increments, where you can get financing, etc. If we designate an Opportunity Zone, housing developers can qualify for state credits and that can create jobs. Each created job, they can receive a \$3500 tax income credit every year for 5 years. It could help Oglethorpe grow. We don’t have any

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Opportunity Zones in the city so I'm looking at what is needed to do that. Housing credits are through the GA Dept of Community Affairs. I found that a lot of cities go through non-profits to do this. I found that there is a market for "for profit" companies that could build low-income houses. Not traditional low income houses. Easy to finance, low income through special federal programs. I'm doing the groundwork to get us involved with that and to designate those areas. I would like the community improvement district to be right here on Sumter Street and encompass our entire downtown. I've started that process. I'm looking at 3-4 years to get this off the ground. Some things will be immediate, but some will take some time. Once this is complete you will see major progress in the city of Oglethorpe. I will keep a book of this information here at City Hall and add to it as work goes on for citizens to review. First thing I've already started doing is locating city owned property. We have some, but not a lot. I've made contact with 12 property owners within the city limits and I'm going to create a pledge stating they want to help Oglethorpe grow and be a part of this.... I will let them know what property they own that we could use for this and get them to sign off stating they will sell the property to a developer at a reasonable fair market value. I found state programs that will help them if they agree to this and will assist with tax incentives so everyone wins. These projects can't be done just by the city, there has to be public and private money involved. My biggest goal is to bring more single family homes because you know we don't have enough housing. You can't produce jobs if you don't have housing. We need housing for all income levels. I have already been in negotiations and spoken with CM Harrison about them from Teams Meetings. Some of the feedback is negative due to the current issues with the county. But, I've had some contact with some smaller, more custom builders, too. We will talk about the blight taxation program at our next meeting. We can connect property owners with developers. There are state programs that offer incentives as well for this. Mayor Daniels asked about the land bank being a part of this? CM Moore – maybe later we could be more on a county level, but the way politics work and relationships work in Macon County, I will get further by doing this by City alone. Maybe later we can work together on a county level. They may want to assist more once they see the fruits of our labor. In the next stage that I'm working on – trying to attract restaurants and businesses. When it comes to the private businesses side, I am creating a package and it will be available at our next meeting. I've talked with national franchise restaurants, clothing and shoe stores. I asked what it would take to get them here. CM Harrison – Thank you for all your work. I think we have already established an Enterprise Zone? CM Moore – Yes, but it's not being utilized. CM Harrison – I think IP would be willing to work with us on this as well to have housing for their employees here as opposed to having to travel from out of town. CM Mahone – I think we should look at the city land and property zoned for _____ Houses. That would be a way of affordable housing. Mayor Daniels asked if the city could purchase land? Attorney Coogle advised not just to purchase, but yes for rebuilding a City Hall, Hospital, something like that. CM Moore but we could use the DDA for that with an Intergovernmental Agreement. Gave review of economic impact over the next 5 years.

- 2) Invoice for vehicle damage from Jay Sutton in the amount of \$2278.10 – Mayor Daniels was given an invoice from 2023 with the request that the city pay as Mr. Sutton claims he hit a pothole. City Attorney advised that he would review the claim and respond as the normal time to file a claim is 6 months.

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- 3) Cell Phones – Chief Breletic has advised that he has spoken with Verizon in regards to our current plan and could get up to 10 new phones with the hotspot included for free and the charges would be \$50 per line with unlimited everything. Mayor and council advised that the Chief and City Clerk Jones review and make a decision on changes.
- 4) NDA – CM Moore brought up having an NDA for council and city staff to sign in regards to city information being discussed.... For example water bills, taxes. City attorney Coogle advised that those are all open records and could be discussed? Chief Breletic advised that GMA had one that lots of other cities used. Coogle advised that he had not heard of one in 40 years of his practice. He stated that this is not a private business and that an NDA would not hold up in a court of law. It would be no more than a form in the employee file. Any write ups would be in the employee file, etc. CM Moore advised he would do more research on the topic.

Old Business:

Other Business:

- 1) Mayor Daniels (coach) and his MCHS Girls Varsity Basketball Team were given a Proclamation on behalf of the City of Oglethorpe for their awesome year (Final Four) and for Jimmy Daniels, Jr. being named Coach of the Year. The city council, staff, and residents are very proud of this team and their coaches for their hard work and dedication.
- 2) CM Harrison asked if we had a budget for blinds? Ms. Jones advised there is a budget for building repair/maintenance.

Public Comments: n/a

Adjourn: 7:30PM Mayor Daniels

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